

ARTIST PORTRAIT MARION BENZ (MARION CAROLA BENZE)

Queen of Ambient Soul- Marion's path to worldwide fame..

Marion Benz is a German singer-songwriter, producer and publisher with a sensually groovy and soulful style. Moreover she is also an author. She is known to hundreds of millions of people via TV-, Radio- and internet appearances, as well as press coverage worldwide.

Born 07.10.1967 in Hameln (Hamelin, town of the Pied Piper/ Lower Saxony/ West Germany) she started her music-, and dance education at the age of four. Later she learned how to play the flute, the guitar and the piano.

When she was four years old, she got given a tape recorder by her uncle. He „interviewed“ her, asking, what she wanted to become in life. Marion answered „I want to become a singer“. She was given classical singing lessons by former opera star Edelgard von Vitzthum for three years from the age of sixteen to age nineteen.

After entering a special music class at the Albert-Einstein-Gymnasium (humanistic, classical, secondary school) she played in the school orchestra and sang in the school choir.

For seven years Marion had lessons in ballet, later she was trained in tap dance and jazz dance for several years.

Miss Benz was offered her first recording contract by Dieter Liffers (Show Magazine) when she was 12 years old already, but turned it down because she wanted to develop her own personality, first.

Instead she set up various bands, entering 3 singing contests, winning them all and furthermore appearing on various radio shows as well as gigging on a regular basis. (The papers wrote, overwhelmed „a Star is Born!!“) This Marion did from the age of thirteen. She was opening act to Peter Horton and Precious Wilson (Earth, Wind and Fire), age 13.

Above that she finished the bronze, silver and gold course of the German dancing foundation from the age of 14-15. She won all three contests, and her dancing partner and then boyfriend Thomas Knorn.

Age fourteen she recorded the first album with the „Folkgruppe“/ Albert-Einstein-Gymnasium.

Age sixteen she finally signed her first recording contract with the major label Intercord in Stuttgart and the well known Bernd Dietrich as her producer. The releases „Lover for a Minute“ and „Cry“ under the pseudonym Shirley Parker charted in various club and radio charts all over Germany. „Cry“ became film music in a Dolly Dollar film. Marion performed both songs several times live on German TV.

When the team split up Marion Benz moved to Munich to study musicology, psychology and science of the theatre, before becoming a fully trained advertising agent, covering music management, plugging, marketing and publishing. During that time she was engaged to the now

very famous film music producer Martin Grassl. Amongst others he wrote and produced the score to Herbstmilch, Marienhof and SOKO Kitzbühel. The relationship didn't last. One split up friendly.

To have a fresh start and inspired by the cultural melting pot London, Marion moved across the channel to fulfil there what seemed impossible in Germany.

Working as a filmproduction assistant for the Westend Ziessen Film Company and later running the publishing company of Zeus B. Held's (former producer of Transvision Vamp, Udo Lindenberg and Nina Hagen) as well as working with international manager K.P.Schleinitz (Terence Trent D'Arby), she then managed to set up a home recording studio and to follow her natural tendencies towards ambient soul and dance music.

Marion Benz wrote „Come Softly“ and two mixes of „Human Spirit“ that became the debut releases of Off Key Records, London/ Haringay Arts Council in 1993. It was a pilot project, sponsored by the European Fund. Christmas '93 „Come Softly“ shot straight to number 1 of the Independent Soul Charts U.K., published in the Echoes Magazine.. It became her international breakthrough and with it she was also writing a tiny piece of music history with it.

She was the first white artist to ever reach such a position in these hottest black trendsetting charts of Europe. „Come Softly“ stayed on top for 13 weeks.

Germany celebrated her success with an outstanding press coverage, like Musik Express/ Sounds (the most important German music magazine) Marion Benze - The new Queen of Soul, Bild am Sonntag (the biggest German boulevard paper) England's Soul Queen is a girl from Hameln. The Lower Saxony Ministry of Cultural Affairs as well as the Ministry of Inner Affairs thanked her publicly in a letter of thanks and used her in an advertising campaign for her Country in Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Russia. Apart from TV appearances in Germany, a.o. at Thomas Gottschalk's prestigious Late Night Show/ RTL, she got a 45 minutes documentary about her on French RFO TV and was also filmed by the British BBC. It was broadcasted worldwide in 55 countries and was repeated twice..

