

Pottermania

By Rebecca Wyman

On June 30, 1997, the very first Harry Potter novel, “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s (Sorcerer’s) Stone” was released in the United States. Since then the series has exploded into a cultural landmark that stretches across all forms of entertainment. The original term ‘pottermania’ was coined around 1999 to explain the crazy fandom that surrounds the series.

This term has only grown more and more appropriate for the heights which the name as a whole have reached. Between eight feature films and seven of the most successful books of all time, Harry Potter will undoubtedly go down in history.

The books themselves have sold more than 400 million copies as a series, and have been translated into 67 different languages. The last four novels have consecutively set records for the fastest selling books in the world. Thesevenbooks have been adapted into six feature films (with two more on the way) that themselves have earned billions of dollars all on their own. In fact, all of the movies currently released are on the box-office top 100 highest grossing movies of all time.

Harry Potter has become so big that it inspired a whole new genre of music. “Wizard Rock” (also known as Wrock) has become a legitimate form of music with popular bands including: The Whomping Willows, Gred and Forge, The Remus Lupins, Justin Finch-Fletchley, The Giant Squidstravaganza, and the original Harry and the Potters.

This entire Wizard Rock movement began in 2000 with the aforementioned Harry and the Potters, who paved the way for all future Potter-inspired music. Since then, over 700 “Wrock” bands have been formed. How many other pop culture obsessions have brought about an entire *genre* of music? Not many if any at all.

Now with easy access to computers and the numerous ways to express one’s love for his or her favorite things on the internet, pottermania is becoming more and more relevant. Between youtube, fanfiction sites, and even itunes, the fans’ love for Harry Potter continues to spread.

On youtube the very popular Harry Potter inspired musical “A Very Potter Musical” has garnered over 1 million views. In fact, the popularity of the musical caused the University of Michigan-based production company, Starkid, to create a sequel adequately named, “A Very Potter Sequel.”

Harry Potter fanfiction has taken over the internet even more than other successful series such as Star Trek, Star Wars, and Lord of the Rings: all extremely successful movie and/or book series with similarly large fan bases.

On itunes, the Mugglecast and Pottercast podcasts continually appear with top rankings on the top 50 favorite podcasts list.

Pottermania has many other outlets as well. To date, three Harry Potter documentaries based purely on the rabid fans of the series have been created. Two books have also been released by experts on the subject of being a Harry Potter fan. The authors, Erin Pyne and Melissa Anelli, are both webmistresses for two very popular Harry Potter fansites.

Iconic landmark tours are all around the UK where you can explore and learn about different places where the films were made. Also many colleges promote Harry Potter themed events such as mock Quidditch games.

Whether or not you are personally a fan of Harry Potter, its cultural effects are undeniable. With the first part of the final movie coming out next week, and the second coming out next summer, some say that an era is coming to an end. However, if the fans have anything to say about it, the legend of Harry Potter will extend for generations.

About the Author

By Rebecca Wyman

Joanne Kathleen Rowling was born on July 31, 1965, in the British town of Chip-ping Soday. From a very young age, she loved to write and would often spend her time writing short stories for fun. However, as a young girl she rarely received encouragement. Her parents wanted her to pursue something other than writing, and so she enrolled in Exeter University where she received a French and Classics degree.

While waiting for a train from Manchester to London’s King’s Cross, Rowling had a “vision” of a young boy with black hair and bright green eyes. At the time she did not know that he was a wizard, but from that moment on she began jotting down notes about a story that would eventually become Harry Potter.

This dream coincided with one of the most challenging years in Rowling’s life: the year her mother died. Later in interviews, Rowling reflected about how the death of her mother affected Harry Potter. She decided that the theme of death that is quite prevalent in her novels came from the immense pain she felt over the loss of her mother. Without that life-changing event, Harry’s story would not have turned out the same way.

In 1992, Rowling married her first husband, and in 1993 gave birth to her first daughter, Jessica. After her marriage ended, however, Rowling was practically thrown out of her house and was forced to raise her daughter completely independently. During this extremely difficult time in her life, Rowling wrote whenever and wherever she could. She could often be found writing in bars, pubs, and cafés, sometimes even on the napkins they gave her.

An example of this is the now famous Elephant House, a gourmet tea and coffee house located in Edinburgh, Scotland. This tea shop is considered by many to be the birthplace of Harry Potter. Rowling often recalls her many hours in the shop writing her now legendary story. The coffee house is now a popular tourist attraction and a must-see in Scotland. After several years of struggling to finish her first novel, “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone,” and many rejections from publishing companies, Rowling’s first book was bought by Bloomsbury publishing for £2,500. The book was officially published on June 30, 1997.

