

Meat Loaf Pulled Off Something Few Singers Have



Earlier this week, iconic singer Meat Loaf tragically passed away at the age of 74. Describing the man as a “unique” talent would be a gross understatement. He had a wild name, an enormous presence, a wide range of singing talent, and a knack for performative theatrics that extended to stage and movies.

Of course, he also sold over 65 million copies of a rather famous rock-opera album trilogy, and won a Grammy award for “Best Solo Rock Vocal Performance.”

Not a bad run.

But for me, the thing that stood out the most about the singer was his multi-generational appeal.

Meat Loaf’s rise to stardom began before I was born, and his career was thought to have climaxed in the mid 1970s with his hugely successful album, *Bat Out of Hell* – a famous collaboration with composer Jim Steinman that spawned the hits, “Two Out of Three Ain’t Bad” and “Paradise by the

Dashboard Light”.

Well, it was famous to older people anyway. Up until the early 1990s, when I was in my late teens, there wasn't much reason for someone my age to know (and therefore appreciate) a whole lot about Meat Loaf. I mean, I think I at least knew who the guy was – probably because I grew up as a couch potato, saw him on *The Tonight Show* or some other program, and found his name and persona amusingly memorable. But my point is that I knew very little of his past fame, whether it be from albums or his role as Eddie in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, a film I knew only for its outlandish poster.

That all changed in 1993 when the absolutely epic song, “I'd Do Anything for Love (But I Won't Do That)” hit radio stations like a meaty ton of bricks. And of course, there was that feature-film style video that received seemingly endless rotation on MTV, and helped propel the song to the very top of the charts.

A whole new generation of music fans suddenly knew of Mr. Loaf, and they very much dug his new collaboration with Jim Steinman.

In fact, they more than dug it. They adopted that first single off the *Bat Out of Hell II: Back into Hell* album as an anthem of the era. I was in college at the time, and nearly everyone I knew owned the CD (thanks in large part to *Columbia House* and *BMG* memberships), and knew the song's infectious lyrics by heart. By the time all was said and done, it had reached number one in 28 countries.

Granted, I don't think many of those listeners ever quite figured out what it was that Meat Loaf *wouldn't* do for love, but few seemed bothered by that. The rock-opera was back... at least for a little while. And it even included an elaborate, musical-style tour.

I'm sure a lot of classic rock purists, who were there for the initial *Bat Out of Hell* ride, bristled at all the johnny-come-lately Meat Loaf fans, but I'm guessing the singer himself had no complaints. He pulled off something relatively few music acts have – a bonafide rock resurrection that drew in a brand new, youthful and energetic fan-base. And he was rewarded handsomely for it.

Many of those newbies, like me, were then compelled to go back and check out (and come to appreciate) the performer's earlier work.

Two more singles were released off of *Bat Out of Hell II*: "Rock and Roll Dreams Come Through" and "Objects in the Rear View Mirror May Appear Closer Than They Are", the latter of which is a really strong, metaphor-heavy tune (with an extraordinarily long name).

But they didn't enjoy nearly the popularity nor emotional attachment of the first, which still holds a special place in the hearts of lots of folks my age. The evidence of that endearment popped up all over my social media feeds in reaction to the news of Meat Loaf's passing.

13 years later, Meat Loaf and Jim Steinman went for a three-peat with *Bat Out of Hell III: The Monster Is Loose*. It didn't find much traction, but that's okay. You can't win 'em all.

As Meat Loaf himself famously said, "Two out of three ain't bad." And if you ask me, wooing two generations of listeners is a pretty great legacy for a singer to have.

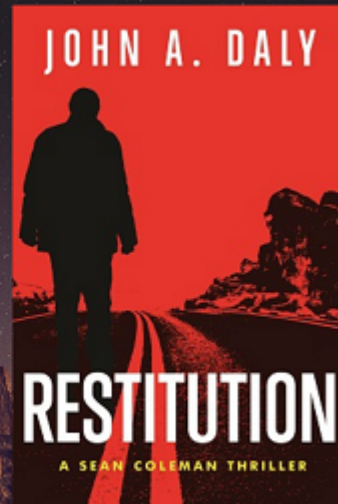
RIP Meat Loaf. I enjoyed your ride.

Sean Coleman is back in John A. Daly's upcoming thriller novel, "Restitution." [Click here](#) to pre-order.

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— Jim Geraghty
*senior political correspondent of
National Review and author of the
"Dangerous Clique" thriller series*



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