

MOBILE FIDELITY SOUND LAB

RASPBERRIES' BEST

FEATURING ERIC CARMEN

CREAM OF THE CROP

During their short, but illustrious, career, the Raspberries were at once a mystery, a mystery phenomenon, a dilemma and, mostly always, a controversy.

The Raspberries were apparently trapped, but actually by their own design, in a musical frame that was entirely appropriate to the mid-sixties and which they often, but never completely, emerged as the rockers and generation of youthful exuberance. But when the Raspberries first appeared with a return to that rock-culture sound during the first half of the 1970s, evidently the thing wasn't only right. The Raspberries' mid-sixties three-part vocal sound (1972-74) saw the release of four albums which proved that simply making music wasn't so bad (and usually as good as or even better than the Beatles) as it had been in that period. The Raspberries were more than their music. Their timing was perfect. The Raspberries were never more than their music, and although that music was essential, it was not the moment in history for "berry music" to come. Especially, the music of the Raspberries gathered numerous listeners who needed to escape the joyless tenets of those early Pop Four-Beatnik Invasion days, but with the polished production techniques and studio expansion developed in the late sixties, the Raspberries captured the attention of the Beatles' "I Want to Hold Your Hand" and the Beach Boys' "In My Room" with songs such as "I Wanna Be With You" and "Sweet Freedom" and even took it one step further with the much more explicit "Go All The Way" and "Bangin'" with its "I just want to make you feel good inside" double entendre.

Eric Carmen, who once said, "In the studio, I guess, and during an interview in late 1978, 'We know from the very beginning what we were out to prove. Our whole concept was, and is, to bring back the halcyon days of about 1960, 1961 and '68. We want to bring back that good time feeling that was around back then."

It was a risky proposition in those post-Woodstock days when other acts were fading and pushing down, and long after the end of the sixties. The Raspberries chose a different route. They appeared with multi-layered harmonies, slightly contrived pop love songs, shorter-than-average hair and elegant, Wally Byham was the Star Designer in Cleveland in the United States of rock school for long hair and had to have two haircuts before he could join the group and making sure.

According to Carmen, "A lot of people just didn't understand us. The problem we had was that we were trying to do something that was not in vogue. Our music and our stage act were designed to shock. The whole idea was to wear the suits was to get the audience's attention, and that caused the boys to do it. It worked for awhile, but we didn't want to be tagged as merely an idiosyncrasy but as we began to dress differently. A lot of people just didn't catch on to our sense of the situation."

Whether it was their early image, a bit single on their second try or the fact that they sounded like a plethora of groups from the mid-sixties, they were quickly identified, labeled and pigeon-holed as a group that in and out of the mainstream. Press and public alike tended to ignore the possibility that the group had the potential to create a sound of its own—admittedly an almost impossible task in popular music today.

However, the group never denied their obvious roots.

"We've had to start out imitating someone. To us, the prototype of what you could do is..."

—Cont. on Other Side

HOW IT BEGAN

The Raspberries were one of the few groups along with the Outcasts and the James Gang to burst out of Cleveland, Ohio, and have a national, even international, impact as well as major a part in the charts.

When Eric Carmen wrote the song "Sweetheart Season (I'll Show)" for the fourth album, he was both expressing the dream of every young man to have a girl as well as poking fun at the fact that although some artists are short, not all are short. Carmen, who was only 22 and 23 years old when their first album was released, had already studied up on a few of those string-bing poets.

Eric Carmen (rhythm guitarist, keyboard player, writer and lead singer of the singles) was born in Cleveland. When he was four years old he attended a Cleveland Symphony Orchestra rehearsal and decided along in the history. He said was a child with the orchestra and started giving him lessons at the age of six. "But I was a dropout at eight," he recalls. He studied classical music at the Cleveland Institute of Music and earned his degree when he was 11. "Then the Beatles hit and all I wanted to do was to get a guitar or drums and start playing rock," explains Eric, nicknamed "The Big".

He started learning to play drums, but his mother said when the muted pounding on a rubber practice pad was too loud so he taught himself guitar.

Lead guitar player William "Wally" Carter Byham was born in Canton, Ohio, where, at the age of eight, he heard a House Rhythms record on the radio and loved it. When he convinced his parents to let him have a guitar and they said a guitar, he asked for one and they bought him a white one. One night in early 1962 he got into a fight in front of the piano room watching Eric Von-Hof and the Wals dancing through "I Can't Explain" on Monday and soon after was writing some power chords on his own guitar. He also got an electric 12-string to play Frets and Frets 120 stringed material on something Eric was doing about the same time.

