



'We Built This S**tty'

The worst song of all time? Les Garland begs to differ

Recently, *Blender* magazine got a lot of media attention when it released its list of the "Top 50 Worst Songs of All Time." Topping *Blender's* very subjective (in my humble opinion) list was Starship's 1985 No. 1 hit, "We Built This City." As you may recall, radio icon Les Garland provided the voice of the disc jockey heard over the song's bridge.

After the list was released, I reached out to Garland to get his reaction to the song's ignoble ranking. "Like many others, I was taken aback by the *Blender* selection," he says. "Not only about the Starship selection, but also Simon & Garfunkel — even The Beatles. What a joke, actually."

Garland took the time to share the back story of how his involvement with the song came about. He says, "Back in 1985, I stopped by a Sausalito, CA recording studio with manager — and dear bud — Bill Thompson to say hello to Starship members Grace Slick, Paul Kantner, Mickey



Les Garland

Thomas and Craig Chaquico.

"While we were there, Peter Wolf — the producer, not the J. Geils singer — played a few tracks for me. As 'We Built This City' blasted out of the system, Wolf casually commented that a DJ voiceover would sound cool over the musical bridge in the song.

"The band looked at me like I was the chosen one, so into the studio I went to make up whatever it was I was going to blab. Wolf asked if I wanted to hear the bridge again for familiarity, to which I replied, 'Nah, that might ruin the magic. Just put it in the red.'

"Right at the exact appropriate moment, right on cue, I started rattling off some bullshit about 'driving across the Golden Gate Bridge on another sunny Sunday in the city that rocks, the city that never stops,' hitting the musical post spot-on. I left that day never knowing that this record would one day be released as a single. Singles — remember those?"

Straight To No. 1

"Several months later I received a call from an RCA attorney asking me how much I'd want for my voice to appear on the album when it was released," Garland continues. "I turned down any monetary offer and opted instead to have whatever my proceeds might be go to the TJ Martell Foundation for cancer research. A few months later the album was released, and 'We Built This City' was the first single.



"It's funny, because in the video you can spot this animated van going across the Golden Gate Bridge with the word 'Garman' spray-painted, graffiti-like, on it. Six weeks later I was walking the main drag in Montreaux, Switzerland with some friends, and a carload of teens cruises by. Booming out of their car radio was — you got it — 'We Built This City.'

"It wasn't long after that the track hit No. 1 on the American charts. It was then that I sent off a telex — remember those? — to Starship that read something like, 'To the members of Starship: Thank you for backing me up on my No. 1 record! Love, Garland.'

"Now, almost 20 years later, *Blender* magazine ranks the tune as the worst record ever. But I'm complimented by that — it's like saying Coca-Cola is the worst drink ever. Checking out the remaining nine songs in *Blender's* top 10, I see 'Ice Ice Baby,' 'The Heart of Rock & Roll' and 'Party All the Time.' I have stories about those, too, but I think I'll save them for an evening around the fire with a shot or two of Patron."

The Words That Made Him Infamous

Below is the bit that Les Garland improvised over the bridge of Starship's "We Built This City."

"I'm looking out over that Golden Gate Bridge on another gorgeous sunny Saturday, and I'm seeing bumper-to-bumper traffic...
"Here's your favorite radio station, in your favorite radio city, the City by the Bay, the city that rocks, the city that never sleeps!"

What's On....

WXSS/Milwaukee

Our good friends at Mediabase hooked us up with the top 10 airing on WXSS from April 25-May 1, 2004. See what Brian Kelly is subjecting Milwaukee to!

