

She'd love to be a Spice Girl

63-year-old DJ Margaret Morgan likes playing rave music best of all



Margaret Morgan doesn't look any different to most women of her age: the 63-year-old from Rhyader in Mid-Wales is wearing grey imitation leather shoes, a simple greyish brown pleated skirt with a blue pullover and a white cardigan. „I may well be 63, but I feel 22,“ she says with a sweet smile. Almost every Friday and Saturday night, she and her husband Austin load three enormous amplifiers, eight 1000-watt speakers, two turntables as well as hundreds of singles into their van. They then drive up to 40km to one of the small towns in the area and transform a local youth club or gymnasium into a rave club.

Margaret loves music more than anything. Rave music is her favourite „because of the beat!“. And as there are hardly any nightclubs outside the two largest towns, Margaret and Austin have been touring the villages every weekend for almost 18 years. Appearances at youth clubs, weddings and summer fêtes are all on Margaret's agenda and she's always snowed under with bookings at Christmas. But most of all she enjoys playing for the young people of Rhyader in the local rugby club.

Her husband is solely responsible for the technical side and she alone decides which records to play. „I play anything from Heavy Metal to AC/DC, the Beatles, Spice Girls and, when I have to, Oasis.“ The 63-year-old doesn't think much of Heavy Metal and Oasis. „But I'll play that kind of music if it's what people want to hear. After all I'm not just doing it for myself.“

Margaret Morgan became a disc jockey purely by chance in 1981. Her then 17-year-old son Stephen was earning himself a bit of money as a DJ. „Stephen was supposed to play at a sixties party in some hotel on the coast, but he wasn't at all interested in sixties music then.“ A friend of the Morgans, who was also a DJ, offered Margaret the use of his own equipment and suggested that she did it instead of her son. „I had never done anything like it before, but I thought, oh well, it might be quite fun, so I accepted.“

The first appearance was soon followed by others and the hotel engaged Margaret for the whole season. And for the next year. „We toured the area for two years with the borrowed equipment. Then, when our friend no longer wanted the amplifiers and speakers, we bought them off him.“ In the meantime Margaret has more than 1,400 singles and over 200 CDs in her collection.

Every Sunday afternoon, Margaret turns on the radio and records the BBC's three-hour long Chart Show. „Then I listen to it really carefully and decide which CDs I want to buy next.“ She regularly gives a list of CDs to a neighbour who drives to Newton, the next biggest town, once a week. „But I've become very choosy – CDs are expensive and you can't earn much as a DJ round here.“

It's her love of music, especially rave music, which drives her to the turntables. And she loves being in the company of young people. „Women of my age buy antique furniture and chat about knitting patterns, you see. That's not my kind of thing at all.“ Margaret never learned a profession. She worked in the post office in Newton for nine years. When she got married in 1961 and moved to Rhyader with her husband, she gave up her job in the post office and became, like many women of her generation, a housewife and mother. „If someone had told me 20 years ago that I'd become a DJ, I'd have laughed in their face,“ said Margaret with one of her sweet smiles. Something would definitely be missing from her life if she wasn't a DJ. „I'm actually quite shy, so it's incredibly exciting for me to play in front of hundreds of people.“

Sometimes, Margaret confesses with a flash of excitement in her eyes, she feels rather a rebel. Not because she's a 63-year-old DJ who plays rave records, but because she is a female DJ. That wouldn't have been possible a few years ago. „There used to be just male bands. Nowadays there are also girl groups, like the Spice Girls. I think that's fantastic.“ Margaret's biggest wish is to keep touring the villages for as long as possible. Down at the disco she is part of the younger generation. „I wish I'd been born in the seventies, then I could have been a Spice Girl.“

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