

# THE HISTORY OF THE POP GROUP

## DSCHINGHIS KHAN



With their hits Dschinghis Khan – Moskau – Hadschi Halef Omar – Rocking Son of Dschinghis Khan – Pistolero - Mexiko and many more, the German-speaking pop group Dschinghis Khan conquered the world till this day as **THE CONQUEROR IN MUSIC**.

It began in 1979.

The composer and producer, Ralph Siegel, and the lyric writer, Dr. Bernd Meinunger wrote the song DSCHINGHIS KHAN. The group with the same name DSCHINGHIS KHAN presented the song as the German contribution for the EUROVISION SONG CONTEST – A SONG FOR ISRAEL – on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1979 at the Rudi-Sedlmayr-Halle in Munich.

The names of the artists of DSCHINGHIS KHAN were: Wolfgang Heichel, Steve Bender, Leslie Mandoki, Louis Hendrik Potgieter, Edina Pop und Henriette Strobel.

Within 6 weeks only – thus under immense pressure of time and with extreme financial effort the first single record production Dschinghis Khan and Sahara was recorded in the Siegel studios. The hip costume designer, Mark Manó, created the exotic costumes. The internationally acclaimed makeup artist, Heidi Moser, created the distinctive makeups. The professional television choreographer, Hannes Winkler, developed the show for stage dancing and the Dschinghis – Khan - artists worked every day in the studio and rehearsed continuously until the show was perfect.

Then the big day arrived. On March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1979 the premiere took place at the Rudi-Sedlmayr-Halle in Munich. The pop group Dschinghis Khan participated at the German pre selection for the EUROVISION SONG CONTEST – A SONG FOR ISRAEL - with the correspondent title DSCHINGHIS KHAN. Dschinghis Khan had only three minutes time to show the German television viewers and the members of jury that they had the best song to represent Germany in Israel. For the counting method the organization had chosen a special procedure. 600 television viewers, that were



previously contacted were allowed to vote by phone and computers of an independent institute at Allensbach summed up all the results.

The first votes that were made late at night at the Rudi-Sedlmayer-Halle in Munich, on that memorable March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1979 overran DSCHINGHIS KHAN completely.

Almost everything was decided after only one minute. Second and third place changed several times, but the winner was: **DSCHINGHIS KHAN**.

So the newcomer DSCHINGHIS KHAN won first place and was selected to represent Germany in Israel at the 24<sup>th</sup> EUROVISION SONG CONTEST.

What happened then?



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The press, the radio stations and the members of the jury had different opinions about sending Dschinghis Khan to Israel. On one hand Dschinghis Khan was praised and on the other hand Dschinghis Khan was damned as a Mongolian bunch of violence glorifying people. The protest went so far that several radio stations refused to play the song Dschinghis Khan.

Even the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bonn became active concerning the German presentation of the "wild Mongolian group" Dschinghis Khan. The performance of Dschinghis Khan was stylized to a Pop-Song political issue.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bonn was worried and asked the former German Ambassador in Israel, H.E. Klaus Schütz, about Israel's reaction to the subject "Dschinghis Khan". H.E. Ambassador Klaus Schütz calmed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bonn by quoting the Israeli Embassy assistant, Dan Ashbel, who constituted: "I don't understand all the excitement. The song of the Germans is very good, the Germans shouldn't make mountains out of a molehills !!!"



Botschafter Klaus Schütz empfangend „Dschinghis Khan“

So highest diplomatic levels were involved in that Inner-German controversy about the Mongolian leader, Dschinghis Khan. To emphasize his certificate of innocuousness the Ambassador, Klaus Schütz, held a culinary reception in Jerusalem for the pop group Dschinghis Khan; the only one, that a diplomatic mission ever gave on occasion of the EUROVISION SONG CONTEST.

The great day came closer and closer.

On March 25th, 1979, the pop group Dschinghis Khan met at 12:30 at the airport in Munich to depart for Athens/Tel Aviv. At the stopover in Athens the custom officers already welcomed the pop group with the words: Dsching – Dsching – Dschinghis Khan – fantastic! In Tel Aviv the German pop group was also welcomed with open arms.

Everywhere Dschinghis Khan heard the phrase: "We love you! You are fantastic!" Dschinghis Khan was pleased by the overwhelming sympathy and popularity in Israel and by all participating artists of the EUROVISION SONG CONTEST.

Then it happened. The 24<sup>th</sup> EUROVISION SONG CONTEST was broadcasted from Jerusalem around the entire world. 500 million people watched this musical event on TV. On March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1979 the pop group Dschinghis Khan presented the hit DSCHINGHIS KHAN in Israel at the Binyanei Ha'Ouma Congress Hall and reached 4<sup>th</sup> place for Germany.



From that day on the musical triumphal procession of Dschinghis Khan was unstoppable. Dschinghis Khan conquered the charts worldwide and it was raining gold and platinum records all around the world. Already on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1979, Dschinghis Khan received their first gold record for 800.000 sold copies in Germany.

