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classix nouveaux



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Bands advertising for "Singers Wanted" in the pages of Melody Maker each week were mostly amateurs trying to follow The Pistols a couple of years too late. One week, there were two punk bands I'd heard of advertising, and one of them had even had a few hits. I went to audition for both. I don't remember the name of the first, but the other was called X-Ray Spex. Their singer Poly Styrene had gone off being in a band, so they were looking for a new frontperson who could also write songs. Of those they auditioned, two members liked me, and two liked someone else. So with the first two, and Mik Sweeney, in August 1979, London's Camden Palace (then called The Music Machine) had a billboard saying "Classix Nouveaux ex X-Ray Spex".

We did plenty of gigs after that and built a following of punks, rockabillys, and misfits! To our surprise, very soon, an article in one of the music papers spoke of "New Romantics" and named bands Ultravox and Japan, along with us. Really none of us had much in common apart from dressing up, and electronic touches in the music. Those other two bands had already released two or three albums each, but like The News, were out of step with the times. Well, all of a sudden our time had come and everyone was putting on makeup and silly clothes and wanting to be New Romantics!

In 1997 EMI (UK) released The Very Best of Classix Nouveaux. I don't want to waste space with repeating the sleevenotes from that album, but if you check it out, there are a number of other stories to put the era into context. You can't order that album here, you need to look in High Street record stores in the UK, or import shops abroad. (catalogue number 7243 8 59978 2 2)

A few significant moments:

1981: First video and chart single "Guilty" followed by album "Night People", first visit to USA followed by only US tour, first silver disc and stadium concerts in Yugoslavia, Top 20 in Sweden, followed by only Swedish tour.

1982: First UK Top 20 "Is It a Dream" followed by album "La Verité", gold in Portugal with #1 single, album, and video, #1 in various other countries, first tour of Asia and India. Gary Steadman is replaced by Jimi Sumen.

1983: First tour in Poland followed by big hits there, final Classix Nouveaux album "Secret", changes of lineup. . Biggest ever crowd,

25,000 in Helsinki, Finland

1984: #1 in Poland with "Never Never Comes" and "Heart From the Start", during major tour there. Jimi Sumen replaced by Rick Driscoll, BP Hurding replaced by Paul Turley, and Pandit Dinesh in the touring band.

1985: "San Damiano" by Sal Solo in UK Top 20, and #1 in Poland, followed by last Polish tour. Final recorded appearances of Classix Nouveaux on Sal Solo album "Heart & Soul". Final Classix Nouveaux appearances in London and Spain.

1997: EMI (UK) release "The Very Best of Classix Nouveaux"

All Classix Nouveaux albums were reissued on CD by Cherry Red Records by 2006