

MUSICAL

MEMORIES

by Sonia Kilvington

Everyone has musical memories. Those wonderful songs which provide the backing track to our past. Whether the memories they provoke are happy, emotional or painful; let's revisit them and celebrate some of the music which helped shape our lives...



Ray 'Duch' Peter is an accomplished singer and musician who performs in and around Larnaca, as a solo act and also as part of the musical trio, Third Dimension. He has endured a tough upbringing in children's homes and foster care, after being abandoned by his parents as a thalidomide baby.

Duch turned to crime and was a feared 'regulator' in London's East End. Leaving his past behind; he moved to Cyprus for a new beginning. The man, who once sang through the bars at Belmarsh Prison, has come a very long way...

Tell Me Duch...

When did you realize you wanted to be a musician?

After hearing my mum sing at our Pentecostal church. I was about nine at the time. I get my singing attributes from my mother; she has got a strong, powerful voice, like my own. It was strange coming from a fostered background into a hard core, Pentecostal, West Indian upbringing.

My mum used to say if you lose everything; your girlfriend, money, your house; you have always got your music to fall back on - and she was absolutely right!

Do you remember any of the hymns she used to sing?

The one I remember most was called *Farther Along* (anonymous hymn)

Did prison feel like the end of your musical career?

You have got to make the best of a bad situation. I struggled long and hard, and after eighteen months they softened, and my reward for good behaviour was access to musical instruments. This was Belmarsh, a category A prison. I used to sing through the cell window into the square. There was a good acoustic sound if you bellowed through the bars. One of the prison officers said, 'What is a guy like you, with a voice like that, doing in a place like this?' He was right, but I hated hearing it.

You might say prison was the end of my musical dreams, but actually it was the beginning, because I could write my own material. It was an experience.

Is there a track you remember singing?

Love Don't Live Here Anymore by Rose Royce, it had a nice resonance through the bars.

Tell me about your first paid performance?

It was at The Five Bells in Streatham High Road, London. I was singing a lot of my own music then. But it was the Leo Sayer cover, my main crowd pleaser, that I remember singing at the time.

Which number did you cover? I preferred David Bowie, *One Man Band* by Leo Sayer

How did you become a singer in Cyprus?

I went with some friends to a karaoke at the Skylight Bar, off Dhekelia Road. It was quite a professional set up. I got a big buzz out of it. I play the piano and the guitar, and I was interested in joining a band, but they don't do that sort of thing over here. The Skylight was the right sort of place for me to start, and it escalated from there. **Which song did you sing at the Skylight?**

Sylvia's Mother by Dr Hook & The Medicine Show. It went down a treat.

What was it like to sing in front of Simon Cowell?

To sing for Simon Cowell was one of my main ambitions, when the X Factor started up. I had done Opportunity Knocks when Bob Monkhouse was doing it, with my band Harlequin. I did the X Factor four times and auditioned for Britain's Got Talent and Fame Academy. I almost went into the Fame Academy house, but I had lied about my age, and they checked up on the electoral role. They were gutted when I had to leave. You have either got it, or you haven't, and if you can sing in front of Simon Cowell and not get booed off, or bad comments; you are doing well in life.

What did you sing for him?

Killing Me Softly by Roberta Flack. I played it on the guitar and did my own rendition.

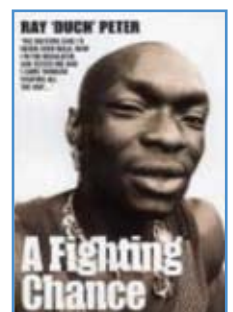
What are you doing at the moment?

I'm putting together the next installment of my memoirs. It will be about going straight and moving to Cyprus. I sing at the Corfu Tavern in Oroklini on alternate Wednesdays. I also sing with a couple of guys. We're called the Third Dimension. There is Ross Neil, who sings at the Mantra Tavern, and Greg Orton. We have just started to sing a new song by Queen, and it's causing a bit of a storm. Freddie Mercury was one of my idols, and I defy anyone else to do it; to walk in those footsteps.

Fighting talk! Which track are you singing?

Who Wants To Live Forever by Queen

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Duch Peter on 96448634



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