

Floyd Mayweather and the Music of the Ring

Written by Kelsey McCarson

Wednesday, 11 September 2013 18:43



All things must pass.

So says the title track of a George Harrison triple album released November 27, 1970. It was his first solo effort after the breakup of the Beatles, and as it is with all noble music, the melodious chorus of the album's namesake moves its listeners towards one of life's deeper truths: everyone and everything must pass away, even the greatest of us.

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Harrison passed exactly thirty-one years and two days after the album's release. At just 58, Harrison succumbed to something called metastatic non-small cell lung cancer. He was cremated at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery, and his ashes were scattered by close family in the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers near Varanasi, India. Most famous as the lead guitarist for the Beatles, Harrison made a tremendous amount of money over his career. In fact, he still makes a tremendous amount of money today. Per a Forbes report, Harrison's estate took in over \$5.5 million dollars last year, over a decade since the popular musician's last breath. It's an impressive feat. But as time ebbs and flows, the earth revolves around the Sun year after year, the superfluous details of Harrison's life and death (how much money he made, the kinds of clothes he wore, etc.) seem to take on less and less importance. In fact, I'd venture to say no young music lover discovers George Harrison for the first time because of how much money he made last year, or at any time in his career at all. Rather, it's all about the music.

So shall it be for Floyd Mayweather Jr. someday, though he makes for us a much different kind of music. Mayweather was the greatest of his era. He still is. Don't let anyone tell you different. That's not to say he wasn't rivaled at one time or another by any of his contemporaries. He was. But the men who rivaled Mayweather's greatness at one time or another were more akin to the gods of ancient Greece who rivaled Zeus for the attention of mortals. Only one of them carried the thunderbolt.

Mayweather has been the best for years now. But Mayweather's been the kind of best you wish had been better. Sure, others had done this before him (Roy Jones, Jr. comes to mind). But Mayweather seemed to take that art to the next level: best because there was no one better, but not the best he could have been.

It's a shame.

Regardless, Mayweather has enjoyed a great career. It's been a privilege to watch it unfold. If great boxers are truly canonized in the annals of history as saints, as Joyce Carol Oates contends, he'll surely be among the very best of them.

And what he's doing in the sport of boxing today is simply astounding. Undefeated at age 36, Mayweather will make more money fighting Canelo Alvarez this Saturday night than every single boxing writer and historian will make in his or her lifetime combined. We are but mere

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mortals after all, and he is Zeus.

Maybe that's too easy of an accomplishment. Let's put it this way. Mayweather will make more money fighting Canelo Alvarez for 36 minutes, or less, on Saturday than just about any other person on the planet could make doing what he or she is best at in the same amount of time. Wow!

That's the power of boxing by the way. Don't let anyone tell you boxing is dead. It isn't, and it never will be.

And good for Floyd. He wants to be admired, and we can all admire him for this. He craves it. He won't tell you, but it's what keeps him working as hard as he does every night in the gym. It's what drives him on fight night, too. It spurs him to adapt to whatever is in front of him when the bell rings, and it's what keeps him upright and punching on the rare occasion someone lands something flush. In a way, all great men are this way.

Of course, when Mayweather takes on Alvarez this Saturday, none of this superfluous stuff will matter. Oh, it seems to matter now, but it won't when the bell rings. And it will matter even less in 10 years time. Oh sure, it's part of the overall narrative of his life, a grain of sand on the beach of his legacy. But when the blood and spit starts flying on fight night, something like how much money one stands to gain after all the goons and goblins get their share of the split falls far by the wayside. What happens inside the ring is less about the abstract future-past, and more about the immediate present.

Mayweather's immediate present will be trading leather with a man physically larger than him and almost equally fast. In fact, Alvarez will be physically larger than any of the men Mayweather has beaten in his 44 previous outings. And Alvarez isn't just a brutish lug either. He's a sweet scientist. He's quick, smart and a competent boxer, and at just 23 years of age, he isn't lacking experience in the least. Alvarez has been fighting professionally since he was just 15 years old. He's already logged 43 professional prizefights on his ledger, a draw its only blemish.

