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Holm: A German In Luv'



During its heyday in 1977-1981, apart from their homeland, **Luv'** was popular abroad. **Germany** was the group's biggest export market. At this time, this country was divided in two parts: in the West, the **Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)** with a prosperous economy and in the East, the **German Democratic Republic (GDR)** which was a communist dictatorship linked with the **USSR**. Since October 3rd 1990, the two States have been reunified.

Luv' often performed on stage and on TV in West Germany whereas they only went once to the Eastern part. The ladies scored **8 hit singles** (among them the #1 song "**You're The Greatest Lover**") and **two albums** in the **FRG** charts.

Even if there was no official promotion in the **GDR**, the socialist radio stations sometimes broadcasted **Luv'**'s tracks. Their records were only available in **Intershops** (stores which sold Western goods in small quantity).

Thanks to the forum of the **Luv'** fanclub's site, I've been in touch with a fan from the former **GDR**. His name is **Holm**. He's been a hardcore admirer of the girls for years and collects everything about them. He's been four times to the Netherlands at fanclub days and still remains faithful though there is no publicity about the divas in Germany anymore.

I think his experience and his point of view about the notorious trio are interesting. That's why I've decided to interview him for my blog.

Luvorama: When and how did you become a **Luv'** fan?

Holm: I've been a **Luv'** fan since 1978 when I watched them performing "**You're The Greatest Lover**" on TV. Until then I was a **Baccara** fan and I played "**Yes Sir, I can Boogie**" very loud on my radio cassette recorder. My sister thought that because of it there would be no volume control anymore!! Somehow I saw **Luv'** with "**The Greatest Lover**" and their brown leather costume with fringes on TV and fell immediately in love with them. **Baccara** downgraded to the second position and **Luv'** became **My Number One**. The "**Greatest Lover**" song really blew my mind and I couldn't stop listening to something else. And of course I had to play it loud. My sister became almost crazy and I know that I got on her nerves. Today it's still the same, anytime I listen to "**The Greatest Lover**", I'm so excited. This song still belongs to my all time favourites. I've been a fan without any interruption. Even at the time, **Luv'** had stopped. I've always been faithful to them. It will be like that forever.

Luvorama: **Luv'** was very popular in the **FRG** but how was it in East Germany? Were the girls famous there?

Holm: No, **Luv'** wasn't famous at this time in the **GDR**. It was also difficult. There was almost no information about them. However, **Luv'** performed only once in **GDR** in a show before their breakthrough. It wasn't enough. I had the chance to watch the West German TV but there were areas in East Germany where it was impossible to receive such programmes. And there were probably people who had never heard of the group at all. There were no records, almost nothing. In the East, the situation was different than in the West. In my class, I was the only **Luv'** fan. The others supported **AC/DC**, **The Bee Gees**, **Blondie**, **Sweet**, etc...And as a boy who liked **Luv'**, I was misunderstood. But I didn't care about it.

Luvorama: Was **Luv'** (as a pop group from a Western country) considered to be a dangerous act in the **GDR**? Did a gay/disco scene exist in your homeland? Was it forbidden to listen to **Luv'**? How did you buy or get records and magazines?

Holm: **Luv'** wasn't dangerous in the **GDR** because the texts didn't have dangerous contents. But there were bands and tracks that weren't played. For example, **The Village People** were banned like **Rasputin** by **Boney M.** (even if **Boney M.** performed in the country without singing this song). There was no problem about **Luv'**. You were allowed to listen to them on the Eastern radio and through the radio stations from the **FRG**. But West German Artists were also censored (like **Udo Lindenberg**) or former East German entertainers who escaped to go West (like **Nina Hagen**).

There was no gay Scene in GDR, though I don't know a lot about this subject.

When I was teenager, I went to the disco. **Luv'** wasn't often played but I always asked the DJ to put one of their records on. As I've told you before, I couldn't buy records and magazines. There were stores called "Intershops" in which you could buy Western goods that you had to pay in Western currencies. The one who didn't have this money could only watch the showcases. Like me. It was frustrating when I first saw the "**With Luv**" LP and couldn't buy it. I often went to these Intershops, just to watch the cover. And then "**Lots of Luv**" (the second opus) came out and I didn't possess the first album. It drove me crazy. I couldn't buy anything of **Luv'**, nothing!!! After the **GDR** had collapsed, I started to search for records.

Luvorama: Did the girls perform in the **GDR** (concerts, TV shows...)?

Holm: They were once the guest of a TV show. There were no other performances or concerts.

Luvorama: What are your favourite **Luv'** songs? Which album do you still like to listen to?

