

WOBEGONE TYPEFACE FAMILY

OTT OPENTYPE FONT

Wobegone

• CONTEMPORARY GOTHIC TYPEFACE FAMILY •

TYPOGAMA TYPE FOUNDRY

© TYPOGAMA - DESIGNED BY MICHAEL PARSON

Introduction

The story of this latest typeface, Wobegone, was one of moving directions as the project evolved. Initially planned as a simple, dark, gothic typeface for titles and logos, it evolved into a much larger and more complex project.

It all started with a personal interest in the blackletter letter forms, the first typographic style to be widely employed at the introduction of printing. This style is heavily influenced by its calligraphic roots and the letters still feature quirks and shapes that are specific to the scribes pen. It remains a unique visual style, gothic letters seem to capture readers attention much more than the more widely read serif or sans serif styles. For many generations, it also represented a sort of visual transgression, undoubtedly influenced by its use by the Third Reich in Germany, that meant that it was a style to be handled with care and was rarely used aside from beers and heavy metal logos.

But over the past twenty years, gothic typefaces have gone from the margins of visual communication to a more prominent use, for example by pop stars, tv shows or music festivals. The unique style, seen as an attack on mainstream visuals, has simply become another type of letter form to be explored. My personal fascination for this style has been ongoing, as I find the primitive approach and angular forms truly striking. With heavy contrasts and a dark overall form, the shapes create an immediate impression.

This typeface was also influenced by some calligraphic research I had been doing, simply playing with a very wide pen and exploring how to contrast the main strokes with more pronounced curves. It was during some of these sketches that I first started to think about designing a new blackletter typeface. It is a style I have already explored in the past, but I felt I had not really pursued the very dark and dense forms that I was experimenting with the pen. So I decided that I wanted to further explore one of these experiments, by creating a simple, single weight blackletter style that I could use for posters and headlines, something that would have a bite and be loud and bold.

in the southern state of
faculties, we are more
to be deceived by the e
through the medium of
er senses: a partial obs
by wax, shall cause thi
so affected, to hear the
bling of water, the ring
bells, or the sounds of
instruments; and on se
casions, although the r
occure tinged with our

I decided to focus on a rigid, brutalist design that would most closely be associated with the blackletter Textura style. With its tall, angular shapes, I found this style best reflected the hard, aggressive approach I wanted the design to have. But I also wanted to use the digital realm to enhance the main strokes by adding a very slight concave bulge. This was done to lighten the overall shape, and help letter recognition, but also as a means of adding more vitality into the modular aspect of the Textura style. The main form is therefore a dark, bold shape with a pronounced calligraphic flair to close each stroke. This combination of sharp angles, curved strokes and heavy mass built a very solid and imposing letter. I worked on a modular approach for the principal letters, allowing a bit of freedom on certain letters like the Carolinian inspired ð. I also wanted to ensure a clear legibility, so for the capital forms, I avoided the decorative style usually found in blackletter typefaces for a more constructed, restrained form. This allowed the upper case to maintain a good visual unity with the lowercase shapes and also ensured a more consistent approach to the overall typeface.

TEXTURA TYPOGRAPHY
headlines & titles
EMOTIONAL DESIGNS
info@wobegone
BLACKLETTER
extensive zeste

While
politicians
save face
genius minds
lay to waste



I started doing some first text tests with the completed font, and despite some minor changes to balance the weights, I was generally happy with the typeface, but, it remained very limited in applications. At a large size, the narrow counter forms and particular angles attract attention and impact, creating a striking design, but in smaller sizes, the dark stroke seemed to simply overload the text, making legibility complicated. I therefore started to think further about how to develop and finalise the typeface. I could simply decide that the font would only serve in large point sizes and keep the single weight, resorting to mixing my typeface with secondary typefaces for any smaller text. While this technique has its merits and is one many users and designers often employ, I felt that it would be a pity to simply limit the typeface to very large sizes due to a stylistic restriction.

**I SEE, I AM,
DECEIVE NONE,
FOR EACH ONE
MUST TEACH ONE**

Since I was happy with the design and inspired to push the research further, I therefore decided that I wanted to expand my single weight typeface into a more complete family. Two further weights were added, a light, Regular style and an intermediate, Bold to compliment the dark Black weight that was the initial design. Through these extra weights, I feel that the overall style remains consistent but the more balanced, and open shapes found in the lighter weights means that they remain more clear and legible, even in smaller sizes. This offers a solution for the required secondary typeface and now meant that Wobegone could be used for titles, logos and large sizes but also be employed in longer passages of text that require more clarity. While the overall typographic style, Textura gothic, remains more problematic for most modern readers, the choice of three weights would at least allow a clear layout for those wishing to explore blackletter as an overall visual style.

