

# Herald Café



3



4

## LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT ABBA

- 'Waterloo' wasn't their first song: 'Ring Ring' was ABBA's first debut album released in 1973 but their phenomenal song which introduced them to the world was the song 'Waterloo', which they performed on April 6, 1974 at Eurovision held in Brighton, England.
- Those outrageous outfits were an easy way to save some Money Money on their tax bill. As revealed on 'ABBA: The Official Photo Book', they exploited a Swedish law which meant clothes were tax deductible if their owners could prove they were not used for daily wear.
- Their stage name was the same as a brand of seafood. The company was established in 1838. In 1974, they decided to let Agnetha, Bjorn, Benny and Anni-Frid share their name, though ABBA is actually an acronym of the first letters of the band members' first names.
- A self-confessed Connie Francis fan and musical prodigy dropped her knickers on stage. In 1956, five-year-old Agnetha Fältskog made her stage debut at a Christmas show, organised by her father, Ingvar. During her performance of 'Billy Boy', a singer's worst nightmare - the waistband of her knickers broke in the middle of the song, so she had a hard time keeping them on!
- Not everyone in the band was Swedish. Anni-Frid Lyngstad was born on November 15, 1945 in Bjørkåsen, Norway. The result of a liaison between young Synni Lyngstad and a German officer named Alfred Haase, her mother was apparently involved in one of SS Chief Heinrich Himmler's Lebensborn houses, meant to "mate" supposed Nazi supermen with pure white Norwegian women. During ABBA's heyday, Frida met her father but the contact between the two was short lived.
- Björn and Benny weren't clean-cut and wholesome after all. Led Zeppelin recorded their last album 'In Through the Out Door' at ABBA's Polar Music Studios, in Stockholm. During a TV interview, Zep's Robert Plant confessed he went out one night in late 1978 with Björn Ulvæus and Benny Andersson, stepping into a local sex club to get away from Agnetha and Frida. Plant detailed that "people would go to bed on circle-shaped mattresses in front of us." A spokesperson for ABBA denied the claims.
- An Oscar-nominee directed their ground-breaking music videos. The Swedes capitalised on their natural good looks, extravagant fashion sense and striking visual appeal by being one of the first groups to use promotional videos to market their music. Most of them were directed by Lasse Hallström, who received an Academy Award for Best Director for 'My Life as a Dog' and 'The Cider House Rules'.
- Their TV Special got more views than the 1969 moon landing. ABBA-Mania was in full swing in Australia when they arrived in early 1976 to do a TV special for the Nine Network. Titled 'The Best of ABBA', it was screened four times to record-setting ratings.
- In 1977, ABBA could've sold out London's Royal Albert Hall 580 times. ABBA's first concerts in the UK included two dates at the London venue, on St Valentine's Day 1977, ten days after the release of the single 'Knowing Me, Knowing You'. An incredible sum of three and a half million applications for the 12,000 seats were received via mail.



## The logo we love



ABBA's iconic logo was designed in 1976 by Swedish artist and designer Rune Söderqvist. It features the band's name spelled out in Helvetica Bold type, but with the first of the two Bs inverted. Söderqvist is said to have wanted the logo to reflect that the band's principals were two committed couples by having the Bs oriented toward the As. The band name itself is both an acronym and a palindrome, comprising the first letters of each of the principal band members' first names. It is also believed that the idea for the official logo was made by the German photographer Wolfgang Heilemann on a 'Dancing Queen' shoot for the teenage magazine Bravo. On the photo, the ABBA members held a giant initial letter of his/her name. After the pictures were made, Heilemann

found out that one of the men held his letter backwards. They discussed it and the members of ABBA liked it. The logo first appeared on ABBA's fourth studio album, 'Arrival', which released in October 1976. 'Arrival' was ABBA's best selling studio album, reaching gold status in the US, platinum in the UK, double platinum in Canada and 18x platinum in Australia. ABBA is, according to Universal Music, the best-selling band in history after only the Beatles, with 375,000,000 records sold (as of 2010). Söderqvist also created all of ABBA's cover art starting with their first Greatest Hits compilation in 1975, and created the set design for their major world tours in 1977 and 1979/80. In 2008, Spinner magazine placed the ABBA logo at number 13 in its survey of the greatest rock band logos of all time.