Holm: My favourite **Luv'** songs! Hmmmmm, well, it's difficult to say. *You're The Greatest Lover, Who Do You Wanna Be, Life Is On My Side, Louis Je T'adore, Trojan Horse, Casanova, The Night Of Love, Money Honey, Saint Tropez, Shoes Off (Boots On), Ooh Yes I Do, Ann-Maria, My Number One, Billy The Kid, Mother Of The Hearts* and **Tingalingaling**.

Actually, I love all the tracks of **Luv'** and I still appreciate all the albums. My favourite opus remains "**With Luv'**". It reminds me a lot of stories,. I remember when I was just allowed to watch the cover and couldn't buy it. I still have this feeling!! Anytime I hold **With Luv'** in my hands, I think of how it used to be. Today I have 10 units of this LP. :-p

Luvorama: Are there songs you don't like?

Holm: Yes. "*Cloud Nr. 9*". Sorry but I think it's horrible.

Luvorama: Your favourite **Patty**, **José** and **Marga** solo recordings? Are there any of these songs you don't like?

Holm: I like "*Ik ga Extreem*", "*Hold On To Love*", "*Radio*" and "*All This Way*" by **Patty**. "*Heho I'll Sing You A Song*" by **Marga**, although I don't know all of her tracks. And of course **José** with "*I Will Follow Him*", "*I Can Hear Music*", "*Time Goes By*", "*So long Marianne*", "*All Around My Hat*" and the complete "**Herinnering**" album with **Bonnie St. Claire**. I like almost everything about **José**.

The ones I don't like? About **Patty**: it's hard to say because **Patty's** style isn't my cup of tea. Her first album (**All This Way**) was good to me but not the second one. About **Marga**: I don't know her whole repertoire but I appreciate the tracks I know. About **José**: "**A Reason For Fallin' In Love**" isn't an excellent composition to me.

Luvorama: You know I'm French. Do you know French artists and do you listen to them?

Holm: Yes I know French bands and artists. As a child I used to sing German songs of **France Gall**. For example: "*Der Computer Nr. 3*" or "*A Banda (Zwei Apfelsinen im Haar und an den Hüften Bananen)*". But I also like **Sheila & B. Devotion** and **Lio**.

Luvorama: How often have you been to the Netherlands to go to fanclub days?

Holm: I've been to four Fan club days. Twice in Breda, once in Oirschot to **José** and one year ago in Amsterdam to **Luv'**. I met **José** four times, **Patty** twice and **Marga** once. **José** is always happy to see me because I think she knows how long I have to travel to meet her. The return trip represents 1200 kms.

Luvorama: Is **Luv'** still famous in Germany? Or are they famous because "*You're The Greatest Lover*" is played during Après Ski Parties , is on compilations and downloaded as ringtones. Are they discos and radio programmes which still play "*The Greatest Lover*"?

Holm: I think they aren't famous as **Luv'** in Germany anymore. Only a few people really remember them without listening to their greatest hit. But when the majority of people listens to "*You're The Greatest Lover*", then they recognize them. They used to be very popular. But time goes by, a lot of bands appeared after **Luv'** and then the records of the girls weren't promoted in Germany and they were forgotten. Yes, there are still DJs in discos who put their discs on but only when I asked them. Hahaha....

I've found out that a radio station broadcasts **Luv'** daily. Most of the time, they play two tracks a day. The problem of this station is that they broadcast songs I don't like. I don't have something against German Schlager but there are often songs that I really hate. They play songs of groups you don't listen to very often. Like **Maywood, Baccara, A La Carte**...music from the 1970's and that's fine.

Luvorama: What do you think about **Luv's** current reunion?

Holm: Of course, I think it's great that **Luv's** back. Who would have thought about it? I hope they will carry on for a long time although I don't see a thing of it here in Germany. But it's wonderful for the Dutch fans. I was shocked by the negative comments on the **Luv's** forum on internet. Who cares about the costumes they wear as long as they bring happiness to the public, that's the most important thing. But I was surprised that these critics were expressed by some fans. However I don't agree with the fact that these people are blocked as long as they don't insult **Patty**, **Marga** and **José**. Everybody should have their opinion that's why there's a forum to share a point of view. You don't have to have the same taste. You should have a freedom of speech.

I'm so happy that **Luv'** is still appreciated. I hope it'll remain like this for a long time. These three ladies drive me crazy. Especially **José**, she is upsetting. I met **Marga** for the first time last year and she was very kind. And **Patty!!!** Even **Patty** was surprising. I could talk to her in a good way. She was so nice and was joking. I didn't expect that. **Luv'** is on the top. I wish them all the best. It would be so nice if they recorded new material. **Hans van Hemert** hasn't lost his talent and could write with **Piet Souer** a couple of new songs - with the "**Luv'** sound"

