One of the first generation of European hard rock bands, the Scorpions are proof that dedication, perseverance and a strong sense of direction can lead to big international success.

Refusing to be deflected from their goals and their musical philosophy by ephemeral trends or fashions, the band has remained faithful to rock music for 20 years now, producing 11 studio albums, two live double albums and a number of hit singles.

The Scorpions is the only hard rock band from Germany to have achieved international success on such a major and enduring scale — success which has attained a greater dimension through the worldwide response to the song "Wind Of Change" and to the outstanding album, "Crazy World."

1971: Singer Klaus Meine and guitarist Rudolf Schenker from the suburbs of Hanover get together to form a five-piece rock group.

1972: The Scorpions sign their first record contract and make their debut album "Lonesome Crow" with Schenker's younger brother, Michael, on lead guitar. The band plays 136 gigs in this year, opening for various major acts in venues around Europe.

1973: In April, Michael Schenker leaves the band to join English hard rock group UFO. His departure causes the Scorpions to break up temporarily.

1974: With Uli Roth on lead guitar and Francis Buchholz on bass, the Scorpions re-emerge, sign a new record contract and release "Fly To The Rainbow."

1975: A turning-point year for the band. They embark on their first tour outside Germany, produce a new LP, "In Trance," and, in November, make their concert debut in England, opening at the Cavern in Liverpool. Their performances in the U.K. with glowing reviews.

1976: The Scorpions are now enjoying headline status in Europe and Japan. The release of a new album, "Virgin Killer," confirms that they are securely launched on the route to international stardom. In Japan, the album goes gold within a week of release.

1977: The Scorpions return to Britain for a more extensive tour, at the conclusion of which drummer Rady Lenmers leaves, to be replaced by Herman Rarebell. Rarebell is the drummer on the album "Taken By Force," released towards the end of the year.

1978: This year brings one of the biggest triumphs of the band's career so far. They make a sell-out, five-day tour of Japan. Excerpts from their two evenings at Tokyo's Sun Plaza are released on a double album, "The Tokyo Tapes." Later, lead guitarist Uli Roth calls it a day and quits the band.

1979: Auditions are held in London to find a replacement for Uli Roth. More than 100 guitarists apply but, in the end, the band pick a musician from Hanover, Matthias Jabs. Immediately they go into the studio to record "Lovedrive." Also featured on the album is Michael Schenker, having left UFO. He contributes half of the guitar solos on the album but, for personal reasons, is unable to stay with the band on a long-term basis. Matthias Jabs continues on lead guitar and is with the band when it plays before 68,000 fans at Cleveland Municipal Stadium, Ohio, for a World Series Of Rock event, opening for Ted Nugent. "Lovedrive" enters the American charts and stays for 30 weeks.

1980: The release of "Animal Magnetism" in March is followed by extensive tours in Britain, continental Europe and the U.S.

1981/82: The recording sessions for "Blackout" are disrupted when singer Klaus Meine suffers a serious throat infection. After an operation, Klaus returns to deliver some of his most powerful vocal performances. Released in 1982, the album achieves gold status in many countries and goes platinum in the U.S. The Scorpions are on the road for seven months, playing 150 concerts in many countries and entertaining a total of 1.5 million people.

1983: The Scorpions appear as co-headliners in the world's biggest outdoor rock festival in the U.S., playing to an audience of 300,000 fans.

1984: "Love At First Sting" is released and becomes a massive hit. A single from the album "Rock You Like a Hurricane" hits the Billboard Top 40, stays for seven weeks and reaches the number 15 spot. A second single from the album, the ballad "Still Loving You," breaks first in France and then conquers the rest of Europe.

1985: The runaway success of "Love At First Sting" elevates the Scorpions to international superstar status. A live double album, "Worldwide Live," incorporating highlights from the "Love At First Sting" world tour, confirms the Scorpions' music as Germany's biggest selling rock export.

1986: The Scorpions head the German participation in the celebrated "Monsters Of Rock" open-air concert in August.

1988/89: The Scorpions are invited to the Soviet Union and do 10 sell-out concerts in Leningrad, playing each night to 15,000 people coming from all parts of the country. "Savage Amusement," an album which marks the end of the band's long and successful association with producer Dieter Diersk, is released.

1990: For the first time, the Scorpions collaborate with Keith Olsen on the production of an album, "Crazy World." Also involved in Canadian songwriter and friend of the band Jim Vallance.

1991: "Crazy World" and the Klaus Meine-penned single "Wind Of Change" become the most successful records of the Scorpions' 20-year career. "Wind Of Change," inspired by the dramatic events in Eastern Europe, becomes the anthem of a generation with a year-long run in the German singles chart. "Crazy World's" heads for worldwide sales of more than 5 million.