

Like a supernova, Missing Persons shined brightly before disappearing completely from the musical universe. Yet almost two decades since the release of their album, *Spring Session M*, the band continues to provide enjoyment to a loyal contingent of followers.



Thank Frank Zappa. Eighties music sensations, Missing Persons share a common link with the avant-garde legend; members Terry Bozzio (drums), Dale Bozzio (vocals), Warren Cuccurullo (guitar) and Patrick O'Hearn (bass/synthesizer) all earned their musical stripes as graduates from the musical school of Zappa. Unlike many of their new wave contemporaries, Missing Persons' secret weapon was their innate musical versatility and virtuosity. These guys could really play. Drummer Terry Bozzio was rightfully singled out by music fans and his contemporaries as one of rock's most explosive and innovative big beat technicians. Highly seasoned musicians, Missing Persons' instrumental battalion always lent their pop-oriented material a hard-won musicality far beyond the reach of their other new wave brethren.

In 1980, against the backdrop of the impending new wave invasion, Zappa alums Bozzio, Cuccurullo and O'Hearn teamed up with Terry's wife, the dazzling Dale

Bozzio, and bassist Chuck Wild to form a band christened U.S. Drag. Soon thereafter, the group changed their name to Missing Persons. Sinking \$3,000 (a loan from Warren's father) into recording their self-titled EP, the band eventually released the record on KoMos label.

Having issued an EP, Missing Persons slowly but steadily built a considerable following. As a result of consistent gigging on the local circuit, a massive buzz circulated throughout the music industry about this new bunch of upstarts. Independent sales in upwards of 10,000 copies sparked a fierce record company feeding frenzy. Capitol Records took the bait, succumbing to the hearty buzz surrounding the band, and signing them to a deal in March of 1982. The EP was re-released by Capitol in June. Buoyed by the surprise #42 chart placing of the "Words" single, the *Missing Persons* EP went on to sell a whopping 250,000 copies, making it the best-selling EP for its time.

Capitalizing on their unexpected sales surge, the band's debut album, *Spring Session M*, was released in October of that same year and remains their crowning achievement. A remarkable debut effort, *Spring Session M* (the title is an anagram of the band's name) offered a delightful compendium of sprightly and radio-friendly new wave-inflected synth-pop. Certified gold, the album raced to #17 on the Billboard album charts and yielded a string of hits, including their signature song, the offbeat and somewhat wacky "Destination Unknown," plus "Walking In L.A.," the rhythmically hyperkinetic gem "Words," and solid album cuts like "Mental Hopscotch," "Here And Now" and "Bad Streets." Yet behind Missing Persons' undeniably accessible and commercial veneer lurked a dark, esoteric foundation, marked by a pronounced avant-garde style and profound aesthetic sensibility.

And the stunning visual image of lead singer Dale Bozzio didn't hurt matters on the commercial front either. With her sultry good looks and lustrous, long-flowing pink/blonde hair, the former Playboy Bunny, came on like a female sex-pot rocker from outer space. Pre-Madonna, Bozzio flirted with the conception of the form, her R-rated image provided a tantalizing come-on to legions of ogling male fans. Adorned in a "Star Wars-like" like silvery space-age costume with two transparent globes strategically placed over her rather ample bosoms, Bozzio was a perfect video star for the MTV generation.

And Bozzio's voice was truly one of a kind, too, a weird amalgam of Betty Boop on helium and Buddy Holly's vocal hiccup affectation, purloined straight from his classic Fifties rocker "Rave On." Indeed, it was the juxtaposition of Bozzio's unique and unconventional vocal-delivery augmented by the technical dazzle and flash of her multi-talented musical comrades—that truly gave Missing Persons their wholly distinctive and engaging sound.

MTV loved Missing Persons, continuously spinning their videos in heavy rotation. From "Destination Unknown" to "Words" to "Walking In L.A.," the group's eye-popping videos were utilized to maximum effect, shining the spotlight on Dale and further fortifying her blossoming image as a sex symbol. It also didn't hurt that Bozzio had previously posed nude for a men's magazine, of which fans scoured for elusive copies.

Massive touring, including a May 1983 appearance at the landmark US Festival, coupled with endless promotional duties—national television appearances, radio, TV and print interviews—also helped to further maximize the band's newfound popularity.

1984's *Rhyme & Reason* upped the artistic ante with a grand collection of soaring and delectable synth-pop confections. Graced with a stylish and elegant black-and-white cover portrait taken by internationally-renowned shutterbug Helmut Newton (no stranger to the rock and roll jungle, Newton had also shot the cover of Van Halen's *Women And Children First* LP), *Rhyme & Reason* showed fans that the scope of Missing Persons' musical milieu was wider than ever imagined. *Rhyme & Reason* was not as instantly accessible as their debut LP. The band openly challenged its fans with the sophisticated material; its deceptively complex and ornate musical touches rewarded the listener with repeat spins. Bozzio's voice had also matured, assuming a bold confidence and resonance less Minnie Mouse on acid; more Dale Bozzio, the accomplished vocalist.

