

## Paul's Top Ten Movies of All Time

### **<11> Mighty Morphin Power Rangers : The Movie (1995)**

But that's Eleven! Oh yeah,.. so it is! However this one is included because *I worked on it*. In fact it was the first feature film of many that I did work on. Since I was once an intense fan of the show, it seems natural I should tick this one as a favourite although it is almost universally hated and panned by all my peers as being utter trash.

But seriously, and aside from the fact that almost every other frame of MMPR:TM features something I built (even myself at one point, I was the only crew member to actually be seen in the film), MMPR:TM is a favourite for me because it represents a *vitaly important milestone in the history of Australian Filmmaking*.

MMPR:TM will forever stand as evidence of a time when our film industry outgrew its farmyard past and burst in to the big city Hollywood scene. Literally hundreds of talented Australian film crew cut their first baby teeth on this film. Without MMPR:TM, there would have been *no Matrix, no Moulin Rouge, No Star Wars prequels, no Fury Road and no permanent film studio in Sydney*.

Power Rangers will forever stand as the wick that lit the fireworks under the Sydney film scene. For the following ten years, Australia (and Sydney in particular) led the march of "offshore Hollywood blockbusters." MMPR:TM is all about the crazy, zany and insane group of Australians that got together and just made it happen. An era which now sits in history and will never be repeated.

### **<10> Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory (1970)**

This film - all three hours of it – represents the very last of what I consider to be the "golden era" of Hollywood films. This film saw constant television repeats throughout the '70s and in to the '80s so it was constantly in front of me. This was well before the VCR freed us from the shackles of a nightly television schedule.

Each time, the film appeared fresh and the musical score excellent. The marvellous art direction throws up new things every time I see it. More than FORTY years later, this film still sees occasional screenings in my family home and has become a favourite I now share with my own kids.

It simply stands as the best of the very best of an era and is utterly enduring. It still looks and feels fresh. Willy Wonka stands as the best example of totally timeless film making. I swear it will still be watched 2000 years from now.

### **<9> The Return of Captain Invincible (1983)**

I was first exposed to this film in 1984 when it screened on television. Turns out there are several versions of it out there – the (latter) television one having a vastly superior soundtrack to the original. This film was a complete and utter commercial flop, grossing a mere \$55k from an investment of over \$7 million in 1981 dollars!!

MMPR:TM aside, Captain Invincible captures the complete insanity that was Australian Filmmaking in the 1970s. It's the Australian answer to Mel Brooks' Blazing Saddles. It will leave you hopelessly laughing in the aisles from the first frame to the very last. And just like MMPR:TM would do 20 years later, the production of "Captain Invincible" also became an immense catalyst to creativity among the still very embryonic Sydney movie making scene. It sucked in dozens of key people, who would then go on to create many of the most popular and award winning Australian films of the 1980s and 1990s.

Aside from all this, Sydney (circa 1980) looks positively amazing in this film. Gritty and serious, like a lost land just beyond dreamy memories of us who grew up in Sydney around that time.

“Captain Invincible” will always remain a window in to a time that existed as a flash in the pan of Australian culture. It’s as amazing to watch today as it was back in 1984. It will leave you declaring that : *“I truly, honestly can’t believe that they actually ever made this”*.

But they did make it.... And here is the evidence. Enjoy!

### **<8>            The Blues Brothers (1978)**

Of course this one would have to get into the list. It stands as an absolute film making classic and still (to my knowledge) holds the record for the most number of cars destroyed in the making of any feature film. The stunt department alone was larger than most film’s entire crew allotment.

I mean... they’re on a mission from God man.. What’s not to like?

And..then there’s that *Sound track*. And the fact that just about anyone who WAS anyone, back in the day, either WAS in it, or at least wanted to be.

Blues Brothers represents the best of the best of the very best. They just don’t make ’em like this anymore.

### **<7>            Metropolis (Moroder Version, 1984)**

Of course Fritz Lang’s silent film “Metropolis” has always stood as a classic dating from 1928, very much the original and first “big budget science fiction” film ever made.

However in the early 1980’s, Georgio Moroder and Freddie Mercury got hold of it. They found some more previously forgotten bits of it lying around in a back room of the National Library of Australia (of all places), then did the best they could to piece the vision back together as close to Fritz’s original that they could. They then added a completely original “early 1980’s” rock and roll score, featuring Queen and many other artists of the time. Queen’s 1983 music video for “Radio Gaga” was pieced together using pieces of “Metropolis,” which very much helped to thrust the Moroder project into the popular spotlight.

There have been many “more recent” rebirths and “original versions” of Metropolis released since 1984. But somehow it’s the Moroder version which in my opinion, is able to seamlessly and universally capture all of Fritz’s original emotion and infuse it with a positively amazing score that absolutely hits the target.

Coupled with Fritz’s original and incredible art direction and production design of the period, “Metropolis Moroder Version” is the ultimate steam punk movie of modern times and singularly introduced a new generation to an amazing film that would otherwise never have seen the light of day.

### **<6>            The Last Starfighter (1984)**

This kids film kind of slipped under the radar in it’s day, doing huge business in the video stores, after a lacklustre response at the Cinema. It features groundbreaking digital effects from the team that bought you “Tron”, the first application of digital effects for a space combat sequence.

But aside from the amazing design (this film still takes the cake for being my all time favourite for art department electrical effects,) the Last Starfighter takes a very ordinary teen from a

caravan park and thrusts him straight into an intergalactic war. The performances are great too, with just the right balance of comedy and action.

