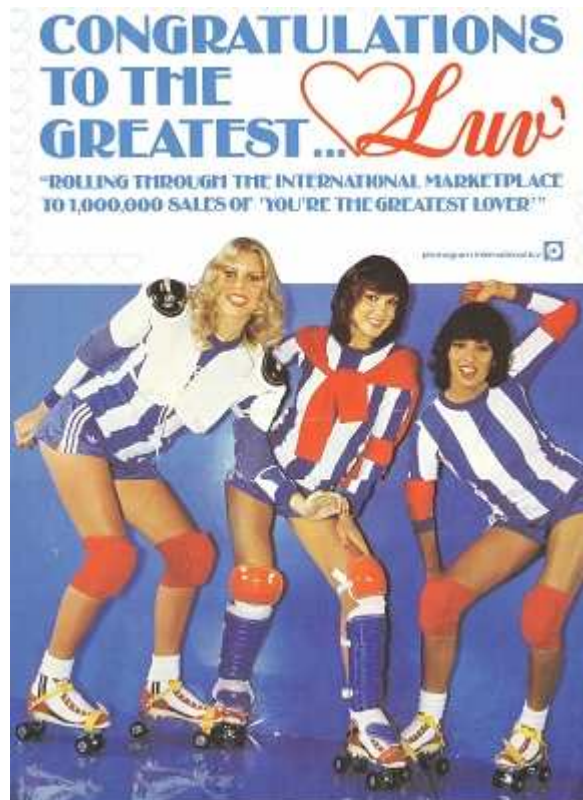


30th Anniversary of "**You're the Greatest Lover**" - article posted on July 29th 2008



Ad in Billboard Benelux Magazine in 1979 to celebrate the 1 million sales of "The Greatest Lover"

Here's the story of "**You're the Greatest Lover**", **Luv'**'s biggest hit single that entered the charts exactly 30 years ago. Flashback to 1978 when **Patty**, **José** and **Marga** reached their peak with this record. This song was covered by many artists (**Brotherhood of Man**, **Jonathan King**, **Loona**....).

## 1) Song history

After achieving success in Benelux with the Top 3 single "**U.O.Me**" in early 1978, **Luv'** wanted more with their follow-up record. They intended to be popular all over Europe.

First of all, they had to solve a big problem. Just after **U.O.Me** had come out, **Luv'**, **Hans van Hemert** and **Piet Souer** (the group's producers) chose a new manager. They ended their relationship with **Han Meijer** and replaced him by **Pim ter Linde** (who runned **Interlinde Artists Management**).

**Meijer**, as one of the creators of the girl trio with **Van Hemert** and **Souer**, held the copyright on the name of the formation (**LUV'**). He considered it as his ownership. That's why, he took the singers and their producers to court about the use of it. Fortunately, the ladies won the legal action and were officially allowed to be named **LUV'**. (source: to read the article from **De Telegraaf** newspaper published on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1978 about **Luv'**'s victory over **Han Meijer**, visit this webpage: <http://zylab.npi.nl/article.aspx?id=31178>)

After this good news, it was time for the three singers and their team to think about **U.O.Me**'s follow-up record. **Van Hemert** and **Souer** noticed that the uptempo arrangements inspired by Latin American and Disco sounds were more appropriate

for **Luv'** than a more serious repertoire (like the debut single, *My Man*). That's why, they composed under the pseudonym "**Janschen & Janschens**" *You're the Greatest Lover* and let it record by their protégées.

In the book "**Nederpop - met hart en ziel**", **Van Hemert** told about this song: "The music had to be uncomplicated but not too vulgar. Preferably with a South American touch....My songs were easy but **Piet** made refined arrangements for them. Listen to the Spanish guitars and the vocal parts in *You're the Greatest Lover!*".

The track was released as a single by **Philips/Phonogram Records** in July 1978. It entered the **Dutch Top 40** on July 29<sup>th</sup> and became very successful in a large part of Continental Europe. It was **Luv'**'s international breakthrough and a chart topper in a dozen of countries.

Because of "*The Greatest Lover*", **Luv'** became a household name in Germany (their biggest export market) and performed it in popular TV shows (**Musikladen**, **Disco**, **Roxi**...). **600 000 units** of this record were sold only in **Goethe's** country. The song was also used for the soundtrack of an episode of the **Derrick** TV series.

## 2) Label & Distribution deal

*You're the Greatest Lover* was released in various editions - all depending on which countries the release took place. **Phonogram** had a distribution deal with **Philips** in Benelux, France, Japan, Brazil and other countries. In the meantime, **Luv's** *Greatest Lover* was distributed by **Carrere Records** in German speaking countries, in Italy and the UK. This strategy of multi distribution was common practice in the recording industry (especially in the late 1970's when there were more labels instead of the four major companies like today). During **Luv's** brief heyday (1978-1981), their records were distributed in more than 40 countries.

## 3) Chart performance & certifications

This million seller hit the **number one spot** in the Netherlands, in Belgium, in Switzerland, in Germany and Denmark. It peaked at **#2** in Austria.

**Luv'** recorded a Spanish version of the song (*Eres mi mejor amante*) that became a minor hit in Spain. Moreover, to adapt the French market, the record was renamed "*Sing, sing me a chanson*" and reached the **37<sup>th</sup>** position of the RTL radio airplay charts.

It also became popular behind the Iron Curtain especially in **East Germany**, **Poland** and **Hungary**. Because records sales couldn't be evaluated in the Eastern Bloc, it's impossible to know the commercial impact of the "*Greatest Lover*" in the communist countries. All we know is that the song was frequently aired on the radio.