As always, the musicianship was impeccable. Yet despite the adventurous spirit that permeated the material, record buyets gave the record the proverbial cold shoulder. While

not an outright commercial disaster, the album failed to break into the Top Forty, reaching a modest #44. The single, "Give," fared even worse, bottoming out at #67. Truth be told, the music audience is a fickle bunch, and with all signs leading to 'Destination Obscurity,' Missing Persons was primed for a major career rehaul. And to make matters worse, around this time the band experienced a defection among their ranks, with Chuck Wild leaving to pursue a solo career.

The band's final effort, 1986's *Color In Your Life* was another solid artistic achievement. Bernard Edwards of Chic fame was tapped to produce this latest work. In an effort to keep Missing Persons musically viable amidst an ever-changing climate of transient fads and trends, Edwards infused a decidedly commercial, dance-rock-oriented groove into their music. A welcome departure from the Missing Persons sound of old, *Color In Your Life* blooms amidst Edwards' aural makeover, a deliciously funk fortified landscape of sound resplendent in delicious horns and dexterous rhythmic textures that leads the subtle transformation. But success was not in the cards. The *Color In Your Life* album fizzled out at a dismal #86. By this point, nothing could stop the bleeding. Something had to give...



Disheartened by their fading fortunes, Missing Persons called it quits in 1986, and with it the Bozzios' marriage also dissolved. A year later, Capitol released *The Best Of Missing Persons*, closing the chapter on one of the Eighties most underrated outfits.

Since Missing Persons went AWOL, the individual members have carved out successful careers. One of rock's most dynamic and acclaimed drummers, Terry Bozzio has remained in demand, working with the likes of Jeff Beck, The Knack, Steve Vai, Dweezil Zappa, and Billy Idol guitarist Steve Stevens. Guitarist Warren Cuccurullo has also fared quite well, having joined Duran Duran in 1986, where he replaced erstwhile guitarist Andy Taylor. Since Missing Persons called it quits, member Patrick O'Hearn has been very productive, too, issuing a string of critically-acclaimed new age albums, including *Ancient Dream*, *Between Two Worlds*, *Rivers Gonna Rise*, *El Dorado*, *Indigo*, *Private Music*, *Trust* and *Metaphor*. Meanwhile keyboardist, Chuck Wild entered the film and TV world, scoring a myriad of projects including the "Max Headroom" show. He also worked on Michael Jackson's "HIStory" album. And finally, Dale tested the waters, albeit unsuccessfully, as a solo artist with 1988's *Riot In English*. Now living in her hometown of Boston and raising her two children, she continues to perform to appreciative crowds, fronting a new lineup of Missing Persons.



This special release of *Color In Your Life* includes four bonus live tracks, "Words," "Destination Unknown," "Mental Hopscotch" and a cover of the Doors' "Hello I Love You," all culled from a live radio broadcast in 1981. The unreleased 1983 studio track "Hot To Cold"

(featuring a rare lead vocal by Warren Cuccurullo), plus "It's A Must,"—an unfinished instrumental—round out the exclusive bonus material.

MISSING PERSONS

COLOR IN YOUR LIFE

- 1 **Color In Your Life**
(Missing Persons)
 - 2 **I Can't Think About Dancin'**
(Missing Persons)
 - 3 **No Secrets**
(Missing Persons)
 - 4 **Flash Of Love**
(Missing Persons)
 - 5 **Go Against The Flow**
(Missing Persons)
 - 6 **Boy I Say To You**
(Missing Persons)
 - 7 **Come Back For More**
(Missing Persons)
 - 8 **Face To Face**
(Missing Persons)
 - 9 **We Don't Know Love At All**
(Missing Persons)
 - 10 **Hot To Cold*** (previously unreleased)
(Bozzio, Bozzio, Cuccurullo)
© 2000 Capitol Records, Inc.
 - 11 **It's A Must*** (previously unreleased)
(Bozzio, Bozzio, Cuccurullo)
© 2000 Capitol Records, Inc.
 - 12 **Words (Live 1981)***
(Bozzio, Bozzio, Cuccurullo)
© 1997 Lo-Fi Records Courtesy Lo-Fi Records
 - 13 **Destination Unknown (Live 1981)***
(Bozzio, Bozzio, Cuccurullo)
© 1997 Lo-Fi Records Courtesy Lo-Fi Records
 - 14 **Mental Hopscotch (Live 1981)***
(Bozzio, Cuccurullo)
© 1997 Lo-Fi Records Courtesy Lo-Fi Records
 - 15 **Hello I Love You (Live 1981)***
(Manzarek, Denmore, Morrison, Krieger)
© 1997 Lo-Fi Records Courtesy Lo-Fi Records
- * Bonus Track

Re-Issue Produced by: Michael Kraft • Mastered by: Kit Watkins • Photos by: Oliver Monroe (Star File Inc.)
Liner notes by: Ken Sharp • Layout & Design by: McGraw Advertising/Design

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72435-27880-2-6