Next to her own projects Marion Benz worked with or for producers like Andrea Andergast (Christian Franke), Jürgen Backes (Master Boy), Ian Beckham (The Code), Dieter Bohlen (promo Blue System), Yak Bondie (Spice, Lisa Stansfield), Alex Breuer (Nino de Angelo), Bernd Dietrich (Mireille Mathieu, Mathias Reim, Shirley Parker, Silent Circle), Michael Dubacher (Benjie/ Marion Benz), Frank Farian (promo Milli Vanilli), Martin Grassl (G.G. Anderson), Zeus B.Held (Udo Lindenberg, Nina Hagen, Transvision Vamp), Javin Lee (Liq'i Liq, Jario), DJ Jam X/ De Leon (Liberty, De Leon), Michael Konopatzki (Mama Afrika), Doug Laurent (La Bouche, Culture Beat), Gabriel del Mar (Malouve/ Gabriel del Mar Filmusic to BR3 Space Night), Mathias Reim (Shirley Parker, Mathias Reim), Ralf Siegel (Petula Clark, Nicole – Eurovision Contest Winner), Sly and Robbie (George Michael, Madonna), Ekki Stein (Goombay Dance Band, Shirley Parker), Peter Valter (Little Star), Jack White (Pat Benatar/ David Hasslehoff) Joachim Witt (Joachim Witt) and many others. The artists mentioned in brackets are the most successful ones the producers, partially also Miss Benz worked with.

Because of Marion's engagement to four years younger press photografer Gero Breloer, nephew of Germany's famous documentary film maker Heinrich Breloer, she left London in 1994.

Amongst others she was out and about with him photographing the Tour de France as well as the German Bundesliga (The german national soccer league). The relation didn't last.

1997 she wrote, interpreted, arranged and produced according to the press an „outstanding Pop Album that's well ahead of it's time“. It was released under the title of „Soul Diving“ and the stage name Marion Benz. Co-producer and co-arranger was Vego Morris) That Year she also founded her

own music-publishing company „Soul Renaissance Music Publishing Marion Benze“.

1998 the album was nominated for the German Rock and Pop Awards of the DRMV (40.000 active musician members). It was limitedly on sale via Synsonic Records San Francisco.

The included songs of Soul Diving had heavy rotation entries and reached top positions in club- and radio charts in Germany, in the State of New York, California, Canada, Finland and Sweden. Due to health- and personal reasons she withdrew from the industry for a couple of years. In 1999 she moved back to Hameln.

2012 she wrote the lyric novel „Der Code Catyouschar Romanoff oder Der Falsche Mann“ „The Code Catyouschar Romanoff or The Wrong man“, a spy romance.

2014 she wrote the lyrics and melodylines to the german pop Album „Engel der Nacht“ (Angel of the Night). Here, she worked alongside a german musician and producer Michel Dubacher (Hanover), who came up with the backing tracks.

2016 Marion worked alongside Wünnetou (Stefan Wünnemann/ Tündern)) on the album „Bride to the wind“. It's still a demo.

Here she wrote all the lyrics and performed as the lead vocalist.

Miss Benze sang the TV commercial of Jacob's Coffee „Swingtime“ and the radio spots of Ritter Sport and Maggie.

Marion Carola Benze was acting as an extra in 10 TV- and Cinema productions, a.o. „Schlaraffenland“ (Land of Milk and Honey) alongside Franka Potente (The Jason Bourne Affair).

Her Hameln parent's house was the location of 20 episodes of the TV film production „Happy Birthday“, starring Witta Pohl.

Her former hobbies were tennis, horse riding, sailing, volleyball, rollerblading, swimming, general fitness, and painting.

Languages: German, English and French.

Miss Marion Benz went to school with the following famous people:

Starviolinist Jean Christee', TV Crime Actor Strike Folkerts, SAT1's former TV Morning Show host Sascha Oliver Rusch (the two were a couple during school time) and last, but not least, Susan Stahnke, former (ARD Tagesschau) main Newsprogram reader.

None of the persons mentioned here had anything to do with the success of Marion Carola Benze.

In 1999 Marion Benz was supposed to open the show on the European Tour of George Clinton and the Parliament Funkadelic. As she suffered from a severe burnout, she couldn't follow this fantastic offer. All that remains are two pictures.

Marion hasn't got any children.
Currently she is in no relationship.

Over the past 20 years a lot of songs have been written about her mentioning the stage name Marion Benz and Marion Benze in them, which started a person's cult around Marion. She is very well

known, particularly amongst international rappers, especially from England and the United States of America...

Miss Marion Benz is now working on new productions, again.

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