

Gino Vannelli & The Metropole Orchestra

„The North Sea Jazz Festival 2002“



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GINO VANNELLI - Big Dreamers Never Sleep

It seems Gino Vannelli was born for the bright lights—handed a name that any dreamer wouldn't mind having. His world is a sweeping soundscape of dynamic rhythms and romantic sensibilities—an amazing singer, evocative songwriter, producer, arranger, poet and thinker, a stage dervish and icon. A multiple Canadian Juno Award winner, as well as being Grammy nominated several times. With No. 1 hits to his name, Gino inhabits a unique place under the sun where soul and jazz, pop and classical meet poetry and philosophy. Over the years, Gino Vannelli has established himself as an innovator and



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exceptional artist, known and respected as one who has always remained true to his himself and art, no matter what the whims and rage of our time, offering a distinctive sound and style that would remain his trade mark to this day, loved by audiences spanning the globe.

The first collaboration between Gino Vannelli and The Metropole Orchestra took place in Rossendaal Holland, during 2000. It was the beginning of an extremely creative partnership and the logical progression of the 70's Vannelli sound. Two years later in 2002 their joint performance at the legendary North Sea Jazz Festival was regarded as a momentous collaboration of jazz, modern contemporary and big band.

Biography

Gino Vannelli was born in 1952 in Montreal Canada. Being the son of a big-band cabaret singer, Russ Vannelli, the young Gino was surrounded and greatly influenced by music from the get-go. At first drawn to the drumming of Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich and Elvin Jones, Gino subsequently went on to study drums and music theory during his adolescent and teen years. At the age of 12 he heard that a local band called 'The Cobras' was looking for a drummer and had a chance to audition for the drum chair when coming home from school. Because he could play "Wipe out" 'without popping a nerve', a Ventures song considered the rite of passage for young drummers, he got the job on the spot. A year later he moved on to his own band, a Motown inspired 'Jacksonville 5', which incorporated his brother Joe on keyboards. Having greater ambitions (and one eye on centre stage) he also began taking guitar and piano lessons, immediately employing his new-found skills writing arrangements for the group. At the age of 17 he signed with RCA Records of Canada and released a single called, 'Gina Bold' under the name of Van-Elli, which hit the top 20 in Canada. Unsatisfied with the local Canadian music industry at the time, the young Gino headed off to New York to make the rounds of publishers and record companies. Finally three years later, together with brother Joe, he found himself at the offices of A&M Records in Los Angeles. Initially unable to get past the security, Gino decided to run headlong past the guard when he saw owner Herb Alpert walk through the parking lot. While the guard attempted to tackle and haul him away, Gino desperately begged Alpert for an audition. Herb agreed, (much to the guard's dismay) Gino eventually played 'Crazy Life', 'Mama Coco', 'Powerful People' and 'Lady' for him on acoustic guitar. The rest is history. With Alpert's personal support, six albums were recorded for A&M, five of which made it to the Billboard top 100 albums.

The years of listening and attempting to reconcile rock, pop, soul, jazz and classical as a single form of music, culminated in the 'Powerful People' album. (As a side note, Gino had been fascinated by classical music since his days of elementary school back in Montreal—to his mind, Ravel and Debussy ranking as high as Miles Davis or Bill Evans) Furthermore 'Powerful People' featured the brothers' first experiences with electronic instruments. The result was an unusual melange of traditional and cutting-edge tones and textures, which were fused in the animated arrangement of 'People Gotta Move', their first Billboard hit. While brother Joe continued to push his synthesizers forward, Gino developed into a fine songwriter, highly skilled and passionate vocalist and larger than life sex symbol.



The next album, 'Storm At Sunup', set a completely new benchmark for all involved. It teems with an innovative usage of electronics, splendid songs, profound vocals and a cover picture attempting to depict the irony, bewilderment and ultimate disillusionment of male pride. Again with varied styles of jazz, rock, soul and classical it was music without boundaries nor safety net. 'The Gist of Gemini' and 'A Pauper in Paradise' are further examples of the concept of 'Storm at Sunup'. 'The Gist' being Gino's foray into darker themes woven into dramatic arrangements and virtuoso musicianship. 'Pauper' boasting Gino's first symphonic piece, performed by The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of London, conducted by the great jazz arranger Don Sebesky.

During this time Gino had established himself as a headline act on the stage. After touring with Stevie Wonder he was invited, the first white artist, to appear on the legendary TV show 'Soul Train'. He was now selling out concert halls and arenas in both Canada and the USA by the age of 23.

The success continued to blossom when the album 'Brother to Brother' propelled Gino Vannelli to the top of the charts and front page of the US entertainment news. Co-produced by his brothers Joe and Ross, it featured the Number four hit 'I Just Wanna Stop' written by Ross. His live shows had become mega events, with always a great line up of musicians to back him. From here Gino moved to Arista Records in 1980, signing with mogul, Clive Davis, the man considered to be the main force behind the success of Bruce Springsteen, Whitney Houston and Alicia Keys.