Finally, it topped the South African charts and peaked there at **#17**.

"*The Greatest Lover*" reached the platinum status in Benelux and went gold in German speaking countries.

To celebrate the sale of 1 million units of the hit single, the group's label, **Phonogram Records**, published in the Benelux edition of the **Billboard magazine** an advertisement (see picture above)

## 4) "The Greatest Lover" today

This song remains **Luv's** biggest hit. It appears on "1970's/Disco" CD compilations and can be downloaded as a ringtone. It's often played on oldies radio stations.

## 5) Cover versions

There were several cover versions of this pop standard:

- In 1978, **Ulla Norden** covered the song in German as ***Wir Sind Verrückt (Wir Beide)***.
- In 1979, English entertainer, **Jonathan King** recorded a cover version of **Luv's** hit that peaked at #67 in the UK.
- Irish pop band **Gina, Dale Haze and the Champions** had a top 10 hit with this song in the Irish Charts in 1979.
- In 1980, Eurovision winning British group **Brotherhood of Man** recorded a version of the song for their "**Good Fortune**" album released only in Australia.
- An East German sister duet, **Die Molly Sisters**, sang a German version entitled ***He, hallo, du bist ein Mann geworden***.
- In 1999, **Kristina Bach** sang a Schlager version of "**The Greatest Lover**" (entitled ***Hey, ich such' hier nicht den größten Lover***).
- In 2000, a dance music oriented cover by **Loona** renamed ***Latino Lover*** was a hit single in German speaking countries (**#6** and gold single (thanks to 250 000 units sold) in Germany, **#9** in Austria and **#6** in Switzerland in 2000).
- A German industrial band **Massiv in Mensch** proposed an electro version in 2004.
- In 2005, the version of "**The Greatest Lover**" by the Flemish dance group **Swoop** peaked at #25 on the Ultratop singles charts in Flanders.

Sources of this article:

- Wikipedia's page about Luv's greatest hit record
- Go to the "Charts" page of the "All About Luv" site to know about the sources of the peak positions of "***You're the Greatest Lover***" per country.
- Go to the "Awards" page to know about the sources of the certifications of the hit single per country

Bibliography:

- **Nederpop met hart en ziel** (History of Dutch Pop Music) by **J. van der Plas**, publ: Kosmos Z&K
- **Hit-Lexikon des Rock und Pop Vol. 1** by **Frank Laufenberg**, publ: Verlag Ullstein
- **50 jaar nummer-1-hits 1956-2006** by **Johan van Slooten**, publ: Gottmer Uitgevers Groep
- **De 500 Nummer 1-Hits uit de Top 40** (1997) by **Johan van Slooten**, publ: Gottmer Becht
- **Top 40 Hitdossier 1956-2005** (9e editie) by **Johan van Slooten**, publ: Gottmer Bech

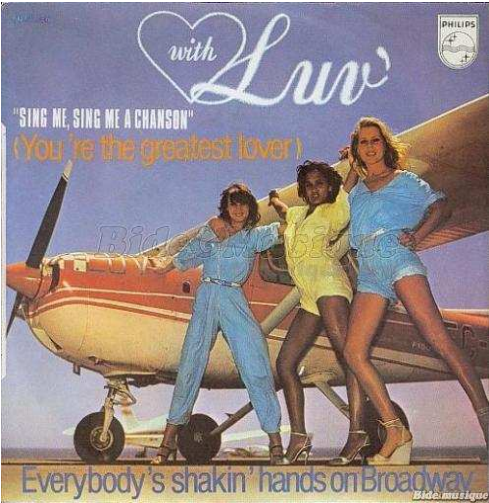
Below, different versions of "*You're the Greatest Lover*"'s sleeve:



Record sleeve of "You're the Greatest Lover" - Dutch edition



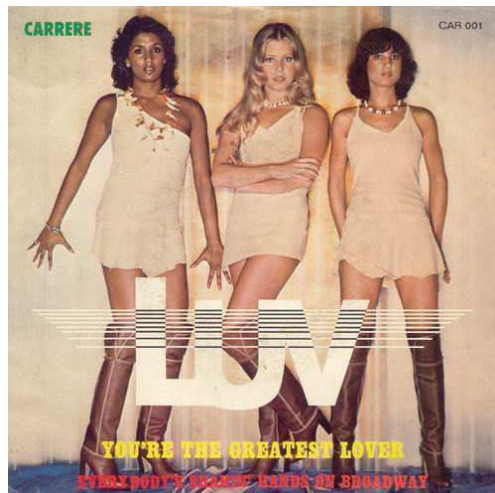
German pressing of "The Greatest Lover"



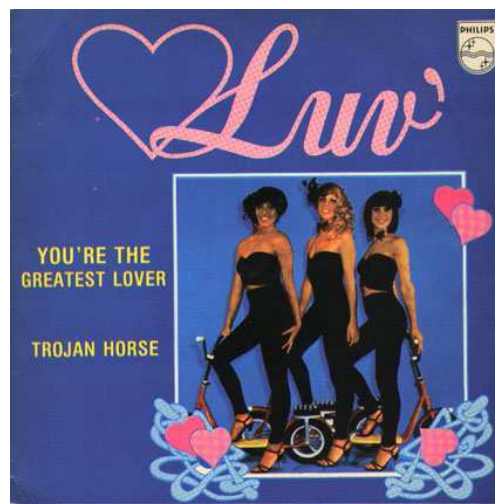
French edition of the single renamed "Sing, sing me a chanson"



Eres Mi Mejor Amante (Spanish version of "The Greatest Lover")



Italian pressing



Brazilian pressing



Japanese pressing