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The Pioneers



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The Pioneers

Pioneers come in all shapes and sizes, with different, often difficult backgrounds. Some get the proper recognition, some are undervalued and some just get forgotten.

In this edition of engage, we briefly look at a few of our favourite pioneers who deserve their stories being told.



The spaceman

We live in very safety first times, with so much knowledge about our world. So it is worth pausing to think about the bravery to go into space, alone, where no man had ever gone.

Not only that; but the craft for the flight was deemed suitable after a test journey that used only a life size dummy and a dog called Zvezdochka. Furthermore, the astronaut Yuri Gagarin was only 27!

On April 12, 1961 Yuri Gagarin became the first human to orbit Earth. Vostok 1 circled Earth at a speed of 17,000 mph. The flight lasted 108 minutes. He travelled around the Earth once, reaching a maximum height of 203 miles. Gagarin re-entered Earth's atmosphere, managing to maintain consciousness as he experienced forces up to eight times the pull of gravity during his descent.

Gagarin became an instant national and international hero. In 1968, he died after a crash on a routine testing flight. His ashes were placed around the Kremlin wall. A crater on the far side of the Moon is named for Yuri Gagarin.

The innovator

Jimmy Iovine (born 1953) is an American record producer, but more recognised as a legendary entrepreneur, marketer and talent spotter.

At 19, he was a college dropout and started work cleaning a recording studio. In the early 1970s, Iovine became a recording engineer and through his energy, dedication and drive, started working with John Lennon, Bruce Springsteen, Patti Smith, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, U2, Stevie Nicks, Dire Straits, and The Pretenders.

In 1990, Iovine co-founded Interscope Records, and was responsible for providing distribution, initial funding and financial oversight for the highly successful Death Row Records hip-hop label in the 1990s. Death Row grew with massive success in the 2000s with artists like Dr Dre, Eminem and 50 Cent.

In 2008, Iovine teamed up with Dr. Dre to co-found Beats By Dr. Dre, a headphones brand. The company had captured 20% share of the headphones industry by within four years.

Seeing the curve to music streaming in 2013, Iovine announced the expansion of the Beats brand into the online digital music world. In 2014, Apple Inc. acquired Beats Electronics for \$3 billion. Iovine was hired by Apple where he helped in the creation of Apple Music. From a studio cleaner, Iovine is now worth over \$930m.



The writer

Joan Lindsay's mystery novel, Picnic at Hanging Rock (1967) is an eerie and unsettling tale that chimes with modern Nordic noir, but it is set in repressed Victorian-era Australia

In 1975, Peter Weir produced the extraordinary *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. His cinematic adaptation of the beguiling mystery novel is a gorgeously photographed, unsettling, eerie tale that remains potent today. Last year, a new television version was also released.

The story is simple: repressed Victorian schoolgirls from Appleyard College visit Hanging Rock, a volcanic formation near Mount Macedon on St Valentine's Day in 1900. Three of the girls and one of their teachers go missing in unusual circumstances, kicking off an enticing mystery that is never satisfactorily solved.

It echoes with modern Nordic noir. We have a familiar combination of missing children, dark secrets and the fatal power of the elemental. Fittingly for a novel that came to its author in a dream, it remains tantalisingly beyond our grasp. *Hanging Rock* doesn't give up its secrets easily.



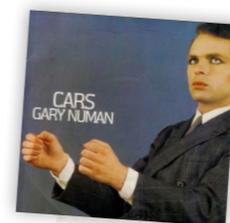
The musician

His influence has been proclaimed by artists ranging from Kanye West, Basement Jaxx, Nine Inch Nails, Depeche Mode, Prince to Foo Fighters whilst hip-hop producers have sampled his pioneering electronic experiments.

Gary Numan's innovation was in stark contrast to the music at the time. In the late 70s with the arrival of punk, everything was geared to angry, guitar bands. Synthesiser bands had started to form in the north of England, such as the Human League and OMD, but out of nowhere, London's Gary Numan alien persona made a big impact visually and as a creative force

However, the music press savaged him and the genre of synth music (that it wasn't genuine or creative). Numan opened the door but the barrage of constant abuse took its toll on the extremely shy Numan.

Time has been kinder and in 2017 he received an Ivor Novello Award, the Inspiration Award, from the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers, and Authors. He has a large cult following and today has gained the admiration and respect from his peers for his innovations.



The mathematician

NASA in the 1950s was dominated by white men, but some talented women were able to rise through the ranks. Perhaps the best-known of these pioneering women is Katherine Johnson.

Johnson joined a pool of women who were essentially working as human computers, or as she described it, "computers with skirts". In accordance with state racial segregation laws, Johnson and the other African-American employees were forced to work, eat, and use the restroom separately to their white colleagues.

Her talent for calculating projectories, launch windows, and emergency return paths for spacecrafts saw her become one of the most highly regarded people in her field. When digital computers were used for the first time by NASA to calculate John Glenn's orbit around Earth, he refused to fly until Johnson had verified the calculations.

In 2015 the then 96-year-old was awarded the Presidential Medal Of Freedom by Barack Obama. The achievements of Johnson and the other women of the computing pool were celebrated in the 2016 movie *Hidden Figures*.