LW	TW	ARTIST	Title
85	91	USHER f/LUDACRIS & LIL JON	Yeah
90	90	J-KWON	Tipsy
87	90	MAROON 5	This Love
22	89	USHER	Burn
82	81	EVANESCENCE	My Immortal
58	60	D12 f/EMINEM	My Band
24	56	MARIO WINANS f/ENYA & P. DIDDY	I Don't Wanna Know
41	55	BEYONCÉ	Naughty Girl
54	48	HILARY DUFF	Come Clean
45	48	YING YANG TWINS...	Salt Shaker

CHR Session Undergoing Top-Secret Testing

The R&R Convention 2004 CHR panel "Dude, Where's My Format" is undergoing rigorous testing at the top-secret R&R proving grounds. Here are some of the questions so far: Where's the pop music? Should it be called CHR/Pop or CHR/Hip-Hop?

Where's the personality? Where's the line on indecency?

We'll also address building compelling content while trying to hit leaner budgets and satellite radio and other distractions. And who will survive the 10-foot "drop test"? Check here for continuous updates, and be sure to register for the convention at www.radioandrecords.com.



Get To Know....

Brian Kelly

OM, Entercom/Milwaukee;
PD, WXSS/Milwaukee

Most recent ratings highlights: Kiss-FM is No. 1 women 18-34 and No. 2 persons 18-34, and [Hot AC] WMYX [under PD Tom Gjerdrum] is No. 2 women 25-54.

Brief career recap: Madison, Milwaukee, WLS and WYTZ (Z-95) in Chicago, Milwaukee — not bad for a radio guy.

What possessed you to get into this business? I have no other marketable skills.

Early influences: Larry Lujack and Bob Collins, and Jonathan W. Little on WISM — pronounced "Wizz-um" — 1480 in Madison.

Most influential radio stations growing up: WLS/Chicago, WCFL (Super CFL)/Chicago and WOKY (The Mighty 92)/Milwaukee.

First exciting radio gig: When I got the job at WLS/Chicago, I was walkin' on clouds for years! I called everyone I knew that night to tell them I got the job. And after I ran out of people I knew, I started calling people I didn't know to let them know I was going to Chicago to work at W-L-S!

What stations are preset in your car as we speak? Kiss, WMYX and WEMP (my stations), plus our competitors: WKT1, WLTQ and WKKV. And, just to round out the presets, we've got WLZR, WKLH, WLUM and WDRV (The Drive) out of Chicago.

What CDs are in your car player as we speak? Usher, D12, Maroon 5, OutKast, John Mayer, Barenaked Ladies, Robbie Williams, the *Scrubs* soundtrack and The Polyphonic Spree.

Hobbies: Watching and performing stand-up comedy, traveling, watching movies and doing things I've never done before.

Guilty-pleasure (off-duty) music: The *Have a Nice Day* collection, *Alice Cooper's Greatest Hits*, movie soundtracks, early Elton John and Everclear.

Secret passion? Puh-leeze — I have no secrets. I would totally suck at poker.

Name the one gadget you can't live without? ReplayTV (kind of like TiVo) has changed my life.

Wheels: Chrysler Concorde.

Favorite food: Lou Malnati's pizza out of Chicago. I have them shipped in.

Favorite local restaurant: Mr. B's.

Favorite cereal: Shredded Wheat.

Favorite junk food: Chocolate-covered almonds from the freezer.

Favorite city in the world: A three-way tie, in alphabetical order: Chicago, Los Angeles and Milwaukee.

Favorite vacation destination: Always L.A.

Favorite TV show: *Scrubs*.

What's the last movie you saw? There hasn't been a good one since *Elf*. It's an instant classic.

Last movie you rented? *The Matrix Revolutions*. What a snooze-fest.

Favorite nontrade publication: *Entertainment Weekly*. I read it cover to cover every Saturday afternoon.

What current radio stations, other than your own, do you admire, and why? Well, I've had a chance to listen to all of our Entercom CHRs, and they are all terrific. I've been sampling our latest acquisition, WZPL/Indianapolis, and Scott Sands has got it *all* going on, with great stuff between the music and a killer morning show.

Favorite word or phrase? "Let's play the tape all the way through on that idea."

Last person you went out to dinner with? Josh Kelley and Donna Passuntino from Hollywood Records. We had a blast.

Most annoying thing people ask you: "Why do you play the same songs over and over?"



Brian Kelly