

**This interview with
GIORGIO MORODER,
writer/producer of “I Feel Love,”
was conducted by the Library of Congress
on October 14, 2015.**



LOC: “I Feel Love” makes up the “future” section of Donna Summer’s 1977 album “I Remember Yesterday,” that you produced. Did you, from the beginning, aspire to create something “futuristic” sounding?

Yes, I definitely wanted to explore it as a whole concept and come up with a sound that was of the future. I did it by only using synthesizers, because I thought it was the instrument that would be used in the future--be *the* instrument of the future. We used it, and only it, to create all the sounds. I wanted to try to imitate what people would do in 20 or 30 years.

I used all digital sounds for the song, all of them coming from the computer. Everything except the voice was created by the Moog.

The problem was I always composed at piano, with the chords. This time [with the Moog], I had to start with the tracks not the melody. So, I started with a bass line. It was a big, big job.

First, I recorded a click, the tempo, about four notes in: *dong dong dong dong*. I just looped them. I got the sound I wanted by holding one note—let’s say C—and holding it then moving it to F and G.... The problem then is I had to stop and restart after every seven to eight seconds to retune the synth.

But, once I had the chord structure, I then used a white noise generator and put it in the envelope [?] to make it sound like a high hat, a snare and many other instruments. Then, I’d add one or two sounds with another synth. And Donna Summer then came in to sing the melody.

One thing about the original: while we were mixing it, my engineer added a delay and it gave it a whole new feel and that’s what’s really what made the sound; it’s what made that driving bass line.

LOC: Who wrote the lyrics to “I Feel Love”?

To be honest, I don't know exactly. We always shared the credit for the song—Donna, Pete [Bellotte] and I. I did the music and Donna and Pete wrote the lyrics but I don't know how that broke down between them.

LOC: How did you first meet Donna Summer and what did you think when you first heard her sing?

It was absolutely fantastic!

We need three girls to come in and do background in Munich and we started asking around. They couldn't have any accent—no English, no American. So she came in and was wonderful. She did a good job. And Pete and I told her, "If we have an idea, we will call you back." Later, we were doing the song "The Hostage" and called her. She came in. She did an incredible job. And, from there, we did "Love to Love You Baby."

LOC: What was your first reaction to "I Feel Love" once it was all finished? Did you know that you had something special?

Yes. I didn't know it would become that big but I knew that it sounded totally different.

Then we played it for Neil Bogart [of Casablanca Records]. And he was...okay. I must say he wasn't that excited. He said, "Let's mix it again" and I added, I don't know what—the bass line longer or shorter... I did it and it came out bigger. The company was not behind it; the English [division] was far more behind it.

LOC: Why do you think the song connected so strongly with people?

I think it was the contrast between the metallic, drum machine, that sound, and then the beautiful romantic voice of Donna. Based upon the music, you would expect a robot to be singing, not Donna! It was a "Beauty and the Beast" type of thing. It was a whole new dimension that you wouldn't expect.

LOC: Did you realize it was the start not only of a genre but of a movement?

Yes, due to two effects—

It was loved by the gay community. People still tell me that they are still dancing to that song in the discos, that it's always been a liberation song for them.

Second, when Brian Eno told David Bowie that the song was "the sound of the future," that's icing on the cake! Hearing from Eno—a genius talking to another genius!

LOC: Did "I Feel Love" create a map, at least a short term one, for where you would next go creatively?

Yes and no. I had worked with the Moog way before, back in 1971. I did it, I stopped it and then I started again.

You know the soundtrack to the movie "Midnight Express" was based upon "I Feel Love." The director Alan Parker loved the song and he wanted me to record something in that style for a very dramatic scene in the movie—the chase scene. He wanted it to have that driving bass line. So that film really opened up the idea of electronic music in movies. I think it was the first to all be done with electronics.

LOC: “Disco” today—the term if not the sound—has a lot of baggage attached to it—

It’s not too bad....

In 1981, it began to change because [disco] generated too many producers with too many not great songs and too many not too great singers and it was all being played so much people started getting tired of it. Of course, it had been a major movement in America, there was so many big hits in America I think because it was a little less violent than some music being produced at that time.

Now disco is totally back. I just saw the movie “The Martian” and all the music in the movie is disco! He says in the movie, “I’m stuck up here and all I’ve got is disco music!” So disco is now officially the music of Mars!