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THE Romantics



The original members of The Romantics are Wally Palmar, Jimmy Marinos, Mike Skill and Rich Cole they formally became a band on Valentine's Day, 1977. Bred on the streets of Detroit's east side, The Romantics were inspired by the British invasion, American rock roots and the late 60s Detroit scene. They favored short hair, shorter songs and leather suits. More than 40 years later they are still known for having created some of the most influential rock and roll of all time.

The band released a single, consisting of the first two songs they had written - "Little White Lies" and "I Can't Tell You Anything" then traveled east to build a club audience. Bomp Records' Greg Shaw sees them in Toronto and funds an EP that includes "Tell It To Carrie" and "First In Line". After signing with Nemperor Records in 1979, The Romantics released their debut LP, recorded in three weeks, anchored by "What I Like About You," "When I Look In Your Eyes" and a cover of Ray Davies' "She's Got Everything". The Music Video for "What I Like About You" is an MTV Favorite a follow up, NATIONAL BREAKOUT, was released in 1980, followed by tours of North America, Europe and Australia. The songs "Tomboy," "21 and Over," "Stone Pony" and "A Night like This" carried the well received second album. The third album, STRICTLY PERSONAL, is released in 1981 and introduces Coz Canler as Lead Guitarist. Underrated on its release, Strictly Personal, includes "In the Nighttime" and "Bop" and remains a fan favorite. In 1983, Mike Skill rejoins the lineup on Bass. The band reaches its commercial peak with their 4th album, IN HEAT, which is referenced in the radio hit "Rock You Up".

IN HEAT goes platinum and bears two top ten singles: "Talking In Your Sleep" and "One In A Million". "Talking In Your Sleep" was the Romantics' biggest chart hit, garnering substantial radio airplay and sales world wide. The song reached #3 on the Billboard Hot 100 in February 1984. It also went to #1 on the Hot Dance Club Play chart in the U.S., where it remained on top for two weeks. In Australia, "Talking in Your Sleep" climbed to #14 on the Australian Singles Chart (Kent Music Report). The song's music video, widely aired at the time on MTV and elsewhere, featured the band wearing black snakeskin suits while performing surrounded by standing, but seemingly sleeping women who were dressed in sleepwear. The Romantics were the first white band to appear on Soul Train, because they were "extremely funky", according to Don Cornelius.

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A 5th album, THE ROMANTICS LIVE, is recorded just after the release of their fourth LP, In Heat. The Romantics deliver a King Biscuit Flower Hour performance worthy of their reputation as a great live band. They start things off with "When I Look In Your Eyes" and for just under 60 minutes play a signature string of tunes. After performing "Talking In Your Sleep," they finish with a compilation of "Shake A Tail Feather", "What I Like About You" and "Little Latin Lupe Lu."

In 1984, Drummer Marinos departs to pursue solo projects. The Romantics, with Dave Petratos on drums, released their 6TH album RHYTHM ROMANCE in 1985, which included the hit "Test of Time" that peaked at #44 on the US main rock chart. The memorable "Test of Time" music video played in heavy rotation on MTV.

In late 1990, the Romantics added Blondie drummer Clem Burke to the lineup, and in 1994 they released a 5 song EP titled Made In Detroit for Westbound Records, containing fellow Detroiter George Clintons' Funkadelic songs along with three originals. Later that year, The Romantics received an award for Outstanding Pop/Rock Recording Artists from the Motor City Music Awards.

In 1992, when Clem had other obligations, The Romantics enlisted legendary Detroit Wheels drummer Johnny "Bee" Badanjek to perform with them at Rob Tyner's (MC5) Memorial Service. In 1996 Jimmy Marinos, the original drummer, rejoined the Romantics to tour and work on recording projects until leaving the group in 1997. The Romantics were presented with the Distinguished Achievement Award at the Detroit Music Awards in 1999.

The next several years were spent recording and finishing songs for their next album, "61/49". Released in the fall of 2003 and named for the storied crossroads near Clarksdale, Mississippi where bluesman Robert Johnson made his pact with the devil. They were joined by their original drummer, Jimmy Marinos, as well as drummer Johnny "Bee" Badanjek with a supporting cast that included keyboardists Eddie Hawrysch (Black Crowes) and Luis Resto, among others. In 2004, due to touring commitments with Blondie, Clem Burke recommended the addition of Brad Elvis, best known as a member of the Elvis Brothers and Big Hello.

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Group members continue to work on various side projects and studio sessions. Wally Palmar was fortunate enough to have performed in Ringo Starr and His All-Starr band in 2010 and 2011. The Romantics are continuously being re introduced to new generations today via the extensive airplay on contemporary rock radio, satellite radio, digital music services, various artist compilations, commercials and movie soundtracks. Some of which include: Grown Ups 1&2, Ritchie Rich, Stuart Little 2, Freaky Friday, 13 Going on 30, Shrek 2 and Surf's Up, as well as some of the more notable commercials with sponsors such as Budweiser, Burger King, Applebees, Papa John's Pizza, Esurance, Hampton Inn, TGI Fridays, Old Navy and Toyota. Sirius XM Satellite radio has also embraced The Romantics. Their songs can be heard on a number of stations including Little Steven's Underground Garage.

The Romantics Wally Palmar on Lead vocals, Coz Canler on Lead guitar, Bruce Witkin on Bass, Joey Malone on Guitar, and Mike Rizzi on Drums are currently touring across the world in 2025 and 2026.