

VICTOR SIMONELLI THE EARLY YEARS VOL 2



1993 – N.Y FINEST: DO YOU FEEL ME

BTG: ...man, talk about legendary piano riffs! There's piano riff kind of house music and then there is Victor Simonelli piano riffs!, which are just next level, Do you feel me is such a great example of this...

VS: Thank you so much. On this, the inspiration on the piano chords comes from Moment of My Life by Inner Life 1982. There's no music samples in this track, It's all played (Live on Piano). but the inspiration in there. That song touched me in the early '80s when it came out. What a beautiful song it is. Total respect and Love to Leroy Burgess (and Sonny T Davenport), who wrote “Moment Of My Life” and Jocelyn, who sang on that. It's just still an all-time classic for me. In fact , they have so many timeless tunes, that I grew up with.

BTG: I've played it in the hundreds of times. My copy is absolutely battle scarred. Such a classic and still so relevant... in fact last August, I was at a festival called Lost Village in the UK, an amazing outdoor festival, where the brilliant DJ, Jayda G played it to probably 3 or 4,000 people in a forest festival dance floor setting, and it absolutely took the dance floor to pieces. What a tune this far on, amazing. It's an anthem of a track.



1992 – GROOVE COMMITTEE: DIRTY GAMES

VS: So I had already done Groove Committee ‘I want to you to know’, and after that release, many people started to contact me interested in my music and I recall, Todd Terry called me and said, ‘you really got something there Victor... here’s my advice, if you got something that works, stick with it, do it again and again...’ and so I took that onboard and Dirty Games was kinda like a part 2 of ‘I want you to know’, similarly, ‘Feels so Right’ was also part of that little set of tracks, they are all tightly connected and was kind of a part 3.

I remember playing ‘Feels so Right’ and ‘Dirty Games’ to Judy Russel (R.I.P.) and Frank Mendez at NuGroove Records, and I remember Judy picking Dirty games over Feels so right haha!

These tracks were all done before computers, on little sequencers, with samplers and little mixing boards (I still have the mixing board that this was made on). The EQ’s on the little board we did that on, I remember were so sensitive, and you can really hear the grittiness in the track!



1993 – STREET PLAYERS: MAKE IT THRU THE NIGHT

VS: I’m so glad you asked about that one! So on Make It Through the Night, yeah, when I took that to Emotive Records... sample records, weren’t really the most common thing. I mean, yes, they were out there, but not that common. When I brought that to Emotive... I saw David (The owner), and Josh, the other owner of Emotive and Ted Patterson (the A&R man there). As they listened, hahaa, these three guys were sitting in the office as I played it. And they're looking at each other (and I could tell they were) thinking, "What the hell did this guy do?" Haha They were looking at each other like I had three heads, thinking, "How in the world could that guy just take all these parts like this and put them together into making something new like this ?" And also, I could see in their eyes that they were hesitating from saying, "Yeah, we want it," although they were feeling it, (I think because these kind of tracks, were pretty much new uncharted territory at the time). It’s basically, I Love Music, right? I mean, the chords. . And that voice is Boyd Jarvis and Timmy's Regisford’s singer for Visual, Jason Smith (R.I.P).. But that's his voice on there, and what an awesome singer he is/was , and all of those other tracks on there, done with samplers, just bits and pieces from here and there put together to make something new like this.. My friend Marcie Allen calls



1993 – SOUND OF ONE: I KNOW A PLACE

BTG: Like with Make it through the night, is this an early example of kind of doing the sample thing again ? Which is just incredible!

VS: In some ways, yeah it's a salute really, to the original musicians. Musicians playing together , jamming, can get into a groove, and really have magic moments. I like to capture those magic moments and build on them. Doing it from a DJ point of view is helpful. Gives a raw edge and a new twist , looping certain parts, and extending magic moments.

BTG: It's so elegantly done, such a great track, one of those tracks back in the day that dance floors would cheer for as it came into the mix, you hear that beat and percussion, followed by the intro vocal and you know whats coming next, and then.... boom... the drop lands! It’s been a pivotal part of my DJ sets many a time down the years!



1993 – INNER FAITH: I'VE BEEN CHANGED

I had been regularly attending the church , Brooklyn Tabernacle around that time, and was totally into Gospel. I still am, I love the sound of a Gospel Choir , and well they had an amazing choir (and still do). So one day my friend Dino called, he had a label called Playtime Records at the time. So he calls me and says ‘Hey Vic I recorded this TV show which had a lot of great gospel music and artists on it, come over to my place and check some of this out’, and so I went over and we listened and watched, and there was so many amazing vocalists and music.

I started thinking, this would make great DJ/Production material, and so we picked out some parts. I took it to a studio Mac Quale and Ben Nitze had in Manhattan right off 14th St. And that’s where I ended up mixing I’ve been changed - I really just wanted to capture the energy , spirit and love of a Gospel choir (and Singer in Church), with the rawness of a house music track, and along with the piano groove, which was especially prevalent in New York around that time, it was really upfront and sounded great! The mixing board that this was done on was previously at their studio in Brooklyn (Fibre) and then moved to the Manhattan location. It is the same board that “I Want You To Know” , “Dirty Games” , “Feels So Right” and This were all mixed on. Shortly after doing this , I purchased this mixing board from them and I still have it!



1993 – INTERNATIONAL CONNECTION: I CAN'T HELP MYSELF

VS: A place I was going to a lot around that time was The Loft, and of course David Mancuso was the DJ. So the Loft was essentially David Macuso’s house (Loft Apt) where he would host these amazing events. I spent a lot of time there and it really was a big influence on me. David played so many great tunes at his events and one track that particularly took me was Powerline ‘Double Journey’, which if you listen to it is where some of the inspiration for ‘I can’t Help Myself’ comes from, check it out, you’ll hear it... Powerline Double Journey is from the early 80’s and I really wanted to capture that energy as best I could and bring into a more current house music style with this track.

Also around that time down in Miami, the Winter Music Conference was still very young. I had been attending WMC since around 1988 but it was really a very local event for the first few years... But by around 92/93 it started to become more international, I met people from all over down there, and I met Carlos who was distributing MURK Records at the time and he asked me if I had anything to put out on a new label he had at the time called Vibe Records. And so I gave him “I can’t help myself” , and with the influence of Winter music conference, I put it out as International Connection, so that’s where the name came from!