“The Last Starfighter” is just everything a 1980’s teen wished would happen to him.

I still dream of parking my star car the local mall and wait diligently for the day when I can park my Gun star in my back yard, just like Alex does at the end...

## <5>            **The Quiet Earth (1981)**

This little known New Zealand flick never, ever leaves my mind. Every time I watch it, it’s like the first time. A cross between scifi, comedy and post apocalyptic thriller. The Quiet Earth is an absolute masterpiece. Film making 101. It should be mandatory viewing for anyone looking to learn how to tell a story using pictures and sound but without words.

The most striking aspect of The Quiet Earth is how it handles the human condition so perfectly. We sit there and watch as the principal character has to come to terms with waking up into a world where all humans have vanished and he is the only one left. Human technology marches on around him, our electrical world slowly but steadily falling apart without it’s human masters to look after it.

But after a little while, we begin to discover how our world of purpose might fall apart when there’s nobody else around to share it with. Heaven quickly becomes hell, where the only true threat to human existence is loneliness.

The Quiet Earth will have you on the edge of your seat for the entire 90 minutes. Just remember to watch it in a quiet space, with no other distractions.

## <4>            **Dark City (1998)**

My friends might wax lyrical about how The Matrix trilogy was such a masterpiece concept.. exploring the whole “reality is an illusion” thing. However they forget about this Alex Proyas film that was made in Sydney just before we were introduced to Leo’s world.

In fact I almost worked on this film. I went through the interviews and met the people, but it just wasn’t my time.

Dark City is a film made in Sydney, that I wish I HAD worked on. In fact I DID end up working on it... The (full size) electric subway train to Shell Beach - was “mine” in a way and probably would not have existed had it not been for the success of one of my other life passions of saving Sydney’s red rattlers.

But all that aside, Dark City stands out because of the *utterly seamless joining of story and design*. Like the title says, the film is dark. It begins with a horrific murder and one might think it’s all downhill from there in a place where it is always night and the sun never rises.

However what we’re treated to.. is the opposite. As the film progresses, we’re given glimpses of light among the jigsaw puzzle. Good ultimately triumphs over evil and the ending is spectacular and optimistic.

Dark City is a film about how the human spirit can triumph through the darkest of worlds. It lays to bare the human condition and explores what might be possible if man became god. An utterly riveting watch, which remains fresh and new, every time I see it. The fact that I know about 40 of the crew on the credits is but a bonus.

### <3>            **Back to the Future Trilogy (1985)**

How could I not include this absolute classic quintessential 1980's film in my list? (actually it's three separate films so I'm cheating here.) It is the perfect moulding of scifi, sitcom, comedy, thriller, action and adventure. Truly something for everyone, which explains its popularity and longevity.

I need not go on about this film because literally every man and his dog has probably seen it dozens of times, it's likely the most viewed and repeated film in history. And it's small wonder, since the performances are absolutely electric, the story riveting and somehow it remains fresh and worthy of another watching every time it comes around.

As long as nobody ever tries to remake it. I'm told that will never happen all the while Robert Zemeckis is alive. That probably gives us another 20 years at least?

### <2>            **The Dish (2000)**

To this day I'll never truly understand WHY this has become one of my all time favourite films. I guess it's just the kind of historical, 20<sup>th</sup> century technical story that's likely to get my interest. However the film is so beautifully made and performed that I just can't resist watching it again and again.

Although this film is set in 1969 small town Aussieland, much of the world actually depicted in the film (even the music) is straight out of the early 1970's. It was a period in Australian history when time and technology virtually stood still. When for a few years at least, the old world seemed utterly reluctant to give itself up to the new guard knocking at the door.

Watching this film puts me back in a world I can remember as a child, and yet yearn so much to know more about. It is simply Australian film making at its absolute best and deserves its place at Number two on my list.

I will watch this film during my last day on Earth. And even then, I'll bet that it'll seem like I'm still watching it for the very first time.

### <1>            **Tron (1982)**

My first viewing of this film, was the first time I stepped out of the family home and went somewhere by myself. I found the cinema in Penrith and sat down on a weekday morning with about eight others in an otherwise empty cavernous suburban multiplex.

For the next 90 minutes, something happened. To this day I can't remember what happened, but I'm pretty sure it was utter creative and artistic overload. The storyline of course met my exact fantasies : a character swept away to another technological world and then watching them discover, react and become part of it. I could totally immerse myself in this concept. In every way, I became Flynn.

But what really blew my mind.. was the **artwork!** To this day, I consider Tron to be *the quintessential moving picture artwork of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. It's like visiting an art gallery full of famous pictures and artworks only in this version, you are zipping along the corridors looking at a complete masterpiece every 1/24<sup>th</sup> of a second.

The fact that the characters are somewhat costumed in white leotards adorned with artwork, just makes the entire film appear as a kind of fantastical dance or ballet. They have all this amazing art there and then they introduce the human form into it. Kaboom!

From the moment I walked back out of that cinema, I knew that I had just seen my favourite film and that no matter what happened or whatever came afterwards, it would always remain so.

The wait for the film release onto VHS seemed like an eternity, but as soon as it came out I grabbed my copy and over the following years, wore it out. Of course nowadays we have films on tap in HD from the digital realm whenever we want it.

And I still want it, nearly 40 years later.

No matter how many sequels, prequels or re-imaginings that are produced, either now or in the future, there was, is and will only ever be one "Tron".