And so in that moment this Saturday night, the one unlike any other in professional sports, after the pomp and circumstance, the parade of nations and flags, the anthems sung aloud while

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prayers are recited in silence. After litanies of achievements are read aloud by the deep voiced laud giver, the obligatory reading of rights is fulfilled by the referee, the final touch of gloves ends the final useless staredown. After the ring clears of all the yes-men, wannabe beauty queens, hardnosed handlers and just-happy-to-be-theres.

After all of these things, remember that none of it really matters. It isn't really about the money, the entourages, the glitz or the glamour. It isn't about who can buy who or which celebrity endorses which fighter before the fight.

For inside the ring on fight night, only two men remain, still in their corners, eyes beaming with discriminate pride. A lone figure stands between them, a referee with arms held to each side. It is all a mystery now, but will soon be revealed. The mirror shall not remain dark long. He is holding the fury of hell at bay, the clashing of fists, the bone and the blood and the gore of the fight game, holding it until he beckons to the timekeeper to begin the most beautiful song in all of sports. It starts with the sound of a bell, that singular reverberation of beginnings that often hearkens something or someone's end. It is a Siren's song, a church bell marking the time, a final moment of calm, a funeral, a wedding, a feast.

It is the first note in the music of the ring, and that is what really matters. When time ebbs and flows away from us, when bright-eyed, strong-jawed novices become long-toothed, bald-headed experts, when our mothers and fathers have made their way back into the ground, when what's new is something old again and time has caught up to us faster than we ever imagined, we will not tell them of Floyd Mayweather's millions or the company he kept or what he did or said. We will tell them of the music he made and little more.

Except, perhaps, of the night it ended.

[Comment on this article](#)

kidcanvas says:

"Mayweather has been the best for years now. But Mayweather's been the kind of best you wish had been better. Sure, others had done this before him (Roy Jones, Jr. comes to mind). But Mayweather seemed to take that art to the next level: best because there was no one better, but not the best he could have been." ~Written by Kelsey McCarson, Sweet Science~

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..... that statement has been my bone to pick with mayweather for years... he had more talent than he used , took the easy route to the 0 and could of been aso much better and gave us so many more great moments with great fighters , fighting them at their best not when they were done.... he cant re do that and in my mind their will always be an asterisk next his name when i think or discuss his career

Radam G says:

That asterisk will be forgotten in a tick of a generation. The fighters are criticized while they are in their primes and a tick passed, and ev'ybodee and dey momma spit how yesteryears pugs coulda and woulda whupped every nowadays fighters. Ninety-five of fans and fanfaronades are bytchers, complainers and hypocrites until a specific fighter's days are over, then they say he was the GOAT and then they start the same jive talking with the new, latest leading whup@\$\$ and big-money maker. Holla!

brownbomber says:

[QUOTE=Radam G;36499]That asterisk will be forgotten in a tick of a generation. The fighters are criticized while they are in their primes and a tick passed, and ev'ybodee and dey momma spit how yesteryears pugs coulda and woulda whupped every nowadays fighters. Ninety-five of fans and fanfaronades are bytchers, complainers and hypocrites until a specific fighter's days are over, then they say he was the GOAT and then they start the same jive talking with the new, latest leading whup@\$\$ and big-money maker. Holla![/QUOTE]
Great point!

amayseng says:

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it wont be forgotten among true fans..

look how thorough you are at explaining and teaching us all the other all time greats picked and ducked and this and that.

you hear more about floyd ducking than anyone...

leon30001 says:

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Agreed! Ducked Manny, most egregiously, and others besides. Just a fact, really. Shame! Not therefore a beyond-all-doubt pick as best of his generation in my opinion.

brownbomber says:

[QUOTE=amayseng;36504]it wont be forgotten among true fans..

look how thorough you are at explaining and teaching us all the other all time greats picked and ducked and this and that.

