

CHAPTER II

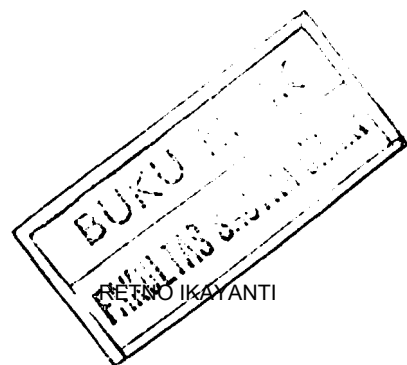
GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT OF THE STUDY

2.1 Bon Jovi

For many bands that became popular in the facile, videocentric late '80s, Bon Jovi has been a case of hair today, gone tomorrow. Not so for Bon Jovi, the New Jersey based-group that helped put pop-metal on the map, but that somehow did not fade away, despite constant drubbing by critics and the onset of grunge in the '90s. Indeed, the last laugh may belong to the group's frontman, Jon Bon Jovi, who has earned praise for his acting, of all things, appearing on such films as *The Leading Man* and *U571*.

The singer was born John Francis Bongiovi March 2, 1962, in Sayerville, New Jersey. A poor student, he spent much of the adolescence playing in local bands with friend David Rashbaum. His cousin Tony Bongiovi owned the Power Station, a prominent New York recording studio, and hired the aspiring singer as a janitor. Sweeping floors provided into world of music, though, and soon he was recording demos with the likes of rocker Aldo Nova and members of Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band.

One of Bongiovi's songs, *Runaway*, found a spot on New Jersey radio, and he formed a band to hit the club circuit. It featured Rashbaum on keyboards, guitarist Dave Sabo, bassist Alec John Such, and drummer Hector 'Tico' Torres. Mercury Records won a bidding war for the group in 1983, though some controversy still surrounds the signing—according to some accounts, Bongiovi himself was the only one signed, with the rest of the band being regarded as little more than employees.



The name of the group became Bon Jovi, which clearly thrust the singer out front, also removing any ethnic traces from his name. John Bongiovi became Jon Bon Jovi, and in a similar spirit, Rashbaum became David Bryan. Before the band actually began recording, guitarist Richi Sambora replaced Dave Sabo.

The album *Bon Jovi* was released in 1984, and *Runaway* became a national hit, just making it into the Top 40 at No. 39, while *She Don't Know Me* made it as far as No. 48. With a degree of success came headaches, though, too—Bon Jovi's cousin Tony came calling with a lawsuit, he was being cut out of the band's largesse despite having helped develop their sound. Though Bon Jovi denied the claim, they chose to settle out of court rather than go through protracted litigation.

The album *7800 Degrees Fahrenheit* followed in 1985 but produced no major hits. Only *Lonely* made it to No. 54, while *In and Out of Love* charted at No. 69. Should anyone doubt the effect of marketing research on rock and roll, they need to look no further than what happened next. After bringing the hit-making songwriter Desmond Child (Aerosmith, KISS, Cher), the band played tapes of its new songs for some New Jersey Teens, basing the song selection and even the running order of tunes for 1986's *Slippery When Wet* on their opinions.

Three additional factors led to that album's breakthrough success. The first was the material, some of it co-written by Child, including *You Give Love A Bad Name* (a No. 1 hit), *Livin' On A Prayer* (also No. 1), *Wanted Dead Or Alive* (No. 7); the immense impact of videos also boosted the album, as women in particular found Bon Jovi's chiseled look and feathery hair irresistible. A third factor was *Slippery's* album cover, which was switched from the standard metal cliché of a woman in a wet T-shirt to the

inoffensive image of the title sketched out on a wet surface. Bon Jovi became a metal band for the whole family, and *Slippery When Wet* went on to sell 9 million copies.

Formula took over for the band's next release, *New Jersey*, which sounded a lot like its predecessor but managed to sell 5 million copies nonetheless. The album spawned no less than five Top 10 singles: *Bad Medicine* (No. 1), *Born To Be My Baby* (No. 3), *I'll Be There For You* (No. 1), *Lay Your Hands On Me* (No. 7), and *Living In Sin* (No. 9).

Following the record's release, the group stayed on the road for 18 months, even taking a trip to the Soviet Union. In the middle of the tour, the band members took time off to back Cher, who was dating Sambora at the time, on her 1989 album, *Heart of Stone*. After all the roadwork, the band went on hiatus.

Jon Bon Jovi went solo for the 1990 album *Blaze of Glory*, featuring songs from the soundtrack of *Young Guns II*, a film on which Bon Jovi had his blink-and-you'll-miss-him big-screen debut. The album sported guest shots by the likes of Elton John, Little Richard, Jeff Beck, and his old pals Aldo Nova; spawned the No. 1 title track, as well as *Miracle* (No. 12); and earned the singer Grammy and Academy Award nominations.

The band reunited in 1992 for *Keep The Faith*, which was met with less enthusiasm than its predecessors but did manage to spin off a couple of hits in the title track (No. 27), *Bed of Roses* (No. 10), and *In These Arms* (No. 27). The following year saw the release of *Cross Road*, a greatest hits collection that included two new songs, one of which, *Always*, went as far as No. 4. Bassist Such left the band, which remained a quartet for 1995's *These Days*. That album featured the No. 14 hit *This Ain't A Love Song*.