# Mamma Mia! Here we go again!



Taking the stage: ABBA tribute band, 'Waterloo'

*They dub themselves the absolutely best ABBA since ABBA. In the year 1996, as co-producers and lead singers of the Swedish band 'Waterloo', Camilla Dahlin and Katja Nord came up with the idea to start an ABBA tribute band together. Now set to perform in Goa, tomorrow May 6, 2017, Café catches up with the act from Sweden and looks into some of the band's past as well as what Goa can expect from their upcoming performance*

The act has performed more than four times the shows of the original ABBA, and for more than two million people worldwide, across 38 different countries. The biggest of these was in Sao Paolo with nearly 70,000 people in attendance. ABBA still sells around two million records a year, and this show packs all their greatest hits into a two-hour musical extravaganza, which follows the ABBA story from their Eurovision beginnings all the way to major chart success.

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**HERALD CAFÉ:** What inspired the band to form as an ABBA tribute band instead of any other?

**CAMILLA DAHLIN:** We liked ABBA very much when we were young girls; we were about 10 years old at the time that the band made its breakthrough. Though we started listening to other kinds of music as teens, when we hit 30, we got back to ABBA once more. People said our voices were similar to Agnetha Fältskog and Anni-Frid Lyngstad. Since we liked ABBA very much and were told that we sang like them, we thought of putting together a tribute to ABBA and started our band in 1996... 21 years ago.

**HC:** How often has the band met the original line-up of ABBA? Has the band ever offered any feedback?

**CD:** Yes, we did meet up with the original ABBA members once. After that, they shared all their videos and songs with us. We asked them for permission to start our band and they said yes. Since then, we have not met up with the band members. However, we have one original member in our band from the ABBA backing band: saxophone player Ulf Andersson, who has been playing with us for many years.

**HC:** What are the key songs that the audience can expect?

**CD:** Some of the songs that we will be singing from the popular set-list from ABBA include the likes of 'Take A Chance On Me', 'Money Money' and many more. I'm pretty sure that

no one in the audience will be disappointed hearing.

**HC:** Will this concert be interactive with a lot of stage presence, or will it be purely vocal focused?

**CD:** It's a big band with one of the original ABBA members, saxophone player Ulf Andersson, in our line-up. It looks like ABBA has come alive on stage again, and it sounds just like ABBA on stage too.

**HC:** What made the band decide that this was the right time for an India tour?

**CD:** It's always the right time to be invited to India. We are now in Goa and I'm sure all you lovely people will love to hear our music.

## DOES YOUR MOTHER KNOW...YOUR FAVOURITE ABBA TRACK?

*With Goa clearly having its share of ABBA love, Café looks into what songs make the playlist of its fans and if there are any reasons for the same*

*As a musician, I think that ABBA is just one of those bands whose music the audience loves partying to and that you absolutely love playing too. It's a big win-win scenario that doesn't happen very often. You don't feel bad about having to play ABBA music, and it's a great band to cover. For me, songs like 'Waterloo', 'Does Your Mother Know' and 'Mamma Mia' are my favourites.*



DUNSTAN DIAS

*I can't wait to get to this gig. 'Does Your Mother Know' is definitely my favourite ABBA song, because of the guitar parts in the song. I also adore 'Mamma Mia' because for me, it's reminiscent of a time when listening to music on cassettes was actually a thing that people did.*



JONATHAN GONSALVES

*I remember my dad playing ABBA LPs very loudly in the morning, and hence these are songs that I've grown listening to. In particular 'Dancing Queen', 'Super Trouper', 'Fernando', 'Chiquitita' and 'The Winner Takes It All' stand out for me. I also love the lyrics of 'Super Trouper'. To a performer, they somehow hit home in a really warm way.*



SONIA SHIRSAT