Today, Rowling is the 13th wealthiest woman in Britain with an estimated 1 billion dollar net worth. Even now, when she hasn’t come out with a new book in four years, Rowling continues to be on the top 10 highest paid authors list for 2010.

In a recent interview with Oprah, J.K. Rowling expressed that despite her extreme success, she still worries about her financial security. She knows what it is like to have almost nothing. She is not wasteful with her money, her highest expense is the amount that she gives to various charities, particularly charities that focus on helping struggling mothers.

J.K. Rowling will go down in history for changing fantasy literature forever. Her immense success, and humble nature sets a precedent for authors everywhere. Her stories have changed countless lives, and her personal struggles have inspired people around the world.

Harry Potter

The Final Movie

By Amy Busch

The magic began with a novel published in London in 1997, then spread quickly to the United States in 1998. Three years later, in 2001, the world of Harry Potter was taken straight from the imagination of J. K. Rowling and placed on the big screen.

“Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone” was released on Nov. 4 in the U.K. and Nov. 16 in the U.S. It received numerous awards, and as of October of this year it is the eighth highest grossing film of all time. The New York Times bestseller turned feature-length film was a great success, and so the franchise began. Nine years, countless new actors, a new Dumbledore, three directors and five movies later, the seventh movie ends the series with a bang.

“Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows” has been split into two parts, one released on Nov. 19 and one to be released on July 15, 2011. Although the term “epic” is chronically overused by our generation, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows promises to be one of, if not the most, epic movies of our generation.

Rowling’s Harry Potter series is a worldwide phenomenon, and not without good reason. Although the movies have been less than pleasing to people who have read the books than those that have only seen the movies, each Harry Potter film never fails to send the fandom into a frenzy.

Let’s face it, Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, Emma Watson and many of the other supporting actors in the films did not start out as great actors. They started out as kids. “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone” is riddled with bad acting, as well as less advanced special effects. But fans have grown up along with the series as the trio perfected their on-screen performances and technology advanced to make Quidditch, Dobby, and all other magic what we see in the final films.

“Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows” is a testament to the growth of Harry Potter, and ends the series on with a final product that deserves a standing ovation. Fans will complain far less about parts of the books being cut from the movie, and be completely absorbed in the plot leading up to the “cliffhanger” ending after 146 minutes of straight action.

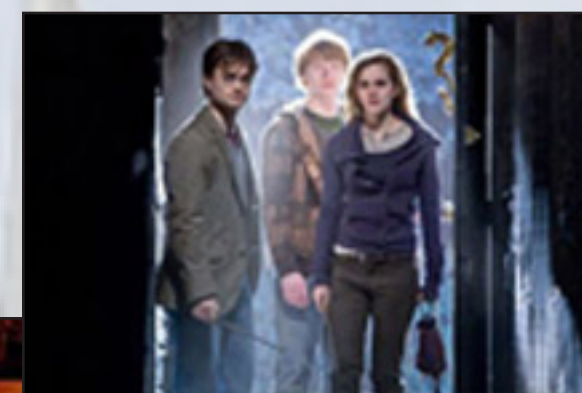


Photo courtesy of Jim Wyman

The “birthplace” of Harry Potter: The Elephant House located in Edinburgh, Scotland was a primary writing place for Rowling to write her early novels.



Harry and Ron finally get a haircut in “Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix,” (above) and this time Harry’s biggest foe is his own inner angst. This, added with the fact that Volemort has returned, makes for an extremely emotional and dramatic journey for our favorite three main characters.



All photos courtesy of mugglenet.com

The end is near in the fantastic finale for “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows” (above). For the first time the kids are out of Hogwarts and nowhere is safe for the Boy Who Lived. The golden trio are officially adults now and find that they are truly alone. No one can help them. With epic battle sequences and many intense moments, this movie hopefully will prove to be the greatest in the series.



Harry, Ron, and Hermione find themselves alone and out of the loop in the sixth movie, “Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince” (above). Harry needs to separate himself from his group of friends for the first time in order to find the dreaded Horcruxes that give Voldemort his power.



In “Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets” (below) we see the beginning of the kids growing up. Hermione’s hair is slightly less frizzy, and snazzy uniforms replace the ill-fitting sweaters that we saw in the first movie.



For the first time in “Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban” (above) we see the trio in *gasp* normal clothes. Each one of them are coming into their own, and with the dark, dramatic plotline we definitely see major growth both through their characters and the actors themselves.



Voldemort is back in “Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire,” (above) and the kids are all grown up. Instead of adorable pre-teens they are truly young adults. Facing not only the powers of evil, but also the opposite sex!

In the first movie: “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone” (above), the golden trio starts out as an adorable group of mischief makers. Between their thick sweaters and Hermione’s frizzy hair their innocence is undeniable.



