

Genesis: A Winter's Tale – A Tale Unfolds

Most Genesis fans are familiar with their early career while under contract to Jonjo Music and Decca Records, a period that ran for approximately 2 years (from 1967-69) and which produced a debut album, *From Genesis to Revelation*, issued in stereo and mono, and a total of 3 singles; 'The Silent Sun', 'A Winter's Tale' and 'Where the Sour Turn to Sweet'. But there is one other record issued during this period with links to the Decca era Genesis which most fans won't be aware of. This is the story (or at least all that is known) about that mysterious record.

The clues to the existence of this record stretch as far back as 1972 when, in discussing the earliest stage of Genesis' career, original lead vocalist Peter Gabriel gave this quote to Chris Welch of *Melody Maker*.

“There were four of us songwriters. Tony and Mike of the present group and Anthony Phillips. But our song writing was marked with a tremendous lack of success. We were writing straight songs – I think we had one cover version that was recorded by Rita Pavone's brother.”¹

Gabriel would later touch on this subject on at least 2 other occasions, both in 1974 interviews, while going over Genesis' early career for the benefit of those readers still catching on to their music. First, when interviewed by *Rolling Stone* magazine, Gabriel recounted:

“At that time, we thought these masterpieces were ready to be recorded by thousands of Number One recording stars, and so we made a tape which was duly sent 'round Tin Pan Alley, and duly returned. We had one song covered by Rita Pavone's brother in Italy, which was a cause of great excitement.”²

Then, a couple of months later to Steve Clarke of *New Musical Express* Gabriel admitted:

“Rita Pavone's brother was the only person who'd actually recorded any of the songs apart from us. There are still some songs that are unsuitable for the band and which we'd like other people to record.”³

As can be seen from the above quotes, in all three interviews Gabriel made no mention of the song in question nor did he provide a definitive indication of the artist responsible. So all the Genesis collector or researcher had to go on was the fact that “Rita Pavone’s brother” was responsible for recording this unidentified “cover version” of an early Genesis song “in Italy”.



Italian '60s female singer Rita Pavone

While Rita Pavone was a big star in her native Italy and fairly high profile in North America, her UK career was relatively short-lived, having just 2 hit singles and appearing once at the London Palladium in the period 1966-67. But who her brother might be (and exactly how many brothers she had) was harder to determine.

In the pre-internet days contacting celebrities or tracking down others that were associated with them was not easy. Unless someone was famous enough to have an active fan club then most performers were simply out of reach and tracking down information on obscure, unidentified songs recorded back in the late sixties by an unidentified singer, for an overseas market as it turns out, was all but impossible.

However, Genesis, and to a lesser degree Peter Gabriel, benefit from having a very determined fan base prepared to search high and low for information on what this band got up to, especially before they had made a name for themselves. Nowhere is that more evident than in Italy, following a tradition that goes back to 1978 when their career was first documented in great detail by Italian journalist and photographer Armando Gallo. ⁴

Fast forward 30+ years and the story seemed to have reached a dead end when a group of Italian Genesis fans took up the challenge of finding out more about Rita Pavone’s brother which might hopefully lead them to identifying both the singer and the song. It turned out that Rita Pavone’s brother was called Carlo Pavone and he had followed his sister into show business in the mid-sixties, albeit with much less success to show for it.

Despite the efforts of the industrious Italians when they finally met with Carlo Pavone to discuss his short career as a singer he had no memory of ever recording a Genesis song and they concluded that the story, as told by Peter Gabriel all those years ago, was a myth or at the very least contained key inaccuracies



Carlo Pavone on stage circa 1966

When I heard this news myself shortly after their meeting with Carlo Pavone, I must admit I wasn't overly surprised. I had long thought the Gabriel quotes from 1972-74 to be a product of him either mis-remembering the facts or using "Rita Pavone's brother" simply as a metaphor to describe Genesis' lack of success. I even went so far as to conclude that perhaps Gabriel was mixing the artist up with Ornella Vanoni, another Italian singer, who had recorded a slightly later Genesis song, 'White Mountain', in 1972 and that there was no Genesis cover version earlier than that. It turns out that I owe Mr. Gabriel an apology.