When bass and rhythm guitarist David (Doc) Randall was five in his hometown, Old City, Pennsylvania, his father took him to a tavern where the promoter sang and danced on the bar — his first public performance.

Meanwhile, James (Jim) Alexander (Barfari) assumed that he was learning to play drums by tapping a bottle back on the kitchen table in Indian, Pennsylvania, where he was born. Eventually they all ended up in Cleveland playing in local high school bands. Jim played drums on "Early in Love" and "Sweetheart" (see above) by the Outcasts when that group tried to follow their own hit, "Time Won't Let Me".

The most popular group in Cleveland in those days was the Maris, later renamed the Choir, and Wally, Dave and Jim were all in it.

According to Eric, "They were my idols. My ultimate ambition was to be a high school kid who either became a member of the Choir or have a group like that myself. I loved rock 'n' roll, and I was going to have to be in a rock band."

Eric started his first band when he was in the 10th grade but throughout high school and in 1967 and 1968 when he was at Cleveland State University, his best musician left to join the Choir. The Choir continued to sing and even did some recording such as "It's Cold Outside," a small hit released nationally on Decca in 1967. Eventually Eric joined Cyrus Eric and, after meeting

—Cont. on Other Side

During the promotional period, the band's personnel changed between the vinyl and cassette releases. Eric Carmen and Wally Carter Byham remained their guitarists and vocalists of the vinyl and cassette releases. David Randall and Jim Alexander were the bass and rhythm guitarists of the vinyl and cassette releases. Eric Carmen and Wally Carter Byham were the vocalists and guitarists of the vinyl and cassette releases. Eric Carmen and Wally Carter Byham were the vocalists and guitarists of the vinyl and cassette releases. Eric Carmen and Wally Carter Byham were the vocalists and guitarists of the vinyl and cassette releases.

The Raspberries - Raspberries Best

MOFI 1-032 - 140g Vinyl LP - UVP € 33,-

Die Himbeeren wagten im April 1972 ausgerechnet in der Nähe von Cleveland, Ohio, einem Zentrum der Rockmusik, etwas gänzlich Anderes. Eine Mischung aus Brit-Pop, mitsamt entsprechender Haarschnitte und Bekleidung, Psychedelia mit Stadionrock-Einschlag und unterhaltsamer Pop-Musik. Das hätte eigentlich schief gehen müssen, doch schaffte es die Band mit diesem Rezept nicht nur bei den Mittelwellenstationen, sondern auch bei den qualitätsbewussteren UKW-Stationen Einzug zu halten und in drei Jahren gleich vier Alben zu veröffentlichen. Man wurde zwar von den echten Hard-Rock-Fans komplett ignoriert, doch spielte niemand sonst eine derartige Qualität in der Pop-Musik. Wer sich die Raspberries musikalisch gar nicht vorstellen kann, der denke an die Stimme von Roy Orbison in Kombination mit Hintergrundchor und einer Rockband, die sich nicht entscheiden kann, ob Buddy Holly oder (der noch gar nicht aktive) Van Halen nun die Favoriten des Publikums sind.

Die besten Hits wurden 1976 zu einem Best-Of-Album zusammengefasst. Eben dieses Album wurde nun von Krieg Wunderlich im MFSL-Studio neu geschnitten und erscheint als Limited Edition im Klappcover mit Kommentaren zu den einzelnen Veröffentlichungen. Passend zum Bandnamen ist die Pressung auf himbeerfarbigem Vinyl mit leichten schwarzen Spuren.

TITEL

1. Go All the Way
2. Tonight
3. Ecstasy
4. I Wanna Be With You
5. I Can Remember
6. Overnight Sensation
7. Let's Pretend
8. Drivin' Around
9. Starting Over
10. Don't Want to Say Goodbye

Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab Silver Label

Unter der Produktbezeichnung Silver Label veröffentlicht MFSL seit Anfang 2011 eine neue Serie an LPs. Diese werden bei Mobile Fidelity auf der von Tim de Paravicini konstruierten Masteringkette neu gemastert und geschnitten und bei RTI in Los Angeles auf 140g Vinyl gepresst. Die Verpackung erfüllt mit einer gefütterten Reispapierinnenhülle, einer schützenden Zwischenhülle und einer fortlaufenden Seriennummer auf dem Außencover die gleichen hohen Ansprüche wie die bekannte Original Master Recording Serie. Mobile Fidelity plant eine Reihe auch experimenteller Veröffentlichungen und ist in dieser Serie auch gewillt mit einer Kopie des Masterbandes vorlieb zu nehmen wenn das Originalband nicht zu Verfügung gestellt werden kann. Alle LPs erscheinen als Limited Edition und dürften sich zu begehrten Sammlerobjekten entwickeln.