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Na boss that's the nature of this business

Radam G says:

True fans of nowadays won't count in 50 or 60 years. The prime people, in people and da it people make the rules of the day. And in 2063, the above type of people -- that I mentioned -- of those days will be about Money May like so many living people now are about Sugar Ray. That will be Sugar Ray Robinson. Everybody and dey momma who didn't see him in life and in living color spit how great his cherry-picking, ducking opponent arse was. The same will happen for Money May.

And I will be there telling the TRUTH about Money May like 92-year-old ex-boxer Mr. Ackerson is telling about Sugar Ray Robinson. And my old-arse 113-year-old Tio Mamoy tells about everybody and dey momma and crosseyed one-night stand.

Tio Mamoy is in training again for a comeback as the oldest boxing in history. Hehehe! So he think. [Old dude is gettin' B-Hoppy. He loves himself so Bernard Hopkins.] Tio Mamoy says that he is going to catch da wave to China on his rowboat and "kayo som' muthapucka on Da Manny's undercard." Hahaha!

I've keep you guys info. I'm going to get him drunk on tuba -- Pinoy homemade coconut wine -- so he doze off and miss the travel date to get to Macao in time on his dingy rowboat. Hehehe!

I gotta catch a prelim bout. See ya! I wouldn't wanna be ya! Holla!Holla!

I guess people are forgiving of the past if you were even an iota of great doing your days.

brownsugar says:

Mayweather loses tonight... He'll be gone but not forgotten

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Hop says:

Agree more with KidCanvas and Amayseng than the others in this thread (though not entirely). Bottom line is that Floyd is both blamed too much by his detractors and also overly praised by his worshipers. In my opinion the true summary of FM is that 1) he is without question an ATG, but also that 2) he could've/should've been even greater. I disagree with those who say that the failure of the Mayweather-Pacquiao fight to come off will not matter to his legacy, and agree that to true, insightful boxing fans it always will (and should). [U]Please[/U] [U]note[/U]: I am not even blaming Floyd entirely or even mostly for the fight not happening. [B]I simply don't know[/B] who is truly to blame. All I am saying is that it will always rank as one of the greatest boxing matches [U]nEVER[/U].

dino da vinci says:

[QUOTE=kidcanvas;36494]"Mayweather has been the best for years now. But Mayweather's been the kind of best you wish had been better. Sure, others had done this before him (Roy Jones, Jr. comes to mind). But Mayweather seemed to take that art to the next level: best because there was no one better, but not the best he could have been." ~Written by Kelsey McCarson,Sweet Science~

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Yes, this topic surfaces from time to time. The great fighter chooses not to fight the very best possible opponent, then upon beating an ordinary or even pretty good fighter, pounds their chest and declares themselves amongst the best to ever do it. And, had they fought the very best, may have won anyway. But we can't credit what might of happened. We actually grade you on what you actually did versus the fellow monster. Jones, jr. Was guilty of this. Floyd as well. The term 'cemented' comes into play here. Yes, Floyd is an all-time great. Could he have gotten himself higher on the All-Time Great List? Yes. But you can't undo what you chose not to do, when you had the chance to do it. Salvador Sanchez didn't have to fight Wilfredo Gomez, but chose to and in the course of doing so, cemented his legacy. About three years ago Floyd could have fought Manny and he would have been favored to win. Doesn't mean he would have. I felt he would have won, but I also thought Lucas was going to win last night and Danny Garcia got the nod. Crazy things have been known to happen once the bell rings. But I could argue Floyd much higher, even with losses, as I do with De La Hoya (who always desired to fight the best) if Floyd fought the most worthy. That said, enjoy him while he's on center stage, as he is special, and let's wait for the next great fighter who wants to fight everybody.

Hop says:

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Really good post, Da Vinci.

dino da vinci says:

Thank you Sir.

dino da vinci says:

Thank you Sir.

Juan Francisco Garza says:

Great stuff by the always brilliant Kelsey McCarson. this is what writing is all about. Thank You. cheers.