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Spin Around

by Eric Ornelas

Georgie Porgie The Music Takes Him Away

Georgie Porgie is affectionately known by his friends in the music business as the unofficial ambassador of house music, and for good reason; Georgie Porgie does it all. He is known worldwide as a talented singer, songwriter, remixer and performer. But what is lesser-known about Georgie is that he is also a successful record producer with his own independent record label called Music Plant Records. The Music Plant artist roster includes many great talents, such as Nina Flowers, Wayne Taylor, Tod Miner, and most recently the legendary Linda Clifford. I recently caught up with Georgie by telephone to talk about where he has been and where he is going.

Georgie's success is rooted in a life-long love of dance music, which began when he was just a kid growing up in Chicago, Illinois. Like most kids his age, Georgie turned to commercial radio for musical entertainment and that is where he discovered disco. In the late 1970's, radio station WDAI was beaming disco hits across the airwaves in Chicago at the height of the genre's popularity and young Georgie was listening. At the time Georgie was unaware the music was being labeled as disco and dance music, but that did not matter. Georgie knew for sure that what he was hearing was really good music.

While most of the other kids in his high school were listening to rock bands like KISS and Led Zeppelin, Georgie felt drawn to the soulful and rhythmic sounds of Stevie Wonder, Donna Summer, Earth, Wind & Fire, Michael Jackson, Barry White, and many others. "I love dance tempo and I love people who can sing," Georgie explained. "And the songs, they had to be great...that's what made me ecstatic. That's what gave me the wow." Dance music ignited a passion in Georgie that he knew he had to pursue.

Surprisingly, Georgie did not start out as a singer or songwriter. During his senior year in high school, he took a job spinning records as a radio DJ. Georgie remembers the trend at the time was for DJs to produce their own records, so he started to write his own songs. His first track did very well. But when he took the next step and got up on stage to perform the song live, people really started to notice. They loved what Georgie was doing and demanded more.

So Georgie continued to write and perform, and quickly found success rising up the dance charts with songs about love, life, strength, and hope. His first song to hit the dance chart was a party track called "Let The Music Pump You Up." It was soon followed by "Strawberry" and "Everybody Must Party." Two other tracks, "All Because Of Me" and "I'm In Love," were played on radio stations all across the country.

Then in 1999 came "Love Story," which exploded in popularity worldwide, ushering in a new chapter in Georgie's career. This next phase included phenomenal hits like "Life Goes On," "I Love, I Love," "Be Happy," "Sunshine," "I Believe," "Brand New Day," and more. "There are two parts to my career because I've been doing this for such a long time," said Georgie. "You have to reinvent yourself over and over again and I feel like "Life Goes On" was that second reinvention." That was 11 years ago and Georgie feels the time is right to reinvent his sound once again. His new single, "It's The Music (That Takes Me Away)," is a departure from the past, but still very much a Georgie song. But according to Georgie, this is just the beginning. He is currently working with DJ Yiannis on a new track titled "I Need Love," which Georgie says will blow people away. He describes the track as sounding a bit like trance superstar Paul Van Dyk. Georgie is eager to evolve and expand his sound.

Many recording artists will tell you they have a favorite song to perform, but not Georgie. He says, "I treat my records as though they were my kids because they took a lot to make and I love them all the same. Every last one of them has something special and they have a meaning. Each one of those records (has) touched people throughout the world in a special way. I equally love them all."

Back in the 1990's, Georgie wrote songs about partying, going out and having a good time because that was what he was experiencing. But things changed in the 2000's. The terrorist attacks of September 11th in 2001 set a different tone for the new decade, and Georgie felt a need to begin writing in a more uplifting mode. The songs "Life Goes On" and "Love Is Gonna Save The Day" were not written about the terrorist attacks, but after 9/11 they took on a new meaning. In his own way, Georgie vowed to help heal the world with songs about picking yourself up and moving beyond tragedy.

Lately Georgie has again turned to writing more uplifting songs because he feels the world is in desperate need of positive messages. "Don't get me wrong," he said, "I like to write me a party record, about love, and all that other stuff. But I also believe I have a responsibility to push back (against the negativity). You have people starving, people losing their homes, you know, these are really tough times, so I take it as my responsibility to try my best to lift these people and make this a better place to live in."

The uplifting nature of Georgie's songs certainly seems to be working for him. Billboard magazine recently named Georgie Porgie as one of its top ten dance artists of the last decade. With Janet Jackson, Jennifer Lopez, Enrique Iglesias, Mariah Carey, Kristine W, and Madonna also on the list – Georgie is in good company. "It's truly a blessing," he said, "to know that somebody of the stature of Madonna... who had a ten-plus year head start on me and was signed to Warner Brothers with millions of more dollars and somehow, somehow, I end up on the same list that she's on...to me, that's a blessing in itself."

Georgie Porgie is more than just a great talent, he is also a kind, generous, and genuinely decent person. His album, "Life, Love, and Be Happy," is available now and includes all of his greatest hits. It is a joy to listen to and I highly recommend it. A new album is in the works and should be available in 2011. For now, you can pick up Georgie's new single, "It's The Music (That Takes Me Away)," at your favorite online music store.

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