Photo courtesy of cker.com

Wrock ‘Til You Drop

By Guest Writer Tori Dunlap

Yup: I’m guessing you saw the title and went “What the heck, doesn’t she know how to spell rock?” Well, I do indeed know how to spell “rock,” but this is an altogether different type of rock: WIZARD rock, a genre of music that is completely dedicated to Harry Potter and friends, wonderfully created for our musical pleasure by J.K. Rowling. Because five percent of all bands in the world are HP related, and we can’t include them all here, I will give you just a mouth-watering taste of the classic wrock bands that started it all.

First and foremost, all hail “Harry and the Potters,” brothers Paul and Joe out of Boston, Massachusetts, who started the band over ten years ago in their basement. They are the originators of wizard rock and have paved the way for other nerds to unleash their Potter love. With five albums and many EP’s, their songs like “Save Ginny Weasley (from the Basilisk)” and “In Which We Save Ron’s Life Part 8” have earned them world-wide fame. Having just wrapped up a European tour, their funny lyrics and awesome alto saxophone skills have brought fans of all ages. For more from them, check out their website: www.harryandthepotters.com

Next, “Draco and the Malfoys”: step-brothers Brad and Brian, who were inspired by the great Paul and Joe to start an opposing, Slytherin punk band. They have often toured with Paul and Joe, and are also known worldwide for their gloom, insulting outlook on life. Because they sing from Draco’s point of view, they often trash Harry’s popularity, Ron’s hand-me-down robes, and Hermione’s bushy hair. With hits like “Pansy (You’re the Girl of my Dreams)” and “Hippogriffs Deserve to Die,” they are definitely one to listen to. Their website is: www.evilwizardrock.com

Some more hilarious bands to check out are “The Moaning Myrtles,” an all-girl band with songs like “Prefects are Hot!”, “Gred and Forge,” headed by Jarrod, who writes amusingly from both Fred and George Weasley’s point of view, and “The Brothers Black,” a wrock band that sounds so good, you can barely even tell that they are wrock!

All bands listed (and more) can be found on iTunes. I highly recommend listening to “The Podcast of Awesome,” which gives you wrock commentary and plays great songs. They also reveal some fabulous up-and-coming bands. Happy Wrocking!

The HP Quiz

- 1) What is Ron’s middle name?
- 2) What is Fleur Delacour’s sister’s name?
- 3) Harry is a descendant of which of the Peverell brothers?
- 4) Who was the owner of Hufflepuff’s Cup before Voldemort turned it into a Horcrux?
- 5) What is Lee Jordan’s code name when he is on Potterwatch?
- 6) What is Luna Lovegood’s patronus?
- 7) What is Lockhart’s favorite color?
- 8) What is the name of Aragog the Spider’s wife?

- ANSWERS:
1: Billius
2: Gabrielle Delacour
3: Ignotius Peverell
4: Hepzibah Smith
5: River
6: Rabert
7: Lavender
8: Mogg



Photo courtesy of Amanda Lane

In “The Wizarding World of Harry Potter” visitors can travel along and check out the store Honeydukes!



Photo courtesy of Amanda Lane

Sophomore Madeleine Lane with juniors Amanda Lane and Mari Brown spend time with the “students” of Beauxbatons and Durmstrang at “The Wizarding World of Harry Potter” in Orlando, Florida.



Photo courtesy of mugglenet.com

The woman behind the magic of Harry Potter, author J.K. Rowling.

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter

By Ellie Sharrard

The books made our imaginations stretch to visualize Hogwarts. The movies made it come to life. But now, the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, a new theme park in Florida, allows us to experience this magical world for ourselves.

The state-of-the-art park cost \$200 million to build. Thus, the rides and attractions rock. The central feature is *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey*, showing the extent of this wizarding world to visitors. Other rides allow people to fly like a hippogriff on the aptly named ride, *The Flight of the Hippogriff* or experience the rage of dragons on the dueling roller coaster ride, *The Dragon Challenge*. Guests can also walk down the streets of Hogsmeade, eat Honeyduke’s chocolate, pose for pictures with students of Beauxbatons’ Academy of Magic, and taste the delectable drink of butterbeer, which is mentioned throughout the series.

Contrary to popular belief, Harry Potter does not wander around the park. “We did not meet Harry Potter. People seem to think it’s like Mickey Mouse where someone walks around in a giant suit. Harry was probably off searching for horcruxes or something, so he was not there,” says Mari Brown, one of the few Bellarmine students who have already visited Harry Potter World. Despite the lack of its central figure, the park still has high ratings, according to Mari. “Surprise: It was snowy in the middle of Florida! We waited in line for Olivander’s when it was 85 degrees and the shops had snow on them. Also, I have a wand. Harry Potter’s wand. So basically, people should go because the park is phenomenal!”

Florida sun, roller coasters, Harry Potter – what are you waiting for?