Apart from Germany, gold and platinum records came from, all in all, 20 countries amongst them Japan, Australia, Korea, The Netherlands, Belgium, Israel, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway and Finland. Dschinghis Khan received double platinum from Australia. Also the former states of the USSR and Asia are till this day great enthusiasts of the music of Dschinghis Khan.

Till this present day Dschinghis Khan is the only German-speaking pop group which reached 2 x No. 1 of the musical charts in Israel, 3 x No. 1 of the musical charts in Japan and 2 x No. 1 of the musical charts in Australia. All in their German versions. No other German artist has ever achieved anything comparable till this day.

Furthermore Dschinghis Khan reached No. 1 of the musical charts in Brazil, Denmark, Portugal and Belgium.

On their second visit to Israel from October 25<sup>th</sup> to November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1979, the German pop group Dschinghis Khan was selected as the most favoured foreign pop group of the year. They were awarded the Israeli Oscar and the Israeli-Egypt Peace Medal in a celebratory ceremony. Already two weeks after the EUROVISION SONG CONTEST Dschinghis Khan hit number 1 in the Israeli charts. This is to be especially noted as the Israeli radio stations never aired a song in German language since the existence of Israeli radio, not mentioning entering the charts.

Since 1979 till this day the group Dschinghis Khan is known to the highest extent in the entire Asiatic region. It was already estimated in the year 1981, that approximately 15 million music cassettes had been delivered to the black market in the region of Singapore and Hong Kong in an “unbelievable” copy quality.



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Dschinghis Khan was a glamorous showcase for the sound “Made in Munich”.

All in all together with Dschinghis Khan more than 100 songs were produced and several albums were published. In the year 1981 Steve Bender left the group before the album “Wir sitzen alle im selben Boot” was published. Dschinghis Khan had further great hits and hit the charts with the songs “Pistolero” and “Loreley”.

The pop group Dschinghis Khan played an outstanding role in the German and European music business in the years 1982 and 1983.

In the year 1986 the phenomenon Dschinghis Khan was definitely over. The mentors, Ralph Siegel and Dr. Bernd Meinunger, had nothing to oppose the upcoming so called “Deutsche Welle”.

By the middle of the 90<sup>ies</sup>, the so called “Schlager-Revival” caused a great stir in the domestic German music scene, that caused a constant reminder of the genre classics of the 70<sup>ies</sup> and 80<sup>ies</sup>, the hits of Dschinghis Khan, like MOSKAU – DSCHINGHIS KHAN - HADSCI HALEF OMAR – ROCKING SON OF DSCHINGHIS KHAN – ROM and many more finally succeeded to gain CULT STATUS.

DSCHINGHIS KHAN, as a German speaking pop group, wrote international pop history.

In the year 1994 the dancer Louis Hendrik Potgieter died in South Africa.

### **June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1979**

Dschinghis Khan presented the legendary world hit MOSKAU for the first time.

During the times of the “Iron Curtain”, on the occasion of the Olympic Summer Games which took place in Russia in 1980, the pop group Dschinghis Khan made a homage to Russia with the song MOSKAU.

The song MOSKAU reached CULT STATUS in the entire world and is one of the most favoured and well known German sung hits in Russia and worldwide.



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At that time the pop group Dschinghis Khan selected the Olympic colours for their costumes. Even today Dschinghis Khan are frenetically celebrated when they perform their hit MOSKAU in Russia. It is impossible to imagine Russian radio and TV-Shows and stages without the song MOSKAU.

Wolfgang Heichel, the KHAN from DSCHINGHIS KHAN, felt extremely honoured, as he received a video from Russian fans where the Red Army Choir was singing the song MOSKAU in German at a New Years TV-Show on Russian television.

### **The Reunion in Moscow**

In the year 2005 STEVE BENDER was the driving force behind the reunion of Dschinghis Khan. Steve Bender contacted Wolfgang Heichel, the boss and the male voice of Dschinghis Khan, to inspire him with his idea of a reunion in Russia. A Russian radio station had contacted Steve Bender to organize a jubilee show with Dschinghis Khan. Wolfgang Heichel was very sceptical. As not to say "NO" he proposed to Steve Bender to stage a spectacular show with horses, camels, sedans, pyrotechnics, tigers, elephants, bears, Bolshoi Ballet and a children's choir. In private Wolfgang Heichel hoped that the case was over, but he was mistaken. Steve Bender called Wolfgang Heichel within one week and said: "Dear Wolfgang, apart of the tigers, the bears and the elephants all your wishes will be fulfilled".

This was the starting signal for Wolfgang Heichel to get involved with the reunion and the sensational comeback of Dschinghis Khan. Edina Pop and Henriette Strobel where contacted and they likewise where surprised and enthused by this idea. Wolfgang Heichel suggested to reassemble the Dschinghis Khan show by participation of young dancers and a crew of Bolshoi Ballet dancers from Moscow. Furthermore the extraordinary dancer and choreographer, Stefan Track, was engaged.



