



Brief overview of the burth of 'Popcorn' oldies. (English)

The Popcorn Golden Gate, The Champou, Boum Boum and the Viertap, ringing names on the Flemish disco-scene, were the founders of a unique style in music that appealed to thousands in the seventies and eighties.

Each weekend was a smashing feast in the famous and sometimes notorious discos; DJs could choose from a wide range of records of their own often completed with collector's items from Great Britain or the U.S. Cherishing their singles and LPs these DJs became authorities on this music-style.

Every week their public was enchanted by the sublime mix of fifties Doowop, Soul, Rhythm & Blues, the high shool sound of Anka, Sedaka and Rydell, and a spark of Cha Cha and Mambo. Later on Jamaican Ska, as an unseperable part of a successful oldies night, turned the place upside down : when dance flours were overcrowded, people climbed the counters to serve their purpose. What atmosphere !

Very soon this exceptional music coctail was called "Popcorn music" or "Popcorn Oldies" after a dancing "The Popcorn" in Vrasene (Flanders, Belgium) It got started in 1969, only opened on Sunday afternoons, but attracted all kinds of people from all over the country and from abroad as well.

Popcorn fans were not interested in the disco which dominated the music scene at the time. Disco was all over the radio. Popcorn music however could only be heard in one of the few dancings in Flanders.

The Popcorn phenomenon remains firmly connected to a special dance style, a kind of soulswing, less explosive than rock'n 'role form the fifties, but more eligant and more ingenious than any kind of music. Many popcorn-freaks developed into real specialists on the dance-floor and turned it into a real spectacle.

Although "The Popcorn" in Vrasene is stil considered to be the starting-point of the music, we must give credit to Freddy Cousaert who in 1968 began some experiments with soul and rhythm & blues from the U.S. Other discos engaged themselves along these lines in the seventies. The fact that the music played in these places was not available in record shops, added to Popcorn's own character.

The oldies market was born, DJs set out to find the ultimate single.

Since the notion "Popcorn Oldies" is connected to all music with that specific and typical rhythm, it is nevertheless difficult to name some performers in this kind of music. There are indeed numerous classics or numbers which were turned and tuned into a Popcorn. Who does not know "Sixteen Tons" by Louis Neefs, "I'm Crying In The Rain" by Major Lance, "You Beat Me To The Punch" by Mary Wells or "I Will" by Billy Fury. But also Gen have made "Popcorn"; And if one oldie did not fit the popcorn beat, the DJ could always tamper a bit with the record speed. Most of then performers however are only known to a few specialists.

Although a small number of discos continue to play only oldies this kind of music seems on the way down. But "Special Popcorn Nights" and oldies-parties are sill very much wanted. "Popcorn Time" is here again.!