As I neared the end of the initial design, I started to think back to one of my older designs, the Halja typeface, that employed illuminated letters as capital forms. Despite the design being one of my older typefaces, I have remained intrigued and interested in pursuing the illuminated approach to other typefaces, so enhancing the letters with decorative swirls.

WOBEGONE BLACK

Wobegone Black

WOBEGONE BOLD

Wobegone Bold

WOBEGONE REGULAR

Wobegone Regular

BLACK

But as madness, by some, has been exclusively held to be a disease of the imagination, and by others, to be a defect of the judgment; consequently these as separate and independent powers

BOLD

faculties of the intellect; it is scarcely worth the trouble to enquire, whether they ever exist as original and distinct disorders. With respect to imagination, it is a faculty of great difficulty; yet this will so far exceed the power of memory, that it will not be distinguished. If a cobbler should be proclaimed emperor, this supposition, though

REGULAR

it is a faculty of great difficulty; yet this will so far exceed the power of memory, that it will not be distinguished. If a cobbler should be proclaimed emperor, this supposition, though



GOD IS
Universal, he is
the
Butler
Universal

For those who can't follow
that spells GURU when in my circle

Illuminated

The word 'Illuminated' is rendered in a dark blue, highly decorative font. Each letter is heavily embellished with intricate, swirling flourishes that extend both above and below the main letterforms, creating a dense, ornate appearance.

Mediæval

The word 'Mediæval' is rendered in a dark blue, highly decorative font. Each letter is heavily embellished with intricate, swirling flourishes that extend both above and below the main letterforms, creating a dense, ornate appearance.

With its brutalist, gothic inspiration, Wobegone seemed like an ideal base on which to continue this illuminated research. The contrast between the dark, solid letters against the curves and delicacy of the additional swirls added a marvelous juxtaposition. My main research focused on finding the correct balance of stroke weights, ensuring the lines sit behind the main letters and don't burden the letter legibility. A common base motif was created that could then be applied to each letter, but I also started creating some individual, free form swirls that I superimposed on the letters to a very interesting effect. These new strokes were added as a finishing touch on the capital letters but also, as a more subtle addition to certain lowercase letters.

As I worked on these swash letters, I questioned the problem of letter repetitions. A swirl on an individual letter can provide a personalized touch, but if that swirl is repeated on each letter, the approach loses its humanity towards a more industrial, systematic design. I therefore decided to add some discretionary ligatures to be able to control certain common letter repetitions or combinations. These additional glyphs offer the chance to find a specific solution to the letters that seemed problematic.

These swash letters and ligatures, included as OpenType features, therefore became an intrinsic part of the typeface, adding extra stylistic choices for any layout.

Official

DEFAULT GLYPHS

Official

SWASH GLYPHS



Anthony

Anthony

Anthony

William

Sarah

Alexis

Jennifer

Richard

Marie

Thomas

Catherine

Jeffery

Kimberly

Mohamed

Anne

Abdul

Dorothy

Additionally to the main features, Wobegone equally includes some options for setting numbers with two main numeral styles. The default style, the lining numbers, are digits aligned to the capital letters and designed to be used in most headline settings. For longer texts, a secondary, hanging style is offered, these letters are aligned to the lowercase forms and contain strokes that ascend or descend in a rhythm that is more suited for running text.

Despite its goal of being a display typeface, I still decided to include the scientific numerals that can traditionally be used for setting exponential values. My thinking was that these figures could be used as alternative numbers while setting prices or other values with decimals. These figures are then equally employed for the fractions feature, allowing the setting of any values separated by a slash.

