Jacqui ABBA story

Hello, I'm Jackie Shevlin, Petro O'Burns daughter, who used to take a lot of the pictures in town and I was with him that night.

I was 15, three weeks before my 16th birthday, my sister used to help him out on a Saturday night or my mum, but she was working on the Isle of Wight. So I used to take their names and addresses and then I'd number them all and take descriptions as to what they look like and what they wore, moustache or... so we could find them all in the negatives on the Monday, and then he'd send them off. And we do that week in week out. That's how he made his living. So yeah, I was thrown into something unbelievable.

I first of all, saw lots of the other people that looked very low key and tank tops and beards and sort of woolly hats, and then two or three beautifully dressed ladies. And then when the lift opened, and they stepped out, then the party began. They looked outstanding. Never seen anything like it. I've never seen men in high heeled silver boots, platforms, walking very slowly. It was Wow. It was like they're out of the Starship Enterprise that you could tell they were from a different planet. And they just had such a great energy. They had like this golden aura around them. They just lit the place up. And we were all just gobsmacked. Yeah, they were different from everybody else mingling. Definitely. I actually thought that night they were the winners. So I didn't realise the show hadn't happened. I thought it had been the matinee. And they were the winners. And then now they're all getting on a tour bus to go to the show. So but yes, that's how electric it was. They were, they were completely different to everyone else.

And then so you were in the show. Did you see the show?

I stood at the side from the side doors where I'd sat with ushers and we'd all be going 'Oooh' so I just remember opening these double doors, looking into all the people seated and they were all in black tie, bow ties, ladies in long dresses. And I just thought they all look so old. I thought it was meant to be a pop concert. It was quite silent. It was quite surreal. But when they came on, they bounded on and I just remember seeing near me the white star shaped guitar and I thought, Wow, I've never seen a guitar... [like that] And then these girls just seem to bound like the Andrex puppy dog out of the side all bouncy and bubbly and they just lit the whole place up. Yeah, amazing.

At the end of the evening when they actually won on stage, it was a bit of a shambles because only one came out to collect the winning and they didn't speak a lot of English all of them. So I think they followed others onto the tour bus, the three that were missing. And then they got off the tour bus because Terry Wogan was promised the first interview in the BBC trailer that was parked outside right where my dad's car was. So we were just putting all its equipment in the boot. I was sitting in the car and they came out of the backstage door. Terry Wogan said come in, I'll interview you. And five minutes later the doors burst open and Terry Wogan came out and went 'who turned the lights out??’ And it was attached by a wire to the Dome. So when they finished at the Dome, and they switched everything off, they had actually switched them off in the trailer. So Terry Wogan never actually got the interview that night but, and Frida did one in 1988 and reminded him of that night sitting in the dark with him. So but that was the surreal moment when dad was banging on the backstage door 'Open up they need the lights on, they leave the electricity! So I remember that and then arriving back at the Grand when they came back and everybody with flowers and it was just wild. So yeah, very funny!