The Most Honest Essay about Bruce Springsteen You’ll ever Read

I write this in response to a lot of comments I scroll through every so often when there’s a new article on Springsteen. Quite frankly it’s all boring comments in two forms. “Bruce is the man” or “That’s enough already, I’m over it, go away.” The latter is stone cold proof that people seriously have no lives. If you’re sick of something, why even acknowledge something was written? Justin Bieber on the cover of Rolling Stone with the words “Bad Boy”… don’t care, it’s insulting to punk rockers everywhere this is a “bad boy.” I’m not going to go out of my way, log into a computer, scroll down, read a bunch of mindless comments with bad grammar just to say “go away dude etc, etc.”

I’m going to lay this out with honest, direct language on behalf of Springsteen fans everywhere. The reason he gets so much press is because he’s still putting out damn good music. The people who are “sick” of him rarely mention that his music is no good; they’re just tired of seeing his name all over music news. His records are still good. Period. Some fans prefer the older stuff, some like it all except for the solo stuff, and some like everything. But, for being in the music business for as long as he has; his stuff is still solid. Sure, some songs are better than others. When you throw it all in one basket, it’s honest, well written, well recorded, turn up the stereo, good quality pure Rock-n-Roll. There are not a lot of singers or bands that have that kind of streak. Music fads have come and gone, Springsteen has watched them all come and go, recording and paying tribute along the way. We as fans have so many forms to choose from when we want to put a Springsteen record on. Do we want classics, i.e., “Born to Run,” Are we in the mood for the folk, acoustic stuff i.e. “Nebraska” or “The Ghost of Tom Joad,” or maybe we want some newer stuff “The Rising” and after, or let’s get out the live stuff. Whatever we choose, it’s all good. In our heart of hearts, as fans, we actually have a valid, long selection from our favorite musician and lyricist. It’s as simple as that. Solid work. If it wasn’t solid, he wouldn’t have the press. There has never been a Bruce Springsteen “comeback.” The closest is when the E Street Band re-formed. I’m not counting that.

As fans, we do deal with the people who just flat out don’t like the man. (I’ve noticed, again, they rarely mention the music) I personally think they just don’t get it. For the first time I’m going to tell you what our opinion is on the people who don’t like him. We don’t care. That’s it. Actually, we’re kind of glad. There are enough of us already. We blood brothers and sisters have our common bond. We have enough people to relate to, so we’re good. It’s ours; that music belongs to us. Keep walking. We don’t owe you an explanation, we don’t need to explain our kinship, and we don’t care. We know what it means to us and that’s all that matters. Our opinions can’t be swayed, we’re too far in. Any negative comment that’s been typed proves to us that he’s still putting out solid music, and it obviously got the best of you.
The other negative thing we hear is Springsteen’s political affiliation. At a press conference New Jersey Governor Chris Christie was asked or told something like ‘Maybe it’s time to put the Bruce Springsteen stuff away.’ There have even been fans who said they were done with him because of politics. On behalf of die hard fans everywhere, our reaction is, are you out of your fucking mind? We mean that in the absolute literal sense. Are you simple minded people out of your damn minds? What does one thing have to do with another? The man thinks different then some of his fans politically and we’re supposed to throw a lifetime of memories and music away? Because of politics? Did I wake up in China? Different people can’t have different political views in America? I don’t agree with all of Mr. Springsteen’s political views but so what. What a world we live in where you have to nix out great Rock-N-Roll because of politics. So basically the same people who don’t like Springsteen or stopped liking Springsteen because of this reason have a lot of cleaning out to do. You better go through that DVD collection because if that’s how it is, your movie days are over. If someone you admire thinks different politically, get rid of ‘em? Well I’m here to tell you many die hard Springsteen fans couldn’t care less. Buddhist, democrat, right on this, left on that, what the hell do we care. It’s music, it’s our music. We’re smart enough to listen to the music. Not dice up everything in little political groups and ruin a great thing. Let me ask the fans who threw out his records because of politics one thing. The man was good enough to write those songs you loved, some of the greatest music you ever heard, he was worth the money you spent on the albums, but as an American he doesn’t have the right to vote different than you? Again, we die hard fans don’t have the time. We still can’t get over how great “Wrecking Ball” is.

Here’s another news flash we blood brothers and sisters been meaning to say and haven’t said yet. Quite frankly, he doesn’t owe you or us anything. That’s right, not a damn thing. You have a problem with him being rich, but writing songs about people like me (sorry, the poor, bad-luck ridden, stuck people). Well, get over it. No one cares. This argument lacks thought and is a clear case of poor, mismanaged thoughts. If you’re not a fan for this reason, what are you a fan of really? Local music only? Suddenly in your sinless, moral-filled lives you made it a rule that you will not be a fan of a song-writer who writes about the poor, who has money himself. Wow, no Johnny Cash either. Again, we don’t care. We feel bad that you have no Bruce Springsteen or Johnny Cash in your life. I mean, I’m poor. I mean dirt poor. Broken car, no savings account, child support, you name it. For the love of God, at least I have Johnny and Bruce.
The reason we’re fans, is because he’s a fan. Yeah, Springsteen knows music, he knows what’s out there, what was out there, and what speaks to him just like the way he speaks to us. He wrote “Hungry Heart” for the Ramones, covered the Clash in London, AC/DC in Australia, played on stage with the Dropkick Murphys, played with Mike Ness from Social Distortion, covered Cash, Lorde, and yes, the Ramones, gave a song to Patti Smith, praises Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, the list can go on and on and on. He’s a fan. He’s a die hard fan. We know it; we know he feels that music the same way we feel his. We know the best musicians are the most well rounded musicians. We’re honored as fans that our personal hero knows his way around a record store.

The main reason why we’re fans is the hardest to explain, but the easiest. We get it. We feel those words, from “Badlands” to “Johnny 99.” From “No Surrender” to “Death to my Hometown.” It’s all there, everything that we feel. It’s saved us and comforted us. It made us cry, rewind, play again, and smile. We went to bed feeling refreshed because our lives are better because of the music. It’s been there, break-ups, hook-ups, fired, hired, and retired. Our houses are clean and our drives shorter. “We learned more from a three minute record than we ever learned in school.” There isn’t a situation where this music fell short. We know the words; they’re embedded in our souls. We don’t care about politics, or money, or anything else. Springsteen is saying what needs to be said to us. This isn’t music to us. This is our lives.

Another reason we’re fans is because Tramps like us take care of our own. I recently found out how awesome we are. You see, I’ve never seen Springsteen live. I own all the DVDs, watched every YouTube video possible, but never had my own experience. When I found out he was coming to Pittsburgh I was more upset then happy. I knew I couldn’t afford it, especially for three of us (my girlfriend and my nine-year-old - yes, he’s a fan!) Then I stumbled across Bruce Funds. A community of Springsteen fans, who help other fans afford the show. Here we are: Three tickets to a Springsteen concert. We’re still in disbelief. Our excitement cannot be explained. We will remember this for the rest of our lives. Thanks to fellow fans who understand what it means to be a Springsteen fan. Anyone who doesn’t get that, quite frankly you don’t deserve the music.

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