Because of his great talent his likeness with the diseased Louis Hendrik Potgieter, Stefan Track was nominated as honourable follower of Louis Potgieter by all original members.



Then everything happened like in 1979. Everything had to happen at once. The costumes for Edina Pop and Henriette Strobel were made in a hurry. Through the cooperation with Bolshoi Theatre the sensational costumes of the magnificent and diversified fund at the Bolshoi Theatre were available for Wolfgang Heichel, Steve Bender, StefanTrack, the dancers and all 72 participants.

The advertising for the one time Dschinghis Khan Reunion Show was posted in all of Moscow. The radio station Retro FM announced the great event continuously, and pre-sales of tickets began. Nothing happened. What next? Quickly the Russian organizer decided to fly the pop group Dschinghis Khan into Moscow one week prior to the show, to present Dschinghis Khan in several radio interviews and TV reports.

What happened next was unbelievable. Dschinghis Khan flew to Moscow. On arrival at the airport the pop group Dschinghis Khan was welcomed by big Russian TV stations with live broadcasting and afterwards a great press conference took place. Within a few hours after the official arrival of Dschinghis Khan the tickets of the Olympiski Arena in Moscow, with a capacity of 30.000, were completely sold out.

Due to the fact that Dschinghis Khan had to interrupt their rehearsals in Germany to fly earlier to Moscow, a dance studio of the Bolshoi Theatre was provided in Moscow. Dschinghis Khan and 72 participants now rehearsed locally until the sensational show was perfected.



At the legendary RETRO-FM opening show of the Dschinghis Khan reunion, with horses, camels, sedan chairs, carriers, impressing pyrotechnics, children's choir and Bolshoi Ballet, on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at the Olympiski Arena in Moscow, which was broadcasted worldwide by Russian television via satellite in 54 Russian speaking countries, Dschinghis Khan celebrated a sensational comeback in front of an audience of 30.000 people and 100 million TV-viewers. To broadcast the show in all detail the TV-Station used 15 cameras. The organizer of the legendary reunion show of Dschinghis Khan sold more than 500.000 DVD copies, and the show was viewed on the internet more than 16 million times.

Since then it is impossible to imagine Russian radio-/ TV-stations and stages without the songs of the pop group Dschinghis Khan - "Dschinghis Khan" and "Moscow" and many more. The popularity of Wolfgang Heichel and Dschinghis Khan were unbroken in Russia. Invitations from Siberia and all the way up to the Black Sea followed. On July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006 Dschinghis Khan performed an Open Air Concert





in Mongolia on the occasion of the 800<sup>th</sup> centenary of the land of Dschinghis Khan. Here also the pop group performed an unforgettable concert together with wild riders, shamans, Mongolian drummers and a Mongolian children's choir in front of an audience of 40.000 people.

## TODAY

In the meantime the pop group is writing a new chapter of the long story of success about DSCHINGHIS KHAN. In the year 2018 the PRIMARY DSCHINGHIS KHAN, Wolfgang Heichel, brought back the lost son of Dschinghis Khan, Stefan Track, to the group and presented since then the best and most professional cast of the successful formation.

Due to the cooperation of Wolfgang Heichel and Stefan Track the unlimited, registered rights and brand name were merged for Germany, Russia, Ukraine, and Spain.

ORIGINAL DSCHINGHIS KHAN is standing on stage together as well at retro legends of the 80s as in current pop shows with great attention and standing ovations. In 2019 DSCHINGHIS KHAN is celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and is working on a new album, together with the producer Luis Rodriguez (producer of Modern Talking) and other well known international artists.



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## DSCHINGHIS KHAN AWARDS AND PRICES

- ❖ Eurovision Song Contest in Israel, Place 4 for Germany (1979)
- ❖ Goldenes Bambi
- ❖ Goldener Löwe (RTL)
- ❖ Goldene Europa
- ❖ Goldene Stimmgabel
- ❖ Goldenes Popcorn
- ❖ Goldenes Mikrophon
- ❖ ECHO – Deutscher Schallplattenpreis der Deutschen Phonoakademie
- ❖ Israeli-Egypt Peace Medal
- ❖ Israeli Oscar



## DSCHINGHIS KHAN GOLDEN RECORDS

- ❖ Germany
- ❖ Israel
- ❖ Brazil
- ❖ Australia
- ❖ Belgium
- ❖ Japan
- ❖ South Korea
- ❖ The Netherlands
- ❖ Denmark
- ❖ Sweden
- ❖ Finland
- ❖ Switzerland
- ❖ Norway
- ❖ ..... and many more



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# DSCHINGHIS KHAN CHARTS INTERNATIONAL

3 x No. 1 in Japan

2 x No. 1 in Israel

2 x No. 1 in Australia

1 x No. 1 in Denmark

1 x No. 1 in Portugal

1 x No. 1 in Belgium

1 x No. 1 in Brazil

1 x No. 2 in Sweden

1 x No. 2 in Switzerland

1 x No. 3 in Austria



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