Jan 1987

DEFAULT LINING NUMBERS

Jan 1987

HANGING NUMBERS

Jan 19/87

FRACTIONS

Ja²n₃

SCIENTIFIC NUMBERS

Squeeze

the juice out,
of all the suckers

with power

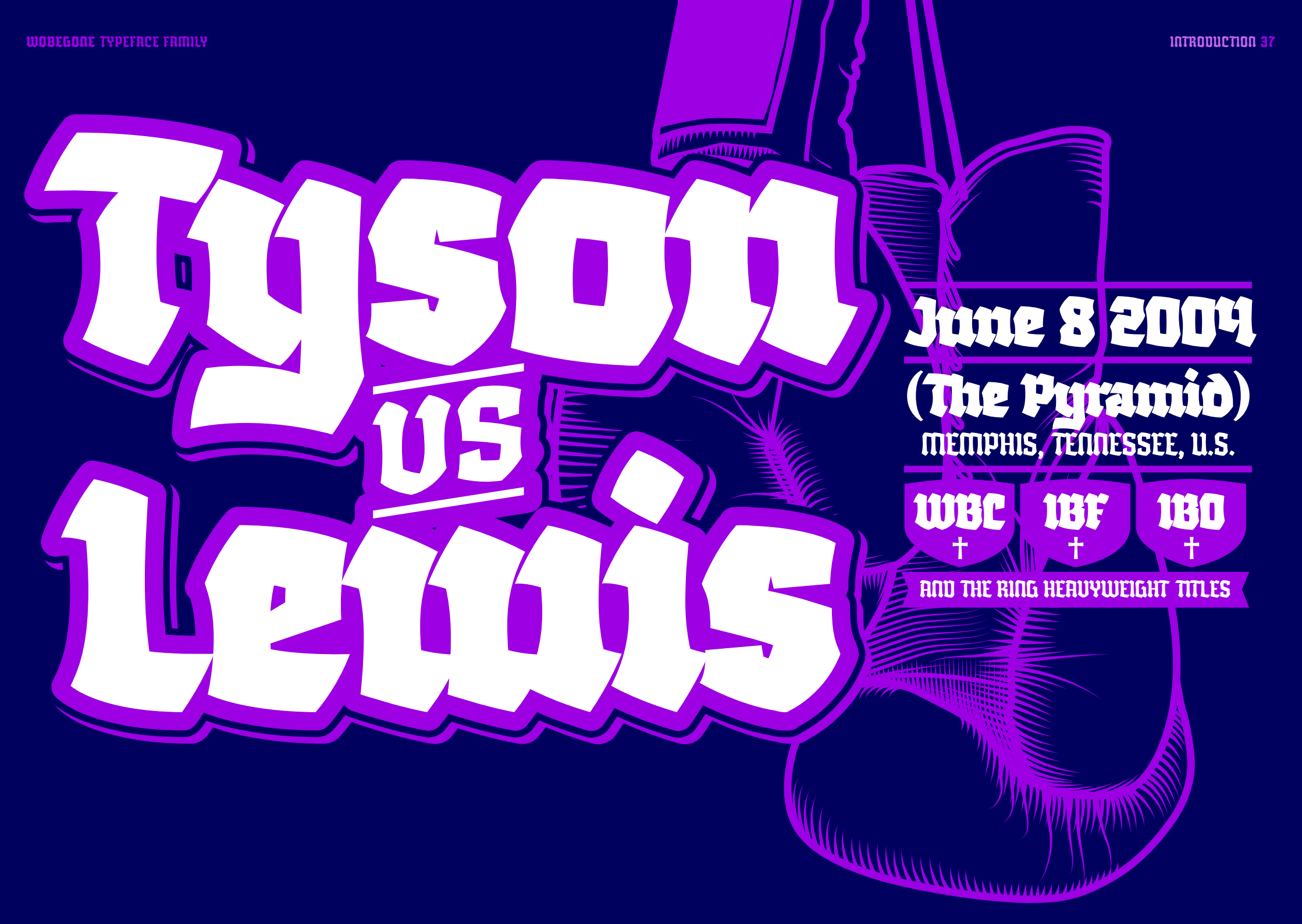
And pour some back out,

so as to water the flowers



Originally intended as a single weight, display typeface, Wobegone expanded into a more versatile and flexible solution. While it remains a display typeface, the extended character set, multiple weights and stylistic solutions offered through Opentype should allow a wide range of approaches for any user. Whether designing logos, website or posters, this family offers a unique voice for any content and can be adapted to create an array of designs and solutions.

WOBEGONE



Tyson vs Lewis

June 8 2004

(The Pyramid)

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, U.S.

WBC

+

IBF

+

IBO

+

AND THE RING HEAVYWEIGHT TITLES

HAD NEVER HEARD BEFORE—
CALLED, THAT IS, HEARING OF
PRODUCED BY THE VOICE OF



ON WHOSE VERACITY I CAN
TOLD ME, THAT WALKING HO
EVENING TO KILMADOCK. H



minds of ordinary men are well contented to deal out their ideas, in the order in which they were received; and, not having found the necessity of bringing them to bear on general subjects, they are commonly minutely accurate in the detail of that which they have observed. By such persons, a story is told with all the relations of time and

place; connected with the persons who were present, their situation, state of health, and a vast variety of associated particulars; and these persons, however tedious, generally afford the most correct account. On the other hand, those who are men of business, and have much to communicate in a given space, are obliged to subtract the more material circumstances from the gross narrative, and exhibit these as the sum total. It is in this way, that words, originally of considerable length, have been abbreviated for the conveniency of dispatch, and from this necessity short hand writing has been employed.

Available now
RELAXATION

(Pg 83) Quoted

WORLDWIDE

info@typogama.com

MORNING & EVENING

Complexions

ALTERATION OF TEMPERATURE

typogama

Wobegone Typeface

by Michael Parson

3 weights

Display

www.typogama.com

Specimen Layout: Michael Parson

Text & visuals: Michael Parson

Font used: Wobegone

Longer text & notes set in Wobegone

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