

RIP Deniz Corday 87

Friday, 20 January 2017

My friend Deniz Corday died on Thursday 19th January 2017. He was 87.

Deniz was born and brought up in Bermuda and never quite lost a slight accent. In 1956, he got a small job in his Twenties, on the film *The Admirable Crichton*, being partly made in Bermuda by director Lewis Gilbert, starring Kenneth More who, co-incidentally, was my next door neighbour in the 60s. Gilbert liked him so much he insisted Deniz come to London to continue work on the movie. He never went back.

Unfortunately the strong unions refused to allow him to work in films in the UK. Devastated he took jobs in record shops. He noticed that kids in that decade loved rocknroll and wanted to listen to it so he came up with the then revolutionary idea of hiring a local hall and getting a DJ to sit on stage playing the records for the kids to dance to. It caught on like wildfire. Deniz always claimed *The Walton Hop* was the first Disco in the world, copied and emulated afterwards everywhere.

Named after the 1958 Danny and the Juniors hit *At The Hop*, it did indeed contribute to the cultural change that took over the world. Some of the biggest global stars came to appear on stage at the hop and many ended up living in the area.

Being 15 years younger than Deniz I hardly even remember the 50s but by the 60s I was a teenager, lucky enough to have my first hit in 1965 - *Everyones Gone To The Moon*. By then *The Walton Hop* was known to be a fantastic venue to start spreading the word about new sounds and even better to try out new tracks to see whether they might catch on with the kids.

It never served alcohol and so avoided the problems connected with alcohol. Deniz kept firm control with bouncers and security against gangs or drunks or people trying to cause fights, so the venue was safe and sound as well as providing a terrific atmosphere. It was not only the first but incredibly well run.

For decades *The Walton Hop* was a huge success.

But Deniz was also one of the nicest and kindest of human beings. So he made many life long friends, of whom I am proud to be one. Later in life, when his heart gave him problems, he used to complain it was broken and I told him no, it was merely damaged and I thought it brilliant, keeping him alive for many years after doctors had told him he had only weeks to live.

I shall miss his sense of humour and his decency and his friendship but most of all I shall miss his love. For life, for music, for people, for horses, for good food and even for his enemies.