In the last half decade of the millennium, Jon Bon Jovi's attention turned increasingly to acting. He appeared in films such as *Moonlight and Valentino* in 1995 and *The Leading Man* a year later. In 1997, when his solo album *Destination Anywhere* was released, it was accompanied by a long-form video starring Bon Jovi and Demi Moore. He appeared in *Row Your Boat*, *Little City*, *No Looking Back*, and *Homegrown*, all released in 1998. The year 2000 saw him show up in *U571*, *Pay It Forward*, and an episode of HBO's *Sex and the City*.

Other band members have also pursued solo careers. Bryan released *Neitherworld* in 1992 and *On a Full Moon* in 1995. Sambora's solo discs, *Stranger in This Town* and *Undiscovered Soul* came out in 1991 and 1998 respectively. The band members reunited once more to record the Single *Real Life* for the soundtrack of EDTV in 1999. Their most recent album, *Crush*, was released in June 13, 2000.

2.2 Bon Jovi's Seventh Album *These Days*

In 1995, with one-time contemporaries Poison And Whitesnake now defunct, distant memories, and alternative bands seemingly dominating the rock scene, it was somewhat surprising Bon Jovi still exists. That the band is thriving today strongly suggest their huge appeal lies somewhere beyond the vision of most critics, presumably in the bedrooms of teenage girls across America. Bon Jovi's formula is in fact little different than Aerosmith's, yet a distinct and frankly unfair credibility gap exists between the two. Both make albums packed with soaring mid-tempo rockers and heartfelt power ballads. Yet on the strength of past achievements, Aerosmith is dubbed legendary, despite recent

reliance on “song doctors” (outside songwriters who pen the hits) and Alicia Silverstone videos to deliver the goods.

Bon Jovi does it more organically. Lead singer Jon Bon Jovi and guitarist Richie Sambora write the songs, while the former’s Jersey Shore roots provide enough of the heart and soul seen in compatriots Bruce Springsteen and Southside Johnny to give him a genuine if heightened passion. In a world where rock stars marry supermodels, here is a gut hitched to his high school sweetheart. Jon Bon Jovi’s sentiment is authentic; the problem is he is not terribly creative when it comes to expressing his feelings. The band’s seventh album, *These Days*, abounds with cliché like “she came looking for some shelter with a suitcase full of dreams” and “life’s a roller coaster”. The album opening, *Hey God*, is yet another “how can the Almighty allow such evil on earth?” song, expressed before and better by XTC and a host of others.

Still, *These Days* shows improvement. *Lie to Me* is a pretty ballad, which, a few trite phrases aside, offers an unexpected take on the struggles of love along with a touch of Beatles influence. Sambora shines acoustically on the album’s last track, *Diamond Ring*. In spite of long and somewhat ambitious songs, the band members do not embarrass themselves, keeping the arena-rock gestures to a minimum. And Jon Bon Jovi deserves credit as a first-rate rock ‘n’ roll voice. He is not a screamer but he reaches for notes on a song like *Hearts Breaking Even* with conviction and confidence. Fans are going to buy *These Days* regardless of reviews. The album establishes Bon Jovi as a credible and deserving band making the most of what they know and what they want.

2.2.1 *These Days*

These Days is the fourth song of Bon Jovi's seventh album *These Days*. The album has the same title as the song because the title is taken from the song. *These Days* is written by the lead vocal of the band, that is Jon Bon Jovi, and Richie Sambora. It is also sung by Jon Bon Jovi and Richie Sambora as the background vocal, who is also the band's guitarist.

These Days consists of some sections of verses, a bridge—a connection passage between two sections of a composition— and a refrain part that is often repeated three times or more. As Erik Flannigan states in his review, *These Days* is filled with cliché that is phrase or idea which is used so often that it has become stale or meaningless. Yet, it is possible that the singer (or songwriter) uses some phrases or idea quite often in order to emphasis his message.

At first, a slow theme played by Sambora's acoustic guitar introduces the opening section of *These Days*. Then, the marking rhythm is getting faster when it reaches the refrain part along with the singer's rock 'n' roll voice.

In general, *These Days* talks about anything that the singer (or songwriter) has experienced lately, about any thing or any person that the singer (or songwriter) has met. It talks about the singer's (or songwriter's) view point towards the world and anything that exists or happen in it. In *These Days*, the singer (or songwriter) also wants to remind his listener that everything that has happened in the past, though not necessarily stemming from the same problem, will probably happen in the future.

2.2.2 *(It's Hard) Letting You Go*

The song *(It's Hard) Letting You Go* is the eighth song of Bon Jovi's seventh album *These Days*. It is also the first song of side B. The song is written and sung by the lead vocal of the band, that is Jon Bon Jovi.

(It's Hard) Letting You Go consists of some sections of verses, a bridge, and refrain that is repeated for four times. If it is compared to *These Days*, *(It's Hard) Letting You Go* is much shorter. But, both are meaningful.

(It's Hard) Letting You Go has slower beat and rhythm than *These Days*. It is also a ballad because it is simple and has short verses. It tells a story that has been experienced by the singer (or songwriter), or other members of the band, or we ourselves have experienced it, too. From the title of the song, we have already known that the song is telling us about the singer's (or songwriter's) feeling when he broke up with his girl that he greatly loved. He wants to tell his listener that it is not that easy to forget anything or anyone who means so much to us.

2.3 Discography

No. of Album	Year	Title
1 st	1984	Bon Jovi
2 nd	1985	7800 Degrees Fahrenheit
3 rd	1986	Slippery When Wet
4 th	1987	New Jersey
5 th	1992	Keep The Faith
6 th	1993	Cross Road
7 th	1995	These Days
8 th	2000	Crush

CHAPTER III

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS