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**ABBA** (stylised **ᗅᗺᗷᗅ**; [Template:IPA-sv](/wiki/Template:IPA-sv)) were a Swedish pop group formed in [Stockholm](/wiki/Stockholm) in 1972 by members [**A**gnetha Fältskog](/wiki/Agnetha_Fältskog), [**B**jörn Ulvaeus](/wiki/Björn_Ulvaeus), [**B**enny Andersson](/wiki/Benny_Andersson), and [**A**nni-Frid Lyngstad](/wiki/Anni-Frid_Lyngstad). They became one of the [most commercially successful acts](/wiki/List_of_best-selling_music_artists) in the history of popular music, topping the charts worldwide from 1974 to 1982. ABBA won the [Eurovision Song Contest 1974](/wiki/Eurovision_Song_Contest_1974) at [The Dome](/wiki/Brighton_Dome) in Brighton, UK, giving [Sweden](/wiki/Sweden_in_the_Eurovision_Song_Contest) its first triumph in the contest, and are the most successful group ever to take part in the competition.

ABBA's record sales figure is uncertain and various estimates range from over 140 to over 500 million sold records.[[1]](#cite_note-1)[[2]](#cite_note-2) This makes them one of the [best-selling music artists](/wiki/List_of_best-selling_music_artists). ABBA was the first group from a non-English-speaking country to achieve consistent success in the charts of English-speaking countries, including the [UK](/wiki/UK_Singles_Chart), [Ireland](/wiki/Irish_Recorded_Music_Association), [Canada](/wiki/Canadian_Hot_100), [Australia](/wiki/ARIA_Charts), [New Zealand](/wiki/Recording_Industry_Association_of_New_Zealand), [South Africa](/wiki/Recording_Industry_of_South_Africa), and on a lesser scale, the [U.S.](/wiki/Billboard_Hot_100) The group also enjoyed significant success in [Latin American](/wiki/Latin_American) markets, and recorded a [collection](/wiki/Gracias_Por_La_Música_(album)) of their hit songs in Spanish.

During the band's active years, Fältskog & Ulvaeus and Lyngstad & Andersson were married. At the height of their popularity, both relationships were suffering strain which ultimately resulted in the collapse of the Ulvaeus–Fältskog marriage in 1979 and the Andersson–Lyngstad marriage in 1981. These relationship changes were reflected in the group's music, with later compositions featuring more introspective and dark lyrics in contrast to their usual pure-pop sound.[[3]](#cite_note-3) After ABBA disbanded in December 1982, Andersson and Ulvaeus achieved success writing music for the stage, while Lyngstad and Fältskog pursued solo careers with mixed success. ABBA's music declined in popularity until the purchase of ABBAs catalogue and record company Polar by Polygram in 1989 enabled the groundwork to be laid for an international re-issue of all their original material and a new Greatest Hits ([ABBA Gold](/wiki/ABBA_Gold)) collection in the Autumn of 1992 which became a worldwide smash. Several films, notably [*Muriel's Wedding*](/wiki/Muriel's_Wedding) (1994) and [*The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*](/wiki/The_Adventures_of_Priscilla,_Queen_of_the_Desert) (1994), further revived public interest in the group and the spawning of several [tribute bands](/wiki/Tribute_band). In 1999, ABBA's music was adapted into the successful musical [*Mamma Mia!*](/wiki/Mamma_Mia!) that toured worldwide. [A film of the same name](/wiki/Mamma_Mia!_(film)), released in 2008, became the highest-grossing film in the United Kingdom that year.

ABBA were honoured at the 50th anniversary celebration of the [Eurovision Song Contest](/wiki/Eurovision_Song_Contest) in 2005, when their hit "[Waterloo](/wiki/Waterloo_(ABBA_song))" was chosen as the best song in the competition's history.<ref name=50th/> The group was inducted into the [Rock and Roll Hall of Fame](/wiki/Rock_and_Roll_Hall_of_Fame) in 2010.[[4]](#cite_note-4)

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### 1958–70: Before ABBA[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

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#### Member origins and collaboration[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Benny Andersson](/wiki/Benny_Andersson) (born 16 December 1946 in [Stockholm](/wiki/Stockholm), Sweden) became (at age 18) a member of a popular Swedish pop-rock group, the [Hep Stars](/wiki/Hep_Stars), that performed covers, amongst other things, of international hits. The Hep Stars were known as "the Swedish Beatles".[[5]](#cite_note-5) They also set up Hep House, their equivalent of [Apple Corps](/wiki/Apple_Corps). Andersson played the keyboard and eventually started writing original songs for his band, many of which became major hits, including "No Response" that hit number-three in 1965, "Sunny Girl", "Wedding", and "Consolation", all of which hit number-one in 1966.[[6]](#cite_note-6) Andersson also had a fruitful songwriting collaboration with [Lasse Berghagen](/wiki/Lasse_Berghagen), with whom he wrote his first [Svensktoppen](/wiki/Svensktoppen) entry, "Sagan om lilla Sofie" ("The Story of Little Sophie"), in 1968.

[Björn Ulvaeus](/wiki/Björn_Ulvaeus) (born 25 April 1945 in [Gothenburg](/wiki/Gothenburg)/Göteborg, Sweden) also began his musical career at 18 (as a singer and guitarist), when he fronted [The Hootenanny Singers](/wiki/The_Hootenanny_Singers), a popular Swedish [folk](/wiki/Folk_music)-[skiffle](/wiki/Skiffle) group. Ulvaeus started writing English-language songs for his group, and even had a brief solo career alongside. The Hootenanny Singers and The Hep Stars sometimes crossed paths while touring. In June 1966, Ulvaeus and Andersson decided to write a song together. Their first attempt was "Isn't It Easy to Say", a song later recorded by The Hep Stars. [Stig Anderson](/wiki/Stig_Anderson) was the manager of The Hootenanny Singers and founder of the [Polar Music](/wiki/Polar_Music) label. He saw potential in the collaboration, and encouraged them to write more. The two also began playing occasionally with the other's bands on stage and on record, although it was not until 1969 that the pair wrote and produced some of their first real hits together: "[Ljuva sextital](/wiki/Ljuva_sextital)" ("Sweet Sixties"), recorded by Brita Borg, and The Hep Stars' 1969 hit "Speleman" ("Fiddler").

Andersson wrote and submitted the song "Hej, Clown" for [Melodifestivalen 1969](/wiki/Melodifestivalen_1969), the national festival to select the [Swedish entry](/wiki/Sweden_in_the_Eurovision_Song_Contest) to the [Eurovision Song Contest](/wiki/Eurovision_Song_Contest). The song tied for first place, but re-voting relegated Andersson's song to second place.[[7]](#cite_note-7) On that occasion Andersson briefly met his future spouse, singer [Anni-Frid Lyngstad](/wiki/Anni-Frid_Lyngstad), who also participated in the contest. A month later, the two had become a couple. As their respective bands began to break up during 1969, Andersson and Ulvaeus teamed up and recorded their first album together in 1970, called [*Lycka*](/wiki/Lycka) ("Happiness"), which included original songs sung by both men. Their spouses were often present in the recording studio, and sometimes added backing vocals; Fältskog even co-wrote a song with the two. Ulvaeus still occasionally recorded and performed with The Hootenanny Singers until the summer of 1974, and Andersson took part in producing their records.

[Agnetha Fältskog](/wiki/Agnetha_Fältskog) (born 5 April 1950 in [Jönköping](/wiki/Jönköping), Sweden) sang with a local dance band headed by Bernt Enghardt who sent a demo recording of the band to Karl Gerhard Lundkvist. The demo tape featured a song written and sung by Agnetha: "Jag var så kär". Lundkvist was so impressed with her voice that he was convinced she would be a star. After going through considerable effort to locate the singer, he arranged for Agnetha to come to Stockholm and to record two of her own songs. This led to Agnetha at the age of 18 having a number-one record in Sweden with a self-composed song, which later went on to sell over 80,000 copies. She was soon noticed by the critics and songwriters as a talented singer/songwriter of [schlager](/wiki/Schlager_music) style songs. Fältskog's main inspiration in her early years were singers such as [Connie Francis](/wiki/Connie_Francis). Along with her own compositions, she recorded [covers](/wiki/Cover_version) of foreign hits and performed them on tours in Swedish [folkparks](/wiki/Folkpark). Most of her biggest hits were self-composed, which was quite unusual for a female singer in the 1960s. Agnetha released four solo LPs between 1968 and 1971. She had many successful singles in the Swedish charts.

During filming of a Swedish TV special in May 1969, Fältskog met Ulvaeus, and they married on 6 July 1971. Fältskog and Ulvaeus eventually were involved in each other's recording sessions,[[8]](#cite_note-8) and soon even Andersson and Lyngstad added backing vocals to her third studio album, *Som jag är* (*As I Am*) (1970). In 1972, Fältskog starred as [Mary Magdalene](/wiki/Mary_Magdalene) in the original Swedish production of [*Jesus Christ Superstar*](/wiki/Jesus_Christ_Superstar) and attracted favourable reviews. Between 1967 and 1975, Fältskog released five studio albums.[[9]](#cite_note-9) [Anni-Frid "Frida" Lyngstad](/wiki/Anni-Frid_Lyngstad) (born 15 November 1945 in Bjørkåsen in [Ballangen](/wiki/Ballangen), Norway) sang from the age of 13 with various dance bands, and worked mainly in a jazz-oriented cabaret style. She also formed her own band, the Anni-Frid Four. In the summer of 1967, she won a national talent competition with "En ledig dag" ("A Day Off") a Swedish version of the bossa nova song "A Day in Portofino", which is included in the EMI compilation [*Frida 1967–1972*](/wiki/Frida_1967–1972). The first prize was a recording contract with [EMI](/wiki/EMI) Sweden and to perform live on the most popular TV shows in the country. This TV performance, amongst many others, is included in the 3½-hour documentary [*Frida – The DVD*](/wiki/Frida_–_The_DVD). Lyngstad released several [schlager](/wiki/Schlager) style singles on EMI without much success. When Benny Andersson started to produce her recordings in 1971, she had her first number-one single, "Min egen stad" ("My Own Town"), written by Benny and featuring all the future ABBA members on backing vocals. Lyngstad toured and performed regularly in the folkpark circuit and made appearances on radio and TV. She met Ulvaeus briefly in 1963 during a talent contest, and Fältskog during a TV show in early 1968.

Lyngstad finally linked up with her future bandmates in 1969. On 1 March 1969, she participated in the Melodifestival, where she met Andersson for the first time. A few weeks later they met again during a concert tour in southern Sweden and they soon became a couple. Andersson produced her single "Peter Pan" in September 1969—her first collaboration with Benny & Björn, as they had written the song. Andersson would then produce Lyngstad's debut studio album, [*Frida*](/wiki/Frida_(album)), which was released in March 1971. Lyngstad also played in several revues and cabaret shows in Stockholm between 1969 and 1973. After ABBA formed, she recorded another successful album in 1975, [*Frida ensam*](/wiki/Frida_ensam), which included a Swedish rendition of "[Fernando](/wiki/Fernando_(song))", a hit on the Swedish radio charts before the English version was released.[[10]](#cite_note-10)

#### First live performance and the start of "Festfolket"[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

An attempt at combining their talents occurred in April 1970 when the two couples went on holiday together to the island of [Cyprus](/wiki/Cyprus). What started as singing for fun on the beach ended up as an improvised live performance in front of the United Nations soldiers stationed on the island. Andersson and Ulvaeus were at this time recording their first album together, *Lycka*, which was to be released in September 1970. Fältskog and Lyngstad added backing vocals on several tracks during June, and the idea of their working together saw them launch a stage act, "Festfolket" (which translates from Swedish to mean both "Party People" and "Engaged Couples"), on 1 November 1970 in [Gothenburg](/wiki/Gothenburg).

The cabaret show attracted generally negative reviews, except for the performance of the Andersson and Ulvaeus hit "Hej, gamle man" ("Hello, Old Man")—the first Björn and Benny recording to feature all four. They also performed solo numbers from respective albums, but the lukewarm reception convinced the foursome to shelve plans for working together for the time being, and each soon concentrated on individual projects again.

#### First record together "Hej, gamle man"[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

"Hej, gamle man", a song about an old [Salvation Army](/wiki/Salvation_Army) soldier, became the quartet's first hit. The record was credited to **Björn & Benny** and reached number-five on the sales charts and number-one on [Svensktoppen](/wiki/Svensktoppen), staying there for 15 weeks.

It was during 1971 that the four artists began working together more, adding vocals to the others' recordings. Fältskog, Andersson and Ulvaeus toured together in May, while Lyngstad toured on her own. Frequent recording sessions brought the foursome closer together during the summer.[[11]](#cite_note-11)

### 1970–73: Forming the group[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

After the 1970 release of *Lycka*, two more singles credited to 'Björn & Benny' were released in Sweden, "Det kan ingen doktor hjälpa" ("No Doctor Can Help with That") and "Tänk om jorden vore ung" ("Imagine If the Earth Were Young"), with more prominent vocals by Fältskog and Lyngstad–and moderate chart success.

Fältskog and Ulvaeus, now married, started performing together with Andersson on a regular basis at the Swedish folkparks during the summer of 1971.

[Stig Anderson](/wiki/Stig_Anderson), founder and owner of [Polar Music](/wiki/Polar_Music), was determined to break into the mainstream international market with music by Andersson and Ulvaeus. "One day the pair of you will write a song that becomes a worldwide hit", he predicted.[[12]](#cite_note-12) Stig Anderson encouraged Ulvaeus and Andersson to write a song for Melodifestivalen, and after two rejected entries in 1971,[[13]](#cite_note-13) Andersson and Ulvaeus submitted their new song "Säg det med en sång" ("Say It with a Song") for the 1972 contest, choosing newcomer Lena Anderson to perform. The song came in third place, encouraging Stig Anderson, and became a hit in Sweden.[[14]](#cite_note-14) The first signs of foreign success came as a surprise, as the Andersson and Ulvaeus single "She's My Kind of Girl" was released through [Epic Records](/wiki/Epic_Records) in Japan in March 1972, giving the duo a Top 10 hit. Two more singles were released in Japan, "En Carousel"[[15]](#cite_note-15) ("En Karusell" in Scandinavia, an earlier version of "Merry-Go-Round") and "Love Has Its Ways" (a song they wrote with [Kōichi Morita](/wiki/Kōichi_Morita_(songwriter))).[[16]](#cite_note-16)

#### First hit as Agnetha, Anni-Frid, Benny & Björn[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

Ulvaeus and Andersson persevered with their songwriting and experimented with new sounds and vocal arrangements. "[People Need Love](/wiki/People_Need_Love)" was released in June 1972, featuring guest vocals by the women, who were now given much greater prominence. Stig Anderson released it as a single, credited to *Björn & Benny, Agnetha & Anni-Frid*. The song peaked at number 17 in the Swedish combined single and album charts, enough to convince them they were on to something.[[17]](#cite_note-17) The single also became the first record to chart for the quartet in the United States, where it peaked at number 114 on the [*Cashbox*](/wiki/Cashbox_(magazine)) singles chart and number 117 on the [*Record World*](/wiki/Record_World) singles chart. Labeled as *Björn & Benny (with Svenska Flicka)*, it was released there through [Playboy Records](/wiki/Playboy_Records). However, according to Stig Anderson, "People Need Love" could have been a much bigger American hit, but a small label like Playboy Records did not have the distribution resources to meet the demand for the single from retailers and radio programmers.[[18]](#cite_note-18) The foursome decided to record their first album together in the autumn of 1972, and sessions began on 26 September 1972. The women shared lead vocals on "Nina, Pretty Ballerina" (a top ten hit in Austria) that day, and their voices in harmony for the first time gave the foursome an idea of the quality of their combined talents.

#### "Ring Ring"[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

In 1973, the band and their manager Stig Anderson decided to have another try at Melodifestivalen, this time with the song "[Ring Ring](/wiki/Ring_Ring_(song))". The studio sessions were handled by [Michael B. Tretow](/wiki/Michael_B._Tretow), who experimented with a "[wall of sound](/wiki/Wall_of_sound)" production technique that became the wholly new sound. Stig Anderson arranged an English translation of the lyrics by [Neil Sedaka](/wiki/Neil_Sedaka) and Phil Cody and they thought this would be a surefire winner. However, on 10 February 1973, the song came third in Melodifestivalen; thus it never reached the Eurovision Song Contest itself. Nevertheless, the group released their debut studio album, also called [*Ring Ring*](/wiki/Ring_Ring_(album)). The album did well and the "Ring Ring" single was a hit in many parts of Europe and also in South Africa. However, Stig Anderson felt that the true breakthrough could only come with a UK or US hit.[[19]](#cite_note-19) When Agnetha Fältskog gave birth to her first child in 1973, she was replaced for a short period by Inger Brundin on a trip to West Germany.

#### Official naming[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

In 1973, Stig Anderson, tired of unwieldy names, started to refer to the group privately and publicly as ABBA. At first, this was a play on words, as [Abba](/wiki/Abba_Seafood) is also the name of a well-known fish-canning company in Sweden, and itself an acronym. However, since the fish-canners were unknown outside Sweden, Anderson came to believe the name would work in international markets. A competition to find a suitable name for the group was held in a Gothenburg newspaper and it was officially announced in the summer that the group were to be known as "ABBA." The group negotiated with the canners for the rights to the name.[[20]](#cite_note-20) "ABBA" is an [acronym](/wiki/Acronym) formed from the first letters of each group member's first name: Agnetha, Björn, Benny and Anni-Frid.[[21]](#cite_note-21) During a promotional photo, Benny flipped his "B" horizontally for fun, and from 1976 onwards the first 'B' in the logo version of the name was "mirror-image" reversed on the band's promotional material and ᗅᗺᗷᗅ® became the group's [registered trademark](/wiki/Registered_trademark).

The first time "ABBA" is found written on paper is on a recording session sheet from the Metronome Studio in [Stockholm](/wiki/Stockholm), dated 16 October 1973. This was first written as "Björn, Benny, Agnetha & Frida", but was subsequently crossed out with "ABBA" written in large letters on top.

#### Official logo[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

The official logo, using the bold version of the [News Gothic](/wiki/News_Gothic) typeface, was designed by Rune Söderqvist, and appeared for the first time on the "[Dancing Queen](/wiki/Dancing_Queen)" single in August 1976, and subsequently on all later original albums and singles. But the idea for the official logo was made by the German photographer Wolfgang Heilemann on a "Dancing Queen" shoot for the teenage magazine [Bravo](/wiki/Bravo_(magazine)). On the photo, the ABBA members held a giant initial letter of his/her name. After the pictures were made, Heilemann found out that one of the men held his letter backwards as in ᗅᗺᗷᗅ. They discussed it and the members of ABBA liked it.

Following their acquisition of the group's catalogue, Polygram began using variations of the ABBA logo, using a different font and adding a crown emblem to it in 1992 for the first release of the *ABBA Gold: Greatest Hits* compilation. When Universal Music purchased Polygram (and, thus, ABBA's label Polar Music International), control of the group's catalogue was returned to Stockholm. Since then, the original logo has been reinstated on all official products.[[22]](#cite_note-22)

### 1973–76: Breakthrough[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

#### Eurovision Song Contest 1974[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[thumb|right|ABBA on Dutch TV in April 1974: Clockwise from top left](/wiki/File:ABBA_-_TopPop_1974_1.png) [Benny Andersson](/wiki/Benny_Andersson), [Björn Ulvaeus](/wiki/Björn_Ulvaeus), [Agnetha Fältskog](/wiki/Agnetha_Fältskog) and [Anni-Frid Lyngstad](/wiki/Anni-Frid_Lyngstad) As the group entered the Melodifestivalen with "[Ring Ring](/wiki/Ring_Ring_(song))" but failed to qualify as the 1973 Swedish entry, Stig Anderson immediately started planning for the 1974 contest.

Ulvaeus, Andersson and Stig Anderson believed in the possibilities of using the [Eurovision Song Contest](/wiki/Eurovision_Song_Contest) as a way to make the music business aware of them as songwriters, as well as the band itself. In late 1973, they were invited by Swedish television to contribute a song for the [Melodifestivalen 1974](/wiki/Melodifestivalen_1974) and from a number of new songs, the upbeat song "[Waterloo](/wiki/Waterloo_(ABBA_song))" was chosen; the group was now inspired by the growing [glam rock](/wiki/Glam_rock) scene in England.

ABBA won their national heats on Swedish television on 9 February 1974, and with this third attempt were far more experienced and better prepared for the Eurovision Song Contest. Winning the [1974 Contest](/wiki/Eurovision_Song_Contest_1974) on 6 April 1974 gave ABBA the chance to tour Europe and perform on major television shows; thus the band saw the "Waterloo" single chart in many European countries. "Waterloo" was ABBA's first number-one single in big markets such as the UK and West Germany. In the United States, the song peaked at number-six on the [*Billboard* Hot 100](/wiki/Billboard_Hot_100) chart, paving the way for their first album and their first trip as a group there. Albeit a short promotional visit, it included their first performance on American television, [*The Mike Douglas Show*](/wiki/The_Mike_Douglas_Show). The album [*Waterloo*](/wiki/Waterloo_(album)) only peaked at number 145 on the [*Billboard* 200](/wiki/Billboard_200) chart, but received unanimous high praise from the US critics: [*Los Angeles Times*](/wiki/Los_Angeles_Times) called it "a compelling and fascinating debut album that captures the spirit of mainstream pop quite effectively … an immensely enjoyable and pleasant project", while [*Creem*](/wiki/Creem) characterized it as "a perfect blend of exceptional, lovable compositions".[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

ABBA's follow-up single, "[Honey, Honey](/wiki/Honey,_Honey)", peaked at number 27 on the US [*Billboard* Hot 100](/wiki/Billboard_Hot_100), and was a number-two hit in West Germany. However, in the United Kingdom, ABBA's British record label, Epic, decided to re-release a remixed version of "Ring Ring" instead of "Honey, Honey", and a cover version of the latter by [Sweet Dreams](/wiki/Sweet_Dreams_(1970s_band)) peaked at number 10. Both records debuted on the UK chart within one week of each other. "Ring Ring" failed to reach the Top 30 in the United Kingdom, increasing growing speculation that the group was simply a Eurovision [one-hit wonder](/wiki/One-hit_wonder).

#### Post-Eurovision[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

In November 1974, ABBA embarked on their first European tour, playing dates in Denmark, West Germany and Austria. It was not as successful as the band had hoped, since most of the venues did not sell out. Due to a lack of demand, they were even forced to cancel a few shows, including a sole concert scheduled in Switzerland. The second leg of the tour, which took them through Scandinavia in January 1975, was very different. They played to full houses everywhere and finally got the reception they had aimed for. Live performances continued during the summer of 1975 when ABBA embarked on a fourteen open-air date tour of Sweden and Finland. Their [Stockholm](/wiki/Stockholm) show at the [Gröna Lund](/wiki/Gröna_Lund) amusement park had an estimated audience of 19,200.[[23]](#cite_note-23) Björn Ulvaeus later said that "If you look at the singles we released straight after Waterloo, we were trying to be more like the [Sweet](/wiki/The_Sweet), a semi-glam rock group, which was stupid because we were always a pop group."<ref name=Guardian2014>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

In late 1974, "So Long" was released as a single in the United Kingdom but it received no airplay from Radio 1 and failed to chart. In the summer of 1975, ABBA released "[I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do](/wiki/I_Do,_I_Do,_I_Do,_I_Do,_I_Do)", which again received little airplay on Radio 1 but managed to climb the charts, to number 38. Later that year, the release of their self-titled third studio album [*ABBA*](/wiki/ABBA_(album)) and single "[SOS](/wiki/SOS_(ABBA_song))" brought back their chart presence in the UK, where the single hit number six and the album peaked at number 13. "SOS" also became ABBA's second number-one single in Germany and their third in Australia. Success was further solidified with "[Mamma Mia](/wiki/Mamma_Mia_(song))" reaching number-one in the United Kingdom, Germany and Australia. In the United States, "[SOS](/wiki/SOS_(ABBA_song))" peaked at number 10 on the [Record World](/wiki/Record_World) Top 100 singles chart and number 15 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart, picking up the [BMI](/wiki/Broadcast_Music,_Inc.) Award along the way as one of the most played songs on American radio in 1975.

The success of the group in the United States had until that time been limited to single releases. By early 1976, the group already had four Top 30 singles on the US charts, but the album market proved to be tough to crack. The eponymous *ABBA* album generated three American hits, but it only peaked at number 165 on the *Cashbox* album chart and number 174 on the *Billboard* 200 chart. Opinions were voiced, by *Creem* in particular, that in the US ABBA had endured "a very sloppy promotional campaign". Nevertheless, the group enjoyed warm reviews from the American press. [*Cashbox*](/wiki/Cashbox_(magazine)) went as far as saying that "there is a recurrent thread of taste and artistry inherent in Abba's marketing, creativity and presentation that makes it almost embarrassing to critique their efforts", while *Creem* wrote: "SOS is surrounded on this LP by so many good tunes that the mind boggles".

In Australia, the airing of the music videos for "I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do" and "Mamma Mia" on the nationally-broadcast TV pop show [*Countdown*](/wiki/Countdown_(Australian_TV_series)) (which premiered in November 1974) saw the band rapidly gain enormous popularity, and *Countdown* become a key promoter of the group via their distinctive music videos. This started an immense interest for ABBA in Australia, resulting in both the single and album holding down the No. 1 positions on the charts for months.

### 1976–81: Superstardom[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

In March 1976, the band released the compilation album [*Greatest Hits*](/wiki/Greatest_Hits_(ABBA_album)), despite having had only six top 40 hits in the United Kingdom and the United States. Nevertheless, it became their first UK number-one album, and also took ABBA into the Top 50 on the US album charts for the first time, eventually selling more than a million copies there. At the same time, Germany released a compilation named *The Very Best of ABBA*, also becoming a number-one album there whereas the *Greatest Hits* compilation followed a few months later to number-two on the German charts, despite all similarities with *The Very Best* album. Also included on *Greatest Hits* was a new single, "[Fernando](/wiki/Fernando_(song))", which went to number-one in at least thirteen countries worldwide, including the United Kingdom, Germany and Australia, and the single went on to sell over 10 million copies worldwide.[[24]](#cite_note-24) In Australia, the song occupied the top position for 14 weeks (and stayed in the chart for 40 weeks), tying with [the Beatles'](/wiki/The_Beatles) "[Hey Jude](/wiki/Hey_Jude)" for longest-running number-one, and making "Fernando" one of the best-selling singles of all time in Australia. That same year, the group received its first international prize, with "Fernando" being chosen as the "Best Studio Recording of 1975". In the United States, "Fernando" reached the Top 10 of the Cashbox Top 100 singles chart and number 13 on the *Billboard* Hot 100. It also topped the [*Billboard* Adult Contemporary](/wiki/Adult_Contemporary_(chart)) chart, ABBA's first American number-one single on any chart.

In the UK, the group had nine Number One's in the chart between 1974 and 1980. The only recording artists with more UK number 1s by 1980 were Elvis Presley and The Beatles. The following songs were UK Number 1s: "Waterloo" ('74) "Mamma Mia" "Fernando" "Dancing Queen" "Knowing Me, Knowing You" "The Name of the Game" "Take a chance on me" "The Winner takes it all" & "Super Trouper" ('80).

[thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Frida_Lyngstad_Schiphol_1976.jpg)[Frida Lyngstad](/wiki/Frida_Lyngstad) in Netherlands (Amsterdam Airport Schiphol), 1976|left

The group's fourth studio album, [*Arrival*](/wiki/Arrival_(ABBA_album)), a number-one bestseller in Europe and Australia, represented a new level of accomplishment in both songwriting and studio work, prompting rave reviews from more rock-oriented UK music weeklies such as [*Melody Maker*](/wiki/Melody_Maker) and [*New Musical Express*](/wiki/NME), and mostly appreciative notices from US critics. Hit after hit flowed from *Arrival*: "[Money, Money, Money](/wiki/Money,_Money,_Money)", another number-one in Germany and Australia, and "[Knowing Me, Knowing You](/wiki/Knowing_Me,_Knowing_You)", ABBA's sixth consecutive German number-one as well as another UK number-one. The real sensation was "[Dancing Queen](/wiki/Dancing_Queen)", not only topping the charts in loyal markets the UK, Germany and Australia, but also reaching number-one in the United States. In South Africa, ABBA had astounding success with "Fernando", "Dancing Queen" and "Knowing Me, Knowing You" being among the top 20 best-selling singles for 1976–77. In 1977, *Arrival* was nominated for the inaugural [BRIT Award](/wiki/Brit_Awards) in the category "Best International Album of the Year". By this time ABBA were popular in the United Kingdom, most of Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand. In *Frida – The DVD*, Lyngstad explains how she and Fältskog developed as singers, as ABBA's recordings grew more complex over the years.

The band's popularity in the United States would remain on a comparatively smaller scale, and "Dancing Queen" became the only *Billboard* Hot 100 number-one single ABBA had there (they did, however, get three more singles to the number-one position on other *Billboard* charts, including *Billboard* Adult Contemporary and [Hot Dance Club Play](/wiki/Hot_Dance_Club_Play)). Nevertheless, *Arrival* finally became a true breakthrough release for ABBA on the US album market where it peaked at number 20 on the *Billboard* 200 chart and was certified gold by [RIAA](/wiki/Recording_Industry_Association_of_America).

#### European and Australian tour[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

In January 1977, ABBA embarked on their first major tour. The group's status had changed dramatically and they were clearly regarded as superstars. They opened their much anticipated tour in [Oslo](/wiki/Oslo), Norway, on 28 January, and mounted a lavishly produced spectacle that included a few scenes from their self-written mini-operetta *The Girl with the Golden Hair*. The concert attracted immense media attention from across Europe and Australia. They continued the tour through Western Europe, visiting [Gothenburg](/wiki/Gothenburg), Copenhagen, Berlin, [Cologne](/wiki/Cologne), Amsterdam, [Antwerp](/wiki/Antwerp), [Essen](/wiki/Essen), [Hanover](/wiki/Hanover), and [Hamburg](/wiki/Hamburg) and ending with shows in the United Kingdom in [Manchester](/wiki/Manchester), Birmingham, Glasgow and two sold-out concerts at London's [Royal Albert Hall](/wiki/Royal_Albert_Hall). Tickets for these two shows were available only by mail application and it was later revealed that the box-office received 3.5 million requests for tickets, enough to fill the venue 580 times. Along with praise ("ABBA turn out to be amazingly successful at reproducing their records", wrote [*Creem*](/wiki/Creem)), there were complaints that "ABBA performed slickly...but with a zero personality coming across from a total of 16 people on stage" ([*Melody Maker*](/wiki/Melody_Maker)). One of the Royal Albert Hall concerts was filmed as a reference for the filming of the Australian tour for what became [*ABBA: The Movie*](/wiki/ABBA:_The_Movie), though it is not exactly known how much of the concert was filmed.

[left|upright|thumb|](/wiki/File:Abba_28011977_15_200.jpg)[Agnetha Fältskog](/wiki/Agnetha_Fältskog) at the opening concert of ABBA's European and Australian Tour in [Oslo](/wiki/Oslo), 28 January 1977. After the European leg of the tour, in March 1977, ABBA played 11 dates in Australia before a total of 160,000 people. The opening concert in Sydney at the [Sydney Showground](/wiki/Sydney_Showground_(Moore_Park)) on 3 March to an audience of 20,000 was marred by torrential rain with Lyngstad slipping on the wet stage during the concert. However, all four members would later recall this concert as the most memorable of their career. Upon their arrival in [Melbourne](/wiki/Melbourne), a civic reception was held at the [Melbourne Town Hall](/wiki/Melbourne_Town_Hall) and ABBA appeared on the balcony to greet an enthusiastic crowd of 6,000. In Melbourne, the group played three concerts at the [Sidney Myer Music Bowl](/wiki/Sidney_Myer_Music_Bowl) with 14,500 at each including the Australian Prime Minister [Malcolm Fraser](/wiki/Malcolm_Fraser) and his family. At the first Melbourne concert, an additional 16,000 people gathered outside the fenced-off area to listen to the concert. In [Adelaide](/wiki/Adelaide), the group performed one concert at [West Lakes Football Stadium](/wiki/Football_Park) before 20,000 people, with another 10,000 listening outside. During the first of five concerts in Perth, there was a bomb scare with everyone having to evacuate the Entertainment Centre. The trip was accompanied by mass hysteria and unprecedented media attention ("Swedish ABBA stirs box-office in Down Under tour...and the media coverage of the quartet rivals that set to cover the upcoming Royal tour of Australia", wrote [*Variety*](/wiki/Variety_(magazine))), and is captured on film in [*ABBA: The Movie*](/wiki/ABBA:_The_Movie), directed by [Lasse Hallström](/wiki/Lasse_Hallström).

The Australian tour and its subsequent *ABBA: The Movie* produced some ABBA lore, as well. Fältskog's blonde good looks had long made her the band's "pin-up girl", a role she disdained. During the Australian tour, she performed in a skin-tight white jumpsuit, causing one Australian newspaper to use the headline "Agnetha's bottom tops dull show". When asked about this at a news conference, she replied: "Don't they have bottoms in Australia?"[[25]](#cite_note-25) In December 1977, ABBA followed up *Arrival* with the more ambitious fifth album [*ABBA: The Album*](/wiki/ABBA:_The_Album), released to coincide with the debut of *ABBA: The Movie*. Although the album was less well received by UK reviewers, it did spawn more worldwide hits: "[The Name of the Game](/wiki/The_Name_of_the_Game_(ABBA_song))" and "[Take a Chance on Me](/wiki/Take_a_Chance_on_Me)", which both topped the UK charts, and peaked at number 12 and number three, respectively, on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart in the US. Although "Take a Chance on Me" did not top the American charts, it proved to be ABBA's biggest hit single there, selling more copies than "Dancing Queen".[[26]](#cite_note-26) *The Album* also included "[Thank You for the Music](/wiki/Thank_You_for_the_Music)", the B-side of "[Eagle](/wiki/Eagle_(song))" in countries where the latter had been released as a single, and was belatedly released as an A-side single in the United Kingdom and Ireland in 1983. "[Thank You for the Music](/wiki/Thank_You_for_the_Music)" has become one of the best loved and best known ABBA songs without being released as a single during the group's lifetime.

#### Polar Music Studio formation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[thumb|267px|Polar Music Studios was situated in this building at 58 Sankt Eriksgatan in Stockholm until 2004](/wiki/File:Sportpalatset_Stockholm_2010.jpg)

By 1978 ABBA were one of the biggest bands in the world. They converted a vacant movie theatre into the [Polar Music](/wiki/Polar_Music) Studio, a state-of-the-art studio in [Stockholm](/wiki/Stockholm). The studio was used by several other bands; notably [Genesis'](/wiki/Genesis_(band)) [*Duke*](/wiki/Duke_(album)) and [Led Zeppelin's](/wiki/Led_Zeppelin) [*In Through the Out Door*](/wiki/In_Through_the_Out_Door) were recorded there. During May, the group went to the United States for a promotional campaign, performing alongside [Andy Gibb](/wiki/Andy_Gibb) on [Olivia Newton-John's](/wiki/Olivia_Newton-John) TV show. Recording sessions for the single "[Summer Night City](/wiki/Summer_Night_City)" were an uphill struggle,[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) but upon release the song became another hit for the group. The track would set the stage for ABBA's foray into [disco](/wiki/Disco) with their next album.[[27]](#cite_note-27) On 9 January 1979, the group performed "[Chiquitita](/wiki/Chiquitita)" at the [Music for UNICEF Concert](/wiki/Music_for_UNICEF_Concert) held at the [United Nations General Assembly](/wiki/United_Nations_General_Assembly) to celebrate UNICEF's Year of the Child. ABBA donated the [copyright](/wiki/Copyright) of this worldwide hit to the [UNICEF](/wiki/United_Nations_Children's_Fund); see [Music for UNICEF Concert](/wiki/Music_for_UNICEF_Concert).[[28]](#cite_note-28) The single was released the following week, and reached number-one in ten countries.

#### North American and European tours[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

In mid-January 1979, Ulvaeus and Fältskog announced they were getting divorced. The news caused interest from the media and led to speculation about the band's future. ABBA assured the press and their fan base they were continuing their work as a group and that the divorce would not affect them.[[29]](#cite_note-29) Nonetheless, the media continued to confront them with this in interviews. To escape the media swirl and concentrate on their writing, Andersson and Ulvaeus secretly travelled to [Compass Point Studios](/wiki/Compass_Point_Studios) in [Nassau, Bahamas](/wiki/Nassau,_Bahamas), where for two weeks they prepared their next album's songs.

The group's sixth studio album, [*Voulez-Vous*](/wiki/Voulez-Vous), was released in April 1979, the title track of which was recorded at the famous [Criteria Studios](/wiki/Criteria_Studios) in Miami, Florida, with the assistance of recording engineer [Tom Dowd](/wiki/Tom_Dowd) amongst others. The album topped the charts across Europe and in Japan and Mexico, hit the Top 10 in Canada and Australia and the Top 20 in the United States. None of the singles from the album reached number-one on the UK charts, but "[Chiquitita](/wiki/Chiquitita)", "[Does Your Mother Know](/wiki/Does_Your_Mother_Know)", "[Angeleyes](/wiki/Angeleyes)" (with "[Voulez-Vous](/wiki/Voulez-Vous_(song))", released as a double A-side) and "[I Have a Dream](/wiki/I_Have_a_Dream_(song))" were all UK Top 5 hits. In Canada, "I Have a Dream" became ABBA's second number-one on the [RPM](/wiki/Revolutions_per_minute) Adult Contemporary chart (after "Fernando" hit the top previously). Also in 1979, the group released their second compilation album, [*Greatest Hits Vol. 2*](/wiki/Greatest_Hits_Vol._2_(ABBA_album)), which featured a brand new track: "[Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! (A Man After Midnight)](/wiki/Gimme!_Gimme!_Gimme!_(A_Man_After_Midnight))", another number-three hit in both the UK and Germany. In Russia during the late 1970s, the group was paid in oil commodities because of an [embargo](/wiki/Embargo) on the [ruble](/wiki/Soviet_ruble).[[30]](#cite_note-30) On 13 September 1979, ABBA began their [ABBA: The Tour](/wiki/ABBA:_The_Tour) at the [Northlands Coliseum](/wiki/Rexall_Place) in Edmonton, Canada, with a full house of 14,000. "The voices of the band, Agnetha's high sauciness combined with round, rich lower tones of Anni-Frid, were excellent...Technically perfect, melodically correct and always in perfect pitch...The soft lower voice of Anni-Frid and the high, edgy vocals of Agnetha were stunning", raved [*Edmonton Journal*](/wiki/Edmonton_Journal).

During the next four weeks they played a total of 17 sold-out dates, 13 in the United States and four in Canada. The last scheduled ABBA concert in the United States in Washington, D.C. was cancelled due to Fältskog's emotional distress suffered during the flight from New York to Boston, when the group's private plane was subjected to [extreme weather conditions](/wiki/Windsor_Locks,_Connecticut_Tornado) and was unable to land for an extended period. They appeared at the [Boston Music Hall](/wiki/Citi_Performing_Arts_Center) for the performance 90 minutes late. The tour ended with a show in Toronto, Canada at [Maple Leaf Gardens](/wiki/Maple_Leaf_Gardens) before a capacity crowd of 18,000. "ABBA plays with surprising power and volume; but although they are loud, they're also clear, which does justice to the signature vocal sound...Anyone who's been waiting five years to see Abba will be well satisfied", wrote [*Record World*](/wiki/Record_World).

On 19 October 1979, the tour resumed in Western Europe where the band played 23 sold-out gigs, including six sold-out nights at London's [Wembley Arena](/wiki/Wembley_Arena).

#### Progression[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[thumbnail|](/wiki/File:Schallplatte.jpg)[*Super Trouper*](/wiki/Super_Trouper_(album)), seventh studio album released by the group in 1980 In March 1980, ABBA travelled to Japan where upon their arrival at [Narita International Airport](/wiki/Narita_International_Airport), they were besieged by thousands of fans. The group played eleven concerts to full houses, including six shows at Tokyo's [Budokan](/wiki/Nippon_Budokan). This tour was the last "on the road" adventure of their career. In the summer of 1980, the group released the single "[The Winner Takes It All](/wiki/The_Winner_Takes_It_All)" the group's eighth UK chart topper (and their first since 1978). The song is widely misunderstood as being written about Ulvaeus and Fältskog's marital tribulations; Ulvaeus wrote the lyrics, but has stated they were not about his own divorce; Fältskog has repeatedly stated she was not the loser in their divorce. In the United States, the single peaked at number-eight on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart and became ABBA's second *Billboard* Adult Contemporary number-one. It was also re-recorded by Andersson and Ulvaeus with a slightly different backing track, by French chanteuse [Mireille Mathieu](/wiki/Mireille_Mathieu) at the end of 1980 – as "Bravo Tu As Gagné", with French lyrics by Alain Boublil. November the same year saw the release of ABBA's seventh album [*Super Trouper*](/wiki/Super_Trouper_(album)), which reflected a certain change in ABBA's style with more prominent use of synthesizers and increasingly personal lyrics. It set a record for the most pre-orders ever received for a UK album after one million copies were ordered before release. The second single from the album, "[Super Trouper](/wiki/Super_Trouper_(song))", also hit number-one in the UK, becoming the group's ninth and final UK chart-topper. Another track from the *Super Trouper* album, "[Lay All Your Love on Me](/wiki/Lay_All_Your_Love_on_Me)", released in 1981 as a [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) single only in selected territories, managed to top the *Billboard* Hot Dance Club Play chart and peaked at number-seven on the UK singles chart becoming, at the time, the highest ever charting [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) release in UK chart history.

Also in 1980, ABBA recorded a compilation of Spanish-language versions of their hits called [*Gracias Por La Música*](/wiki/Gracias_Por_La_Música_(album)). This was released in Spanish-speaking countries as well as in Japan and Australia. The album became a major success, and along with the Spanish version of "Chiquitita", this signalled the group's breakthrough in Latin America. *ABBA Oro: Grandes Éxitos*, the Spanish equivalent of *ABBA Gold: Greatest Hits*, was released in 1999.

### 1981–82: Final album and performances[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[thumb| ABBA during a TV special](/wiki/File:ABBA_Last_Interveiw_-_Cavett.png) [*Dick Cavett Meets ABBA*](/wiki/Dick_Cavett_Meets_ABBA) in April 1981

In January 1981, Ulvaeus married Lena Källersjö, and manager Stig Anderson celebrated his 50th birthday with a party. For this occasion, ABBA recorded the track "Hovas Vittne" (a pun on the Swedish name for [Jehovah's Witness](/wiki/Jehovah's_Witness) and Anderson's birthplace, [Hova](/wiki/Hova,_Sweden)) as a tribute to him, and released it only on 200 red vinyl copies, to be distributed to the guests attending the party. This single has become a sought-after collectible. In mid-February 1981, Andersson and Lyngstad announced they were filing for divorce. Information surfaced that their marriage had been an uphill struggle for years, and Benny had already met another woman, Mona Nörklit, whom he married in November 1981.

Andersson and Ulvaeus had songwriting sessions during the spring of 1981, and recording sessions began in mid-March. At the end of April, the group recorded a TV special, [*Dick Cavett Meets ABBA*](/wiki/Dick_Cavett_Meets_ABBA) with the US talk show host [Dick Cavett](/wiki/Dick_Cavett). [*The Visitors*](/wiki/The_Visitors_(ABBA_album)), ABBA's eighth and final studio album, showed a songwriting maturity and depth of feeling distinctly lacking from their earlier recordings but still placing the band squarely in the pop genre, with catchy tunes and harmonies. Although not revealed at the time of its release, the album's title track, according to Ulvaeus, refers to the secret meetings held against the approval of totalitarian governments in Soviet-dominated states, while other tracks address topics like failed relationships, the threat of war, ageing, and loss of innocence. The album's only major single release, "[One of Us](/wiki/One_of_Us_(ABBA_song))", proved to be the last of ABBA's nine number-one singles in Germany, this being in December 1981; and the swansong of their sixteen Top 5 singles on the South African chart. "One of Us" was also ABBA's final Top 3 hit in the UK, reaching No. 1 on some charts (such as Record Mirror).

Although it topped the album charts across most of Europe, including Ireland, the UK and Germany, *The Visitors* was not as commercially successful as its predecessors, showing a commercial decline in previously loyal markets such as France, Australia and Japan. A track from the album, "[When All Is Said and Done](/wiki/When_All_Is_Said_and_Done_(song))", was released as a single in North America, Australia and New Zealand, and fittingly became ABBA's final Top 40 hit in the US (debuting on the US charts on 31 December 1981), while also reaching the US Adult Contemporary Top 10, and number-four on the RPM Adult Contemporary chart in Canada. The song's lyrics, as with "[The Winner Takes It All](/wiki/The_Winner_Takes_It_All)" and "One of Us", dealt with the painful experience of separating from a long-term partner, though it looked at the trauma more optimistically. With the now publicised story of Andersson and Lyngstad's divorce, speculation increased of tension within the band. Also released in the United States was the title track of *The Visitors*, which hit the Top Ten on the *Billboard* Hot Dance Club Play chart.

#### Final recording sessions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

In the spring of 1982, songwriting sessions had started and the group came together for more recordings. Plans were not completely clear, but a new album was discussed and the prospect of a small tour suggested. The recording sessions in May and June 1982 were a struggle, and only three songs were eventually recorded: "You Owe Me One", "I Am the City" and "Just Like That". Andersson and Ulvaeus were not satisfied with the outcome, so the tapes were shelved and the group took a break for the summer.[[31]](#cite_note-31) Back in the studio again in early August, the group had changed plans for the rest of the year: they settled for a Christmas release of a double album compilation of all their past single releases to be named [*The Singles: The First Ten Years*](/wiki/The_Singles:_The_First_Ten_Years). New songwriting and recording sessions took place,[[32]](#cite_note-32) and during October and December, they released the singles "[The Day Before You Came](/wiki/The_Day_Before_You_Came)"/"[Cassandra](/wiki/Cassandra_(ABBA_song))" and "[Under Attack](/wiki/Under_Attack)"/"[You Owe Me One](/wiki/You_Owe_Me_One)", the A-sides of which were included on the compilation album. Neither single made the Top 20 in the United Kingdom, though "[The Day Before You Came](/wiki/The_Day_Before_You_Came)" became a Top 5 hit in many European countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. The album went to number-one in the UK and Belgium, Top 5 in the Netherlands and Germany and Top 20 in many other countries. "Under Attack", the group's final release before disbanding, was a Top 5 hit in the Netherlands and Belgium.

"I Am the City" and "Just Like That" were left unreleased on *The Singles: The First Ten Years* for possible inclusion on the next projected studio album, though this never came to fruition. "I Am the City" was eventually released on the compilation album [*More ABBA Gold*](/wiki/More_Gold:_More_Hits) in 1993, while "Just Like That" has been recycled in new songs with other artists produced by Andersson and Ulvaeus. A reworked version of the verses ended up in the musical [*Chess*](/wiki/Chess_(musical)).[[33]](#cite_note-33) The chorus section of "Just Like That" was eventually released on a retrospective box set in 1994, as well as in the *ABBA Undeleted* medley featured on disc 9 of *The Complete Studio Recordings*. Despite a number of requests from fans, Ulvaeus and Andersson are still refusing to release ABBA's version of "Just Like That" in its entirety, even though the complete version surfaced on bootlegs.

The group travelled to London to promote *The Singles: The First Ten Years* in the first week of November 1982, appearing on [*Saturday Superstore*](/wiki/Saturday_Superstore) and [*The Late, Late Breakfast Show*](/wiki/The_Late,_Late_Breakfast_Show), and also to West Germany in the second week, to perform on Show Express. On 19 November 1982, ABBA appeared for the last time in Sweden on the TV programme Nöjesmaskinen, and on 11 December 1982, they made their last performance ever, transmitted to the UK on [Noel Edmonds'](/wiki/Noel_Edmonds) [*The Late, Late Breakfast Show*](/wiki/The_Late,_Late_Breakfast_Show),[[34]](#cite_note-34) On 4 July 2008, all four ABBA members were reunited at the Swedish premiere of the film [*Mamma Mia!*](/wiki/Mamma_Mia!_(film)). It was only the second time all of them had appeared together in public since 1986.[[47]](#cite_note-47) During the appearance, they re-emphasized that they intended never to officially reunite, citing the opinion of [Robert Plant](/wiki/Robert_Plant) that the re-formed [Led Zeppelin](/wiki/Led_Zeppelin) was more like a [cover band](/wiki/Cover_band) of itself than the original band. Ulvaeus stated that he wanted the band to be remembered as they were during the peak years of their success.[[48]](#cite_note-48) [thumb|350px|Posing together with the actors from the motion picture](/wiki/File:ABBA_2008_Av_Daniel_Åhs.jpg) [*Mamma Mia! The Movie*](/wiki/Mamma_Mia!_(film)) on 4 July 2008, are the original ABBA members. Far left, Benny Andersson. Fifth from left, Agnetha Fältskog, with her hand on Anni-Frid Lyngstad's shoulder. Second from right, Björn Ulvaeus.

The compilation album [*ABBA Gold: Greatest Hits*](/wiki/ABBA_Gold:_Greatest_Hits), originally released in 1992, returned to number-one in the UK album charts for the fifth time on 3 August 2008.[[49]](#cite_note-49) On 14 August 2008, the [*Mamma Mia! The Movie*](/wiki/Mamma_Mia!_(film)) film soundtrack went to number-one on the US *Billboard* charts, ABBA's first US chart-topping album. During the band's heyday the highest album chart position they had ever achieved in America was number 14.

In November 2008, all eight studio albums, together with a ninth of rare tracks, was released as [*The Albums*](/wiki/The_Albums).[[50]](#cite_note-50) It hit several charts, peaking at number-four in Sweden and reaching the Top 10 in several other European territories.

In 2008, [Sony Computer Entertainment](/wiki/Sony_Computer_Entertainment) Europe, in collaboration with [Universal Music Group](/wiki/Universal_Music_Group) Sweden AB, released [*SingStar ABBA*](/wiki/List_of_SingStar_titles) on both the [PlayStation 2](/wiki/PlayStation_2) and [PlayStation 3](/wiki/PlayStation_3) games consoles, as part of the [SingStar](/wiki/SingStar) music video games. The PS2 version features 20 ABBA songs, while 25 songs feature on the PS3 version.

On 22 January 2009, Fältskog and Lyngstad appeared together on stage to receive the Swedish music award *"Rockbjörnen"* (for "lifetime achievement"). In an interview, the two women expressed their gratitude for the honorary award and thanked their fans.

On 25 November 2009, [PRS for Music](/wiki/PRS_for_Music) announced that the British public voted ABBA as the band they would most like to see re-form.[[51]](#cite_note-51) On 27 January 2010, ABBAWORLD, a 25-room touring exhibition featuring interactive and audiovisual activities, debuted at [Earls Court Exhibition Centre](/wiki/Earls_Court_Exhibition_Centre) in London. According to the exhibition's website, ABBAWORLD is "approved and fully supported" by the band members.[[52]](#cite_note-52)[[53]](#cite_note-53) "Mamma Mia" was released as one of the first few non-premium song selections for the online RPG game *Bandmaster*. On 17 May 2011, "Gimme! Gimme! Gimme!" was added as a non-premium song selection for the Bandmaster Philippines server. On 15 November 2011, [Ubisoft](/wiki/Ubisoft) released a [dancing game](/wiki/Dancing_game) called [*ABBA: You Can Dance*](/wiki/ABBA:_You_Can_Dance) for the [Wii](/wiki/Wii).[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

In January 2012, Universal Music announced the re-release of ABBA's final album *The Visitors*, featuring a previously unheard track "From a Twinkling Star to a Passing Angel".[[54]](#cite_note-54) A book entitled *ABBA: The Official Photo Book* was published in early 2014 to mark the 40-year anniversary of the band's Eurovision victory. The book reveals that part of the reason for the band's outrageous costumes were the Swedish tax laws at the time that allowed the cost of [brazen](/wiki/Wikt:brazen) outfits that were not suitable for public display to be deducted against Tax

On 20 January 2016 all four members of ABBA made a public appearance at *Mamma Mia* the party. It was their first since the *Mamma Mia* movie premiere 8 years earlier.[[55]](#cite_note-55) On 6 June 2016 at a big private party at [Berns salonger](/wiki/Berns_salonger) in Stockholm to celebrate 50 years to the day since Andersson and Ulvaeus the first met, they and Fältskog and Lyngstad all took to the stage and performed the ABBA track *The Way Old Friends Do* together.[[56]](#cite_note-56) The band created a basic rhythm track with a drummer, guitarist and bass player, and overlaid other arrangements and instruments. Vocals were then added, and orchestra [overdubs](/wiki/Overdubbing) were usually left until last.[[57]](#cite_note-57) Agnetha and Frida contributed ideas at the studio stage. Benny and Björn played them in the backing tracks and they made comments and suggestions. According to Agnetha, she and Frida had the final say in how the lyrics were shaped. -- "When we gather around the piano to get our voices tuned up, we often come up with things we can use in the backing vocals."[[57]](#cite_note-57) After vocals and overdubs were done, the band took up to five days to mix a song.[[57]](#cite_note-57)

### Fashion, style, videos, advertising campaigns[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

ABBA was widely noted for the colourful and trend-setting costumes its members wore.[[58]](#cite_note-58) The reason for the wild costumes was Swedish tax law. The clothes could be deductible only if they could not be worn other than for performances.[[59]](#cite_note-59) Choreography by [Graham Tainton](/wiki/Graham_Tainton) also contributed to their performance style.

The videos that accompanied some of the band's biggest hits are often cited as being among the earliest examples of the genre. Most of ABBA's videos (and *ABBA: The Movie*) were directed by [Lasse Hallström](/wiki/Lasse_Hallström), who would later direct the films [*My Life as a Dog*](/wiki/My_Life_as_a_Dog), [*The Cider House Rules*](/wiki/The_Cider_House_Rules_(film)) and [*Chocolat*](/wiki/Chocolat_(2000_film)).[[60]](#cite_note-60) ABBA made videos because their songs were hits in many different countries and personal appearances were not always possible. This was also done in an effort to minimize travelling, particularly to countries that would have required extremely long flights. Fältskog and Ulvaeus had two young children and Fältskog, who was also [afraid of flying](/wiki/Fear_of_flying), was very reluctant to leave her children for such a long time. ABBA's manager, Stig Anderson, realized the potential of showing a simple video clip on television to publicize a single or album, thereby allowing easier and quicker exposure than a concert tour. Some of these videos became classics because of the 1970s-era costumes and early video effects, such as the grouping of the band members in different combinations of pairs, overlapping one singer's profile with the other's full face, and the contrasting of one member against another.

