

Bob Sinclar

"Born in 69"

His name is Bob. Bob Sinclar. Behind that nickname now synonymous with hit records is a DJ/ producer born in '69, Christophe aka Chris The French Kiss.

The story began in 1991. Chris, whose first single bought at 15 was the famous "Rock It" by Herbie Hancock, met Alain Hô in a Parisian record shop. Together, they launched the Yellow label with their first release: the now mythical "Mathar" by Indian Vibes, remake of a rare track played on sitar by Dave Pike in 1969. *"We felt we had good vibes. We went on sampling records that inspired us. I was laid back as a producer. We were like family with the artists and there was a good feeling about it,"* remembers Chris 18 years later.

The Yellow adventure grew quickly with albums from Dimitri From Paris, Kid Loco, The Mighty Bop, Reminiscence Quartet (featuring Salomé De Bahia), Silent Poets from Japan and the compilations *Bossa Très Jazz*.

In 1997, Chris launched what was to become his most ambitious concept. He released a 12", "Disco 2000 Selector Volume 1", under the alias Bob Sinclar. On the cover: a naked woman, seventies style. *"I wanted to sample disco and to use images from seventies softcore. That's what I had in mind,"* explains Chris, who didn't appear on the first Sinclar covers. *"As I don't look like a rock & roll star, I never bothered to put my face on my records. So for the first 12"s, I had a guy with a big moustache playing Bob Sinclar. The English press loved it, and it was really fun."*

The Sinclar buzz grew bigger and bigger until the long awaited release of the first album, *Paradise*, in 1998, featuring the hits "Gym Tonic" and "My Only Love". In New York, London and Tokyo, Bob Sinclar became a household name. Chris travelled the world from Beirut to Berlin, from Chicago to Sydney.

What was supposed to be a one-off became Yellow's biggest act. In 2001, the *Champs-Élysées* album contained four singles, "I Feel For You", "Freedom", "Ich Rocke" and "Darlin". Chris charted again with "Kiss My Eyes" and "The Beat Goes On" from the album *III*, and revisited the whole Cerrone catalogue in *Cerrone By Bob Sinclar*, a compilation that started a Cerrone revival.

But between 2002 and 2004, Chris was plagued with doubts. *"I was looking for something new. I thought maybe it was the end of Bob Sinclar. In January 2005, I went into the studio with Gary Pine, who sings with The Wailers, and we did an acoustic ballad. When we put it on tape, there was an emotion in the studio that I had never felt before. It's hard to explain it with words,"* he recalls. The song was "Love Generation", revealed at the Winter Music Conference, then in Ibiza, then all over the world. In France, it became the theme of *Star Academy*, the country's equivalent of American Idol. The song sold about two million copies and was included on the album *Western Dream*. Bob had more hits coming with "World, Hold On" (sung by Steve Edwards) and "Rock This Party (Everybody Dance Now)", with a video made up entirely of dancing kids re-enacting scenes from cult videos.

Tired of Paris, Chris went to Los Angeles for a year, where he discovered folk rock sounds that were new to him: America, Boz Scaggs, John Fogerty, Michael McDonald, Dan Fogelberg. The countdown to *Born In 69* had started.

With a dozen instrumentals made between September 2007 and March 2008, Chris went to Jamaica to record some vocals. Despite coming down with a huge fever as soon as he arrived, and doing auditions in a trance, he met Christopher Martin, Tony Rebel and Queen Ifrica at the studio belonging to Shaggy and Robert Livingston, Bad Yard.

Back in LA, Chris listened to the tapes again, heard some good vibes, but not the thrill he felt doing "Love Generation". He returned to Paris to record some more tracks with his team, including engineer and co-producer Cutee B, and made significant progress in his musical puzzle.

*"At that point, I went back to the tracks I'd recorded in LA and polished them up. Then I called **Steve Edwards** who came to Paris in October, took a sample from Richie Havens "We Are Everything" (a sort of psychedelic song with a Beatles-style sitar) and tried without luck to get Q-Tip. Then I got a sample from another track by Illusion released in 1969, added Steve Edwards vocal and found the name "Peace Song". The concept of the album had started coming together."*

Another crazy idea: making a daring blend of "Je ne t'aime plus" by **Manu Chao** and the voice of **Shabba Ranks** on a track called "Love You No More". Manu Chao accepted being sampled and Shabba Ranks came (on time for once!) to the studio that Bob had rented at the end of 2008. Suffice to say, two miracles had come together.

Also in New York, the song that was soon to be chosen as the first single from *Born In 69* was recorded: the legendary **Sugarhill Gang** - who released the legendary old school hit "Rappers Delight" in 1979 - accepted the offer of a collaboration with Bob Sinclar.

With a baseline concocted by Cutee B, MCs Wonder Mike and Master Gee rapped out in their unique trademark styles, accompanied by a killer hook inspired by a kid's choir from a Kid Creole song!

And thus "LaLa Song" was in the can: a hybrid rap/dancefloor killer where new style meets old school. *"Personally, I say 'Bob Sinclar and Sugarhill Gang, they're amazing!' (laughs) I don't know why, but right from the beginning I knew it would be great, and the day we recorded, Wonder Mike and Master Gee told me that they just come from CNN where they'd been invited for the 30 year anniversary of "Rappers' Delight"! After a year of trying to make it come together, something magical had happened."*

The magic is ever-present in *Born In 69*, a record that has "classic" written all over it: "Belly Dancer" and its R&B Soca vocal provided by Kevin Lyttle over an arab rhythm, the surprising cover of "Mr. Tambourine Man" by Adam Joseph, a folk singer discovered on Myspace, "Jamaica Avenue" and its Eddy Grant-style vocals by Tony Rebel or "New, New, New" featuring Queen Ifrica from Jamaica and Vibrate from Martinique.

After 18 months, the result is here at last: *Born In 69* is ready, packed with the essential singles ("Lala Song" and "Love You No More" to start with) and overflowing with the emotion that Chris was aiming for.

"I hit upon the Born In 69 concept when looking for something linked to the Peace & Love / Flower power themes with folk voices. My 40th birthday is on 10th May, and the album is released on the 11th. It's a great gift", concludes DJ/producer Bob Sinclar. With this album full of fun and dance gems, Chris doesn't just wish himself a happy birthday: he offers the the world a collection of songs that will please the crowd and make people forget the economic crisis. It's pretty obvious: Bob Sinclar is back.