

EDITORIAL

The thrill of getting your first instrument is incomparable. After playing around on a harmonium for a while trying to learn Bangla music, one day when I was at my grandmother's house, my dad called to say our new instrument was here. It was an upright piano and all I could ask on the phone was what colour it was.

Over the next many years, my piano was my refuge. It was many years of trying to recreate my favourite movie and musical scores, playing each bar of a piece as my teacher punctiliously tapped her foot in the background going "one, two, three" in her Russian accent. It was also many years of rummaging her sheet music closet to grab the best pieces before the other students did to perform at the recital.

At night when I'd play my piano while everyone else slept, it was peaceful. Because the kind of dedication your instrument inspired is unlike anything else. It's not just learning which pedals to use when, but knowing which keys were slightly damaged and needed that extra push when playing, and diligently wiping your instrument clean when dust gathered on it.

-- Mrittika Anan Rahman, Subeditor, SHOUT



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PLAYWATCH

MOVIES



Why Old Barbie Movies are Superior

ZIBA MAHDI

It's established at this point that old Barbie movies are better, so there's no point in rehashing that argument. But in order to find out why exactly they were better, I went on a Barbie movie marathon this quarantine.

Just like Disney, Barbie films had some common themes (e.g. power of friendship, happily ever after, etc.), but that was where similarities ended. Each of the stories had their own unique themes. A magical paintbrush that let Rapunzel paint herself outside of the tower, a purple Pegasus, a beautiful peacock ball gown, charming ballet scenes, dreamy underwater aesthetic: stuff like this just stuck with you even after the movie was over.

The newer ones had storylines that sounded fun enough on paper, but came off as bland and forgettable. They seem dumbed down to a point where anyone can tell how the story will end after the first five minutes. Some of them borrowed themes from their older counterparts, making minor tweaks along the way, which just made it worse. There are some exceptions, though. *Princess Charm School* and *A Fashion Fairytale* turned out pretty decent, and I say this as an adult.

The picturesque environments are something you can't ignore when it comes to Barbie. One would think that newer animations would trope older ones, but that wasn't the case here. Most of the modern flicks look like any other animated movie nowadays, just in a flashy pink setting. Pre-2010 ones had something that was distinctly Barbie. The

illustrations were stunning and immediately transported you to the elegant sceneries. And the best part is that there was always a transformation with a sparkly dress involved.

Beautiful paraphernalia weren't the only thing setting these movies apart. Catchy songs and ethereal instrumentals were a staple of the earlier films. "Shine" from *Barbie in the 12 Dancing Princesses*, "Free" from *Barbie as the Princess & the Pauper*, "All for One" from *Barbie & the Three Musketeers* are still stuck in my head a decade later. The instrumentals worked as a nice complement to the magical backgrounds.

The villains and supporting characters (most of whom were cute animals) were pretty memorable too. Preminger even had his own villain anthem. Then there was Bibble, known for his adorable babbling, and Shiver, who made me want to keep a baby polar bear as a pet.

I'll admit, I'm slightly (read: very) biased here since the classics were a big part of my childhood, but Barbie's decreasing popularity, even among kids, solidifies my position somewhat. There was even a petition requesting Mattel to bring back the old version of the blonde icon. There have also been numerous rankings ranging from BuzzFeed to YouTube videos, and you'll rarely see a recent movie making it to the top. Of course, this won't stop me from watching anything with Barbie in the near future.

Ziba Mahdi is your resident pessimist. Cheer her up at www.facebook.com/ziba.mahdi.735