

Astonishing Tales 1970-1976: A Nostalgic Journey into the Marvelous World of Ben Stevens

Astonishing Tales, a seminal Marvel Comics anthology series that ran from 1970 to 1976, served as a breeding ground for some of the most iconic and enduring characters in comic book history. Among the many talented artists who graced the pages of Astonishing Tales, Ben Stevens stands out as a visionary whose bold and dynamic style left an indelible mark on the Marvel Universe.



Astonishing Tales (1970-1976) #13 by Ben Stevens

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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This article delves into the remarkable career of Ben Stevens, focusing on his groundbreaking contributions to Astonishing Tales. Through in-depth analysis of his artwork, we will explore the evolution of his unique style and the lasting impact he had on the Marvel landscape.

Early Beginnings

Ben Stevens began his career in comics in the early 1960s, working on a variety of titles for DC Comics and Charlton Comics. His early work

showcased a raw talent for storytelling and a keen eye for detail, but it was not until he joined Marvel Comics in 1969 that his career truly took flight.

Stevens' first major assignment at Marvel was on the popular jungle adventure series Ka-Zar. His dynamic pencils and lush backgrounds brought the untamed world of the Savage Land to life, capturing the imagination of readers worldwide. Stevens' collaboration with writer Gerry Conway on Ka-Zar established him as a rising star in the industry.

Astonishing Tales: A Creative Playground

In 1970, Marvel launched Astonishing Tales, an anthology series that provided a platform for emerging artists and writers to showcase their work. Stevens was a regular contributor to the series, crafting memorable stories featuring a diverse cast of characters, including Ka-Zar, Shanna the She-Devil, Werewolf by Night, Man-Thing, and Dracula.

Stevens' artwork in Astonishing Tales was a revelation. His bold and expressive linework, combined with his innovative use of panel layouts and perspectives, created a dynamic and immersive reading experience. Stevens' ability to capture the essence of each character, from the noble Ka-Zar to the tormented Werewolf by Night, demonstrated his remarkable versatility as an artist.

Landmark Issues

Among the many memorable issues of Astonishing Tales illustrated by Ben Stevens, several stand out as true landmarks in Marvel Comics history.

- **Astonishing Tales #12:** The first appearance of Moon Knight, a complex and enigmatic vigilante created by Doug Moench and Don

Perlin. Stevens' pencils brought Moon Knight's sleek costume and razor-sharp crescent darts to life, establishing the character as a fan favorite.

- **Astonishing Tales #15:** The of Howard the Duck, a satirical talking duck from another dimension. Stevens' whimsical artwork perfectly captured the character's irreverent humor and endearing charm.
- **Astonishing Tales #23:** The first issue of a groundbreaking Werewolf by Night solo series, written by Gerry Conway and drawn by Mike Ploog. Stevens contributed a stunning cover that perfectly encapsulated the character's tragic destiny.

Collaborations with Jack Kirby

One of the most significant aspects of Ben Stevens' time on Astonishing Tales was his close collaboration with comic book legend Jack Kirby. Kirby, the co-creator of the Fantastic Four, the X-Men, and countless other iconic Marvel characters, provided breakdowns for many of the stories Stevens illustrated.

Kirby's dynamic layouts and grand cosmic themes served as a perfect complement to Stevens' detailed artwork. Together, they crafted some of the most visually stunning and memorable stories in Marvel Comics history.

Legacy and Impact

Ben Stevens' contributions to Astonishing Tales left a lasting legacy on the Marvel Universe. His bold and dynamic style influenced generations of artists, and his iconic characters continue to entertain and inspire readers to this day.

Stevens' work on *Astonishing Tales* played a pivotal role in defining the Marvel brand in the 1970s. His unforgettable artwork helped establish the series as a showcase for innovation and creativity, and cemented its place in the annals of comic book history.

Astonishing Tales 1970-1976 stands as a testament to the extraordinary talent of Ben Stevens. Through his groundbreaking contributions to the series, he left an indelible mark on the Marvel Universe and shaped the landscape of comic books forever. His bold and imaginative artwork continues to inspire and delight readers, ensuring that the legacy of *Astonishing Tales* will live on for generations to come.

Additional Resources

- [Ben Stevens on Marvel Database](#)
- [Ben Stevens on Comics.org](#)
- [Remembering Ben Stevens on Comic Vine](#)

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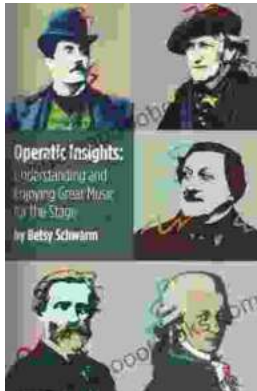
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