The first album, 'Nightwalker' continued where 'Brother to Brother' left off. Heavily loaded with ballads and intensive rock/jazz/soul fusions, it featured the hit 'Living Inside Myself. But soon came intense creative differences and an eventual falling out between Gino and Clive. (Not so unusual, as one looks retrospect into many of Clive Davis's artistic associations) The main bone of contention was a new album entitled 'Twisted Heart', a more stripped-down, earthier work that Gino was proud of at the time that did not square with Clive's notions of Gino's place in the market. To this day, Vannelli refuses to comment too much on the subject. A long lasting and painful separation process was inevitable.

The legal proceedings took four years before Vannelli was released from Arista and could sign with Mercury, get on with his life and fulfil his dreams and vision. It was a decision that assured him maximum creative freedom to create the first, successful album 'Black Cars' which had in some respects the same simplified concept as 'Twisted Heart'. A virtual, no-fuss, modern use of synthesis, along with pithy pop songs, Black Cars captured the attention of radio and clubs in Germany; mainly due to the remix version and the track 'It Hurts to be in



Love'. More importantly 'Black Cars' was soon released in Europe and became his most successful international work to date.

Two years later he followed with 'Big Dreamers Never Sleep'. The single taken from it 'Wild Horses' became a successful radio hit, which is still heavily played today. 'Big Dreamers' shows Vannelli turning away from the electro sound to a warmer tone although still influenced by jazz and soul. The 1990's 'Inconsolable Man' followed a more acoustic path with one foot in the mainstream while the other in the elusive dreamland of philosophy and poetry. After a long stretch of looking for answers to long-standing Life questions, after a twelve-year break, Gino finally decided to hit the stage once more. This resulted in the 1992 album 'Live in Montreal' which contained all the hits, well recorded with powerful live performances of 'in The Name of Money' and 'Brother to Brother'.

Before, during and after that extensive tour, which had been so successful, his thoughts had changed. Was it so important to always stand centre stage? Write hits? Was fame and success so critical to happiness? What of the adulation that came along with it? On a sort of pilgrimage, Gino went to diverse (many obscure) regions in the world, and continued his search for deep personal fulfilment while at the same time finding the trek to be almost perfectly in step with his search (and love) for new music endeavours. He moved his family from the busy, hectic life of LA to Portland Oregon, built a studio and continued to concentrate on his music and personal development. The result was Gino's very jazzified and acoustic work called, 'Yonder Tree' It boasted Vannelli's characteristic tension between male strength and weakness—desire and duty—spirit and body—somewhere out there versus here and now. Anything but the standard jazz lyric or sound, Yonder Tree is considered one Gino's finest. In 1997 'Slow Love' followed on Verve records. Working with many of his favourite musicians, such as Jimmy Haslip, Rachael Z, George Witty, David Garibaldi and George Calendrelli, Slow Love boasts a well-crafted collection of songs with the usual rhythmic and harmonic adventures that is expected of Gino. A great fan of Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Johnny Mercer and the likes, Gino felt he was that much closer to putting his thoughts into carefully scanned phrases.

The old passion of his youth, namely classical music, persisted. It blazed a new musical trail when 'Canto' was released in 2003. It was the consequence of a phone call Vannelli received from the Vatican. The pope had become aware of 'Parole Per Mio Padre', a ballad inspired by Franz Schubert and heard on 'Haitek Haiku' a CD recorded with Danish pianist Niels Lan Doky. The Pontiff liked what he heard and asked the singer to partake in a Christmas gala and have an audience with him. Not surprisingly, with such friends in high places, many multi-national labels were very interested in a neo-classical work by Gino. To this day, Gino continues to make new fans of his classical efforts, always managing to work one of the songs from Canto into his live performances.



2005 featured a radio friendly sound. 'These Are the Days' combined 7 new pop focused tracks with randomly chosen hits of the past. Not a giant leap forward, although still boasting quick-witted and amusing tunes like 'East-West World' and 'Venus Envy'.

For many years Vannelli has received a warm welcome and maximum attention in the Netherlands. With much success on the charts, especially in the 80's with 'Black Cars' and 'Hurts to be in Love' being many station's regular play list. From 2006 to 2008 he chose to live in the area around Amersfoort during some of his 'protracted stays' in Europe. He would use a band of Dutch musicians, give lessons, organise workshops and use the Netherlands as a base for smaller tours in Italy, France and Scandinavia. In 2008 he returned to the North Sea Jazz Festival, living out 'The Dutchbeat', a landmark song describing his observations and impressions during his stay in Holland culminating in the 2009 album 'A Good Thing'. Abandoning the usual loaded questions, his songs, took on more fanciful moods, with heady grooves, a touch of humour, as a kind of coming to terms and salve on old wounds, Furthermore, 'A Good Thing' consists of twenty-three newly-written poems Gino composed during his 'Gypsy Days' in the Netherlands. As regards the poetry, 'The Falconer', is considered to be a testament to his verse skills and mirror of his truest beliefs.

