

If you want to talk about glam rock, you have to talk about Sweet – the group that sold more than 55 million records and notched up 34 worldwide hits from 1968 onwards (Ballroom Blitz, Fox On The Run, Love Is Like Oxygen, to name but a few).

In 2014, if you talk about Sweet, you should also talk about ABBA. Original Sweet member Andy Scott recently produced and recorded Does Your Mother Know with Suzi Quatro. His guitar sounds as glam as ever on this fantastic cover.

In the early 70s, Sweet rocketed to stardom with hits by Chinn & Chapman. How was your musical direction decided?

The original band was modelled after The Who. Musically, we were a cross between Deep Purple and Black Sabbath. When we played our Chinn & Chapman hits live on *Top Of The Pops*, we had to re-record the backing tracks for the show, and we always played harder and louder than on the single version. We noticed that the people who came to see us at our concerts also knew the B-sides and album tracks that were hard rock-oriented. This way, we gradually moved towards heavy metal.

How did you get the idea to cover an ABBA song?

There was a local pub band that I befriended. They played well-known covers. I sometimes helped them out with the arrangements. The group was called Paddy Goes To Hollyhead and intended as a pun on Frankie Goes To Hollywood. One night, I watched them play Does Your Mother Know. When they came to the middle section, I couldn't help but notice they were just chunking some chords. I offered to help them out with arranging the song and ended up playing the song live with them. When Suzi contacted me and asked me to help her out because she had been asked to record an ABBA song, I immediately came up with Does Your Mother Know.

How did you decide on the sound and arrangement for Does Your Mother Know?

One thing that was important for me was to keep the original underlying synth sound. I gave some homework to the sound engineer. He had to do some research to find out about the composition of that particular sound that consisted of three elements: a note, a knock noise and a wave. Suzi remarked that the riff in Does Your Mother Know is a Sweet riff but, of course, it's not; it's an ABBA riff, but I understand what she means.

Was ABBA appreciated amongst (hard) rockers?

I saw them when they won the ESC. I knew for

sure that they were going to win by a great length. The song was great, and it laid the foundation for everything that was to come. Nowadays, the contest has become politically influenced. A song like Waterloo wouldn't have a chance of winning.

What is the greatest merit of ABBA's music?

Their music is subliminal, it has neo-classical lifts. Benny is clearly influenced by classical music. Just listen to the intro of S.O.S. to understand.

So you consider yourself an ABBA fan?

Yes, but I have to be completely honest with you. The three biggest groups in the world are The Beatles, Queen and ABBA. In recent years, it seems that the last two groups have overshadowed The Beatles. Especially since their musicals came out, this shift has happened. I haven't seen the musical *Mamma Mia!* or the film. What bothers me is the idea of James Bond singing... but I have been told the film is brilliant, so I will check it out at some stage.

Do you think there is an 'ABBA overdose' right now?

The songs are great, but after hearing them more than a hundred times, something changes. They become part of a general soundscape. It's like the noise of a Harley Davidson, after hearing it several times, you don't notice it anymore (laughs)!

Have you got a favourite ABBA song?

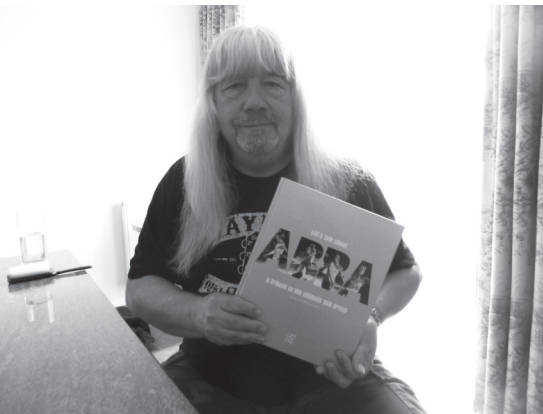
There are half a dozen songs that are so familiar that I wouldn't choose those. I wouldn't choose Mamma Mia. I am more interested in the less obvious ones that stand a bit more by the side. I think The Name Of The Game is a great song, it's a very unusual sounding song.

Did you ever see ABBA perform live?

No, I never saw them live, but I would have loved to. I've heard that they were great live, but they didn't do many tours and when the moment was there and we got offered tickets to see ABBA, we were probably touring with Sweet in America, and when they were in America we were in England. Not very likely that we would have flown over just to see them, and in the early 80s the momentum had gone.

Now ABBA is finally releasing a complete live album.

That would be interesting to hear. ABBA are from the analogue era, meaning that everything they did was completely live. Sweet are still doing this today. I know that many of today's great rock bands use tapes during their concerts. ABBA needed something like twelve people on stage to recreate their sound from the records. In the 70s,



it was very difficult to add a pre-recorded section to the live set, to synchronise it perfectly within the live sound. We've only tried it a few times and I can assure you, it is not easy.

Do you understand why ABBA are not interested in a reunion tour?

I can understand that they think, "Been there, done that, and now it's all over". But remember that some people in the business don't have the choice. At the same time, as an artist, it is very difficult to just walk away and decide, "I'm never going to do it again". My motto is 'live and let live'. I'm just hoping that I know when the time has come for me to stop (laughs).

Is it a question of always moving on as a person, as an artist?

I can imagine, especially for the girls in ABBA, that they must have had enough of hearing their own songs. I never listen to the Sweet songs myself, but I recommend to the younger members of the band that they check out our recordings, when it's decided to add certain songs to our live set list.

How important was image for Sweet?

We were involved in every aspect, but it was Marc Bolan who started the whole glam rock trend. He had silvery shining stars under his eyes, and he was wearing women's make-up. After that, it became a sort of competition between all the glam rock acts. By the time ABBA came with their glam-inspired look, Sweet was already moving away from glam; our clothes were black leather clad.

Did you appreciate ABBA's glam rock look?

I thought that they looked more experienced than to wear the clothes that were being picked out for them. They looked professional, but they clearly already had a musical history and knew exactly what they were doing.

The full version can be found on our website (L).