In 1976, ABBA participated in a high-profile advertising campaign by the Matsushita Electric Industrial (today's [Panasonic](/wiki/Panasonic)), which was designed to promote the brand [National](/wiki/National_(brand)). This campaign was designed initially for Australia, where "National" was still the primary brand used by Matsushita, who had not introduced the "[Panasonic](/wiki/Panasonic)" brand to Australia yet despite its widespread use in other parts of the world. However, the campaign was also aired in Japan. Five commercials, each approximately one minute long, were produced, each using the "[National](/wiki/National_(brand)) Song" sung by ABBA, which used the melody and instrumental arrangement of "[Fernando](/wiki/Fernando_(song))", adapted with new lyrics promoting National, and working in several slogans used by National in their advertising.[[61]](#cite_note-61)

### Political position[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

In September 2010, band members Andersson and Ulvaeus criticized the right-wing [Danish People's Party](/wiki/Danish_People's_Party) (DF) for using the ABBA song "Mamma Mia" (with modified lyrics) at rallies. The band threatened to file a lawsuit against the DF, saying they never allowed their music to be used politically and that they had absolutely no interest in supporting the party. Their record label Universal Music later said that no legal action would be taken because an agreement had been reached.[[62]](#cite_note-62)

## Success in the United States[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

During their active career, from 1972 to 1982, ABBA placed twenty singles on the [*Billboard* Hot 100](/wiki/Billboard_Hot_100), fourteen of which made the top 40 (13 on the Cashbox Top 100) and ten of which made the Top 20 on both charts. A total of four of those singles reached the Top 10, including "Dancing Queen" which reached number-one in April 1977. While "Fernando" and "SOS" did not break the Top 10 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart, reaching number 13 and 15 respectively, they did reach the Top 10 on Cashbox ("Fernando") and Record World ("SOS") charts. Both "Dancing Queen" and "Take A Chance On Me" were certified gold by the [Recording Industry Association of America](/wiki/Recording_Industry_Association_of_America) for sales of over one million copies each.[[63]](#cite_note-63) The group also had 12 Top 20 singles on the *Billboard* Adult Contemporary chart with two of them, "Fernando" and "The Winner Takes It All", reaching number-one. "Lay All Your Love on Me" was ABBA's fourth number-one single on a *Billboard* chart, topping the Hot Dance Club Play chart. The singles "Dancing Queen" and "Take a Chance on Me" were certified gold (more than 1 million copies sold) by the RIAA.

Nine ABBA albums made their way into the top half of the [*Billboard* 200](/wiki/Billboard_200) album chart, with seven of them reaching the Top 50 and four reaching the Top 20. *ABBA: The Album* was the highest-charting album of the group's career, peaking at No. 14. Five albums received RIAA gold certification (more than 500,000 copies sold), while three acquired platinum status (selling more than one million copies). In 1993, the *ABBA Gold: Greatest Hits* collection was released in the United States and has since become a seven-time platinum best-seller; it climbed to number-one on the *Billboard* Top Pop Catalog Albums chart and also peaked at number 11 on *Billboard* Comprehensive Albums chart.

On 15 March 2010, ABBA was inducted into the [Rock and Roll Hall of Fame](/wiki/Rock_and_Roll_Hall_of_Fame) by [Bee Gees](/wiki/Bee_Gees) members [Barry Gibb](/wiki/Barry_Gibb) and [Robin Gibb](/wiki/Robin_Gibb). The ceremony was held at The [Waldorf Astoria Hotel](/wiki/Waldorf_Astoria_Hotel) in New York City. The group was represented by Anni-Frid Lyngstad and Benny Andersson.[[64]](#cite_note-64)

## ABBA-related tributes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

Musical groups

* ABBA The Concert – A Swedish band, the *Ultimate Tribute to ABBA* [[65]](#cite_note-65)\* [Abbaesque](/wiki/Abbaesque) – An Irish ABBA tribute band
* [A\*Teens](/wiki/A*Teens) – A pop music group from Stockholm, Sweden
* BABBA – An Australian Tribute band, formed in 1994
* [Björn Again](/wiki/Björn_Again) – The earliest-formed ABBA tribute band (1988)
* [Gabba](/wiki/Gabba_(band)) – An ABBA/[Ramones](/wiki/Ramones) tribute band that covers the former in the style of the latter, the name being a pun on "Gabba Gabba Hey".

Media

* [*ABBA: You Can Dance*](/wiki/ABBA:_You_Can_Dance) – A dance video game released by [Ubisoft](/wiki/Ubisoft) in 2011 based on songs from ABBA and also a spin-off of [*Just Dance* video game series](/wiki/Just_Dance_(video_game_series))
* [*Abbacadabra*](/wiki/Abbacadabra) – A French children's musical based on songs from ABBA
* [*Abba-esque*](/wiki/Abba-esque) – Erasure's 1992 EP
* [*ABBAmania*](/wiki/ABBAmania) – An ITV programme and tribute album to Swedish pop band ABBA released in 1999
* [*Abbasalutely*](/wiki/Abbasalutely) – A compilation album released in 1995 as a tribute album to ABBA
* [*Knowing Me, Knowing You*](/wiki/Knowing_Me_Knowing_You_with_Alan_Partridge_(TV_series)) - Used as title/homage to ABBA in the BBC TV show starring Steve Coogan's alter ego Alan Partridge
* [*Mamma Mia!*](/wiki/Mamma_Mia!) – Musical stage show based on the songs of ABBA
* [*Mamma Mia! The Movie*](/wiki/Mamma_Mia!_(film)) – Film adaption of the musical stage show

## Awards and nominations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

## Discography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

* [*Ring Ring*](/wiki/Ring_Ring_(album)) (1973)
* [*Waterloo*](/wiki/Waterloo_(album)) (1974)
* [*ABBA*](/wiki/ABBA_(album)) (1975)
* [*Arrival*](/wiki/Arrival_(ABBA_album)) (1976)
* [*The Album*](/wiki/ABBA:_The_Album) (1977)
* [*Voulez-Vous*](/wiki/Voulez-Vous) (1979)
* [*Super Trouper*](/wiki/Super_Trouper_(album)) (1980)
* [*The Visitors*](/wiki/The_Visitors_(ABBA_album)) (1981)

## Tours[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

* 1973: Swedish Folkpark Tour
* 1974–75: European Tour
* 1977: [European & Australian Tour](/wiki/European_&_Australian_Tour_(ABBA))
* 1979–80: [ABBA: The Tour](/wiki/ABBA:_The_Tour)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Wikipedia books](/wiki/Template:Wikipedia_books)

* [ABBA: The Museum](/wiki/ABBA:_The_Museum)
* ABBA City Walks – [Stockholm City Museum](/wiki/Stockholm_City_Museum)
* [ABBAMAIL](/wiki/ABBAMAIL)
* [List of best-selling music artists](/wiki/List_of_best-selling_music_artists)
* [List of Swedes in music](/wiki/List_of_Swedes_in_music)
* [Music of Sweden](/wiki/Music_of_Sweden)
* [Swedish popular music](/wiki/Swedish_popular_music)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

**Notes** [Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist) [Template:Refbegin](/wiki/Template:Refbegin) **Bibliography**

* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)

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[Template:Refend](/wiki/Template:Refend)

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

[Template:Commons+cat](/wiki/Template:Commons+cat)

* [Template:Official website](/wiki/Template:Official_website)
* [Template:Rockhall](/wiki/Template:Rockhall)
* [ABBAinter.net](http://www.ABBAinter.net/) TV-performances archive
* [Template:Discogs artist](/wiki/Template:Discogs_artist)
* [ABBA Stars](http://www.abbastars.cz/) – funpage Czech revival ABBA Stars.
* [ABBA Songs](http://www.abbasongs.co.uk/) – ABBA Album and Song details.

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