



It's Our History, Our Country

Written by: Ronald Wolf

Gino Vannelli

June 16, 1952



The year was 1985 and I was 20 years young, playing pool with my friends and dropping a quarter in the jukebox to hear Gino Vannelli's Black Cars.

Gino Vannelli is an Italian-Canadian singer, songwriter, musician and composer. Born in Montreal, Que., Vannelli is one of three sons (Joe, Gino and Ross) born to Russ and Delia Vannelli.

Russ, his father, was a big band musician. As a child, Gino's greatest passion was music, and he began playing percussion at an early age.

By the age of 15, Gino began writing songs. Just out of high school, he signed his first recording contract with RCA under the name Vann Elli, but went on to study music at McGill University.

After a stint in New York City, Vannelli and his brothers went to Los Angeles, California. He signed with Herb Alpert's A&M Records, releasing his first album under that label in 1973. Gino's brother, Joe, served as arranger and keyboardist for most of his

recording career. At a time when polyphonic synthesizers were non-existent, Joe overdubbed multiple parts to create a texture of sound that was progressive for the early 1970s.

In 1974, People Gotta Move made it to No. 22 on the Billboard Top 100. In February 1975, Vannelli became the second Caucasian performer to appear on Soul Train (Dennis Coffey appeared in 1971). This was his television debut.

In 1978, the song I Just Wanna Stop earned Gino an American Grammy Award nomination and was a No. 1 single in Canada (No. 4 in United States). Vannelli's album Brother To Brother was certified platinum in early 1979. Gino won Canada's Juno Award for Best Male Artist. Vannelli also won Juno Awards in 1976 and 1979. Gino's additional recordings of the 1970s include: Crazy Life, Powerful People, Storm at Sunup, The Gist of the Gemini and A Pauper in Paradise.

In April 1981, Living Inside Myself was on Billboard's Top 100 at number six. Canadian

comedy legend, Eugene Levy satirized Gino in Episode four of SCTV/Network 90 also in 1981. The Vannelli brothers shared the Juno Award for Recording Engineer of the Year in 1986 for Black Cars. The prestigious Juno Award was again shared by the Vannelli brothers in 1987 for Recording Engineer of the Year for Wild Horses and Young Lover. Gino's additional recordings of the 1980s era include: Nightwalker and Big Dreamers Never Sleep.

The latest recordings released by Vannelli are Canto and These Are the Days. He surprised the music world by revealing his operatic license in Canto, which heralds Vannelli's superlative vocals in Italian, French, Spanish and English. The Northwest Orchestral Assembly is also featured on the Canto recording, which aired on CBC in Canada. Vannelli was commissioned by the Vatican to perform for Pope John Paul II.

On the Canto recording is a loving tribute to Vannelli's father titled, Parole Per Mio Padre,

which was also a favorite of Pope John Paul II.

Vannelli's electrifying vocals and music garnered rave reviews for Canto. These Are the Days made yet another hit; a wonderful combination of Vannelli's new releases and classics.

Vannelli lives and works in The Netherlands as well as the United States. In March 2007, Vannelli performed in Las Vegas to sold-out shows. By request, encore performances were given two months later at the Flamingo Showroom.

In November 2007, Vannelli gave three sold out performances in New Orleans, La. The concerts were a humanitarian effort with proceeds benefiting local charities. By popular demand, Vannelli continues to tour globally.

Fame comes and goes. For those truly talented, they can take a small vacation from their fame and make a comeback years later. Those with these skills can be found all over the world and the starting point is in Canada.