



### **robin scott-music career**

Robin Scott's recording career encompasses four decades. He grew up in the South London suburb of Croydon and after leaving school enrolled at Croydon Art college, where he met Malcom MacLaren, with whom he attempted - with some success - to change the prevailing system, a predictable aim for free thinking students in the late 1960's. Scott befriended MacLaren and later day fashion guru Vivienne Westwood [with whom he was to collaborate 10 years later]. However he declined their offer to be involved in the Chelsea clothes shop which MacLaren and Westwood launched, preferring to make his career in music. While at art college he had displayed a talent for writing topical songs which he performed on radio and TV, and this led to the first robin Scott LP titled 'Woman From The Warm Grass', which was released on the small independent label, Head Records. Scott was backed on the album by a notable group of the time, Mighty Baby, but this was a poor introduction to the record business, as Head Records very quickly bit the dust.

Scott was working as a troubadour, singing his own songs and accompanying himself on guitar, and he spent a period playing folk clubs as a solo artist sharing bills with such emergent artists as David Bowie, John Martin and Ralph McTell. In the early seventies he conceived a multimedia project, 'The Voice' which was aired on the highbrow BBC Radio 3 but his restlessness then led him to travel both in Europe and North America, and when he returned he made demos with members of prog-rock Camel, song writer Terry Britten and publisher Ronnie Scott. In 1972 he entered the 'Search For A Star' National

talent contest, which he won, and was offered a recording contract by EMI Records, but because they would not support his backing band, he turned down the deal.

Around 1973 he performed in bands with the likes of Pete Thomas (later of Elvis Costello and the Attractions) and Paul 'Bassman' Riley, and also wrote 'Heartaches & Teardrops' a musical play with original songs which was apparently inspired by 'The Rocky Horror Show', and the 'True Love And Romance' comic strip genre.

Scott then started working with Roogalator, a well regarded and original R&B band producing their debut single 'Cincinnati Fatback' [one of the first Stiff record releases] followed by another single 'Love & The Single Girl' on Virgin. As Virgin failed to pick up the album option he independently produced Roogalator's debut LP 'Play It By Ear' to be released on his own Do-It Records, for whom Scott also recorded 'Cry Myself To Sleep' under the alias of Comic Romance. When punk rock surfaced circa 1976/7, working with Roogalator (both as producer and manager) Adam & The Ants introduced themselves to Do-It records and Scott duly released their debut LP, 'Dirk Wears White Sox'.

In 1978 Scott worked as producer for Barclay Records in Paris where he lived with his partner Brigitte Vinchon [alias Brigit Novik] after producing and filming [with celebrated director Julian Temple] all female punk quartet, The Slits. Still in Paris he recorded early versions of 'Moderne Man/Satisfy Your Lust', tracks which would ultimately appear on the first album. Established now as 'M', he also produced and recorded Pop Muzik, which was written as a resume of 25 years of pop music since 1954, and was certainly a watershed for Scott. Among other musicians who played on the track were his brother, Julian Scott, on bass, latterly highly-rated [but then unknown] keyboard virtuoso Wally Badarou, Canadian programmer John Lewis [who sadly died of aids in 1982] and Brigit Novik - the "backing" vocalist who put the 'pop' in the 'muzik'.

In 1979 Pop Muzik was a huge international hit, after which MCA Records, the label which had released the single in the UK, understandably requested an album. 'New York, London, Paris, Munich' was recorded in Montreux, Switzerland, at Queen's Mountain Studio, and using their regular engineer, David Richards. And as well as Julian Scott, Wally Badarou [who would later work with Stevie Winwood, among others and Brigit Novik. Additional musicians on the LP included drummer Phil Gould [later of Level 42], Gary Barnacle [sax & flute] and local Montreux resident David Bowie [occasional handclaps]. Released in the UK at the end of 1979, the LP was also a sizable hit in the US [where it was released on the Sire label]. In marked contrast to 'Pop Muzik', another track from the LP, 'Moonlight & Muzak' was the follow-up single. MCA potentates were unhappy with this change of direction; but with a huge hit behind him Scott, felt it was relevant to be heard at this point. The track was written as a result of his experiences in the US, where he came into contact with the Muzak organisation, which he describes as "a very weird experience. There were all these white collar workers conscientiously putting together music with the precision of chemists. Way before Eno was doing it, these guys were doing it for real. They were pre-occupied with the pace of workers in factories, and how to maximise their efficiency". That was the motivation behind 'Moonlight & Muzak', which was a UK top 40 hit, and then 'That's The Way The Money Goes' the fourth

'M' single and the third hit inside a year. A 45 minute film incorporating videos and performances of 'M' tracks to date came as a result of globetrotting in the wake of 'Pop Muzik'.

In late 1980, the follow-up album called 'Official Secrets' [containing the hits 'Keep It To Yourself' and the title track], was inspired [albeit tongue-in-cheek] by the overwhelming worldwide paranoia of the time. It was recorded in the UK and Dublin, with contributions from Bill Whelan [the man behind 'Riverdance', who at the time worked as an arranger]. Among the musicians on the album were Phil Gould on drums again, who also introduced his friend and subsequent Level 42 colleague, Mark King. King at the time played guitar as much as bass, and it was prior to his discovery of his trademark sound. In 1981 Scott co-produced rising star Ruichi Sakamoto, along with fellow members of Yellow Magic Orchestra [who also participated on resultant albums 'Left Handed Dream' and 'The Arrangement'], as did King Crimson/David Bowie guitarist Adrian Belew, while Scott and Brigit Novik supplied vocals and co-wrote four tracks. The same year brought a third 'M' album 'Famous Last Words', which featured many of the musicians from the previous albums, including the early incarnation of Level 42 [who by this time were having their own regular hits], producer Wally Badarou also playing keyboards, Julian Scott [on bass], Brigit Novik [backing vocals], Thomas Dolby programming, Yellow Magic drummer Yukihiro Takahashi, Andy Gill guitarist Gang Of Four and Tony Levin on bass.

MCA declined release of the album and it only saw the light of day in France, Italy and the US, where M was not signed to MCA. Subsequently MCA and M parted company. At this point some role reversing took place and Scott produced the M single 'Danube' for the Stiff label, featuring Brigit Novik on vocals, followed by 'The Wedding Dance' presenting Novik as an artist in her own right. As a development of the ethnic references on 'Official Secrets' and the Stiff releases, Scott found a new musical direction, producing an EP of African acts in Kenya. This led to the as yet unreleased album, 'Robin Scott & Shikisha' in 1983/4 recorded in Kenya and the UK with musicians from several different African states. The album featured a female vocal trio from South Africa, Shikisha [hence the album title], Wally Badarou and Julian Scott in addition to musicians too numerous to mention here. Most of this pioneering World Music has been legally suppressed till now, but has been remastered and due for release in 2003.

The resurgence of interest in Robin Scott and the history of "PopMuzik" follows U2's usage of the Steve Osbourne remix opening their current world 'PopMart' tour. Remixes by Junior Vasquez and Dub Pistols are to be released mid 2003. Meanwhile Scott's eldest daughter Berenice is now developing her career as a singer and writer and his second daughter Djalenga is appearing in the West End Lloyd Webber musical 'Joseph' and recording with Scott. Various other projects related to production/performance and new technologies including [www.thewhitelabel.com](http://www.thewhitelabel.com) engage Scott's enthusiasm.