

Bobby Hendricks

He was one of the greatest sons of the Overberg and is famous for his hit song "Give me hope, Joanna". Bobby Hendricks – the undisputed King of Langarm. "Langarm"(straight arm) is dance music without vocals, but a very distinctive saxophone and guitar-dominated sound. It is a traditional mix of ballroom music, big band sounds and sakkie-sakkie (boeremusiek) – but played in the unique and vibrant Cape style.

Robert Stuart Hendricks was born in Caledon on 7 February 1936. Life in Caledon revolved around church, work and social activities. Bobby loved the musical scene and started playing the saxophone by ear. At the age of 20 he joined the band of Kuy Simmers. A few years later he started his own band the Bobby Hendricks Sound. Although music was a part-time activity, Bobby worked as a builder during the week but fame lay around the corner for this band.

The band obviously had the right recipe playing tunes that everybody knew and their first five long-playing records all went gold. The time was 60's and early 70's. Life was a lot simpler with no TV or cell phones. Bobby's fame ran over African borders and this from a man who could neither read nor write music. He would hear a song on the way to a gig, hum it a few times, and rehearse with the band and that night folks would dance to a new song from Bobby Hendricks Sound.

Fame he had, riches not that much, never appeared on hit parades and never made it into the glossy magazines, but his true wealth and recognition was revealed by the number of people who attended his funeral when he died in 1999, one of the biggest ever held in the Overberg.

Although langarm has declined over the years, some radio stations still host programmes celebrating this unique sound of "sakkie-sakkie boeremusiek". Bobby Hendricks was awarded with a Merit Award "for exceptional service to the performing arts". So next time you hear a sakkie-sakkie tune, salute the King of Langarm
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