In 2009, record in Portland Oregon, 'The Best and Beyond' was released. In a way it is the ultimate musical statement of Gino Vannelli. It was the realisation of a long cherished idea, the recording of the popular successes with new, fresh arrangements, benefiting from life's experiences and knowledge (and technology). In a matching book called 'Stardust in the Sand', Gino exposes himself with collected memories, stories, impressions and thoughts together with relevant photographs taken, beginning with his early days as a drumming toddler. Entire Vannelli? The whole story? Hardly! Because here is something yet new!

The first official release of the live recording of his legendary performance with Metropole Orchestra in Den Haag in 2002 had to come out first.

With his double staved charts in hand, Gino sat with Holland's top orchestrator's to come up with new and fresh big-band arrangements of "Brother To Brother", "Black Cars" or "People Gotta Move"—in all, 12 of Vannelli-classics dating from 1974 to 1997. Another dream realised—a truly innovative effort, that is Vannelli's own.

The Metropole Orchestra, with conductor Dick Bakker at the helm, delivers pure excitement with amazing conviction and appreciation of Vannelli's music. Gino flows with exuberant dynamics and manages to deliver lesser known songs such as "King For A Day" with a dizzying high. Their version of "Hurts To Be In Love" is both tender and layered with interesting tones and textures. In all, this work is another step forward in Gino continuing growth. In light of such musical works hardly ever being conceived, let alone performed by such capable musicians and an artist, it ranks as one of Gino's breakthrough innovations.



Great tunes, arrangements, performances, an enthusiastic audience, Gino Vannelli & The Metropole Orchestra are truly a one-of-kind experience

THE METROPOLE ORCHESTRA

A Dutch cultural institution, founded in 1945, the ensemble achieved a good reputation during the entertainment tristesse of the post war years when it came to bringing top-class performances somewhere between jazz, pop and classical music to the people. Originally planned to be a radio orchestra, Metropole quickly conquered the restricting boundaries of that medium, raised cheers on stage and in the soundtrack scene. Eventually considered to be the "biggest professional orchestra" in the world. It was a permanent guest on numerous stages at The North Sea Festival, was Grammy-awarded and can look back on an extensive accumulation of live experiences. Including world stars in jazz (Pat Metheny), pop (Joe Cocker), soul (Chaka Khan) and world music (Mariza). In 2002, conductor Dick Bakker guided the team through sweeping Vannelli arrangements. Since 2005, famous composer and arranger Vince Mendoza presides over the musicians whose reputation can be proved by 4 grammy awards and 16 nominations.

NORTH SEA JAZZ FESTIVAL

Paul Acket, founder of this mammoth festival and publisher of diverse pop magazines such as Musikexpress or PopFoto, realized his plan to establish a jazz festival of a new style in Den Haag in 1976. The summer musical event has become one of the biggest get-togethers of contemporary jazz in the world. Already at the debut, Acket's concept to synchronically present several concerts in halls of all sizes proved the key to its success. The listeners can wander from one concert to another to experience and discover established stars of the scene and talented newcomers on the same day. The organisers were at all times unreserved towards other kinds of music that are based on jazz. Soul, funk, pop and on the spot with their most important protagonists (Miles Davis, Wynton Marsalis, Patti Labelle, Carlos Santana,...) every year guarantees an extensive live experience. Since 2006 North Sea takes place in Rotterdam during the last weekend of July each time, always featuring the stars of the season, a 72-hour mega event, demanding a great deal of musicians and audience.



Tracklisting:

1) Alive by Science

Music by Gino Vannelli & Paul Hanson, lyrics by Gino Vannelli and Brian Christopher

2) Jehovah and all that Jazz

Music by Gino Vannelli, lyrics by Gino Vannelli and Brock Walsh

3) Walter Whitman (Where are You)

Music by Gino Vannelli , lyrics by Gino Vannelli and Brock Walsh

4) Black Cars

Music by Gino Vannelli , lyrics by Gino Vannelli and Roy Freeland

5) Living Inside Myself

Music and lyrics by Gino Vannelli

6) Wild Horses

Music by Gino Vannelli, lyrics by Gino Vannelli and Roy Freeland

7) King for a Day

Music by Gino vannelli, lyrics by Gino Vannelli and Roy Freeland

8) Hurts To Be in Love

Music and lyrics by Gino Vannelli

9) Persona Non Grata

Music by Gino Vannelli, lyrics by Gino Vannelli and Roy Freeland

10) People Gotta Move

Music and lyrics by Gino Vannelli

11) I Just Wanna Stop

Music and lyrics by Ross Vannelli

12) Brother to Brother

Music and lyrics by Gino Vannelli