In 2014 one of the Italian fans involved in the search finally tracked down a copy of a Carlo Pavone promo 7" single called 'Joanna' (Arc ANC 4147) which carries as its B side 'Chi Ti Ha Dato La Sua Vita' with a writing credit given as "F. Evangelista/Genesis". This news was confirmed on the forum on the Genesis website *Turn It On Again* in September 2014 and a quick search on YouTube actually reveals that a copy of the song that some Genesis fans have long wondered about was uploaded in 2012 by Aniello Salatiello which goes to prove how useful the internet can be when one knows what one is looking for! It should be noted that Arc Records is a subsidiary of RCA as evidenced by the company sleeve illustrated below.



'Chi Ti Ha Dato La Sua Vita' promo single in company sleeve

One listen to the song in question is enough to identify this track as being an Italian re-write of Genesis' second single 'A Winter's Tale', with Italian lyrics provided by the aforementioned "F. Evangelista". The song's title translates to "Who Gave You His Life" and is sung at the point in the song where Gabriel delivers the more familiar line "you're concealing every feeling" which indicates the two songs cover quite different subjects.

It's well documented, correctly, that the band's version was issued on 10 May 1968 and attracted very little interest in the UK music press gaining only 2 known reviews and precious little radio play. Interestingly the You Tube entry identifies the Carlo Pavone single as coming from 1967, which, if correct, would place it at least 5 months earlier than the Genesis version. So how likely is that?

At this point in time there's precious little evidence to go on to place the recording of the song or the release of the 'Joanna' single in 1967 and in fact all evidence points to both the recording and its release being from 1968. Furthermore, although certain discography sites show an entry for stock copies (Arc AN 4147) the only confirmed physical copies that have been tracked down to date are promos (Arc ANC 4147) and in fact it is believed by those closest to the research that 'Joanna' never went beyond promo stage.

Posting on the Genesis *Turn It On Again* forum on 9 September 2014 "Rael Matrix" provided the following information, which, with a little tidying up so it reads more natural, offers the following background information:

"My research revealed a connection between Arthur Greenslade (who arranged strings on the *From Genesis to Revelation* album) Norrie Paramor and Rita Pavone (Carlo Pavone's sister).

Rita made some appearances on BBC1 TV during 1966 and 1967 (London Palladium Show, the Val Doonican Show, International Cabaret and Top of the Pops) and Norrie Paramor was then Rita Pavone's producer.

Remember that Jonathan King's arranger was Ken Jones who was Norrie's studio arranger in the '60s.

So it's possible that Rita's producer knew about Jonathan King's work with Genesis in 1967. I'm more and more certain that the recording date of the cover is spring 1967, one year before *From Genesis to Revelation*."⁵

Although most of the above can be taken as read, the idea that Carlo Pavone could have recorded "Chi Ti Ha Dato La Sua Vita" as early as Spring 1967 is easily dismissed given the young songwriters were only just recording their first demo together over the Easter holidays of that year at *Radio Shop*, Chiswick. No specific date is known for that recording but the Easter holidays reference makes it sometime in a 3 week window spanning late March early April and it certainly predates their links with Jonathan King and Jonjo.

Looking in detail at how the relationship between Messrs. Gabriel, Banks, Phillips and Rutherford and Jonathan King/Jonjo Music developed it is possible to paint a reasonable picture around their output in terms of songs written and committed to tape in 1967.

The link up with Jonathan King began when he returned to his former school, Charterhouse for an *Old Boys' Day* and John Alexander, a fellow Charterhouse pupil and friend of the song writers, handed King a copy of their *Radio Shop* demo. King was sufficiently intrigued by the songs and Gabriel's vocals to provide funding for a second tape, completed, according to King, "in the school holidays"⁶ in the summer of 1967 and which led to both parties agreeing to a publishing contract with Jonjo Music and to King becoming their recording manager.

The "Contract to Appoint a Recording Manager" although drafted in August 1967 wasn't completed by both parties until early September 1967 after the boys' parents intervened and reduced the term of the contract from 5 years to 1 year with a 1 year option.

In the quote from the *Rolling Stone* interview in 1974, Gabriel refers to a tape being sent around "Tin Pan Alley", and it's most likely that he was referring to the July 1967 tape. For the record, the songs included on that demo are 'Image Blown Out', 'She Is Beautiful', 'Try a Little Sadness' and what was then called 'Sour Turns Sweet'. So we know for a fact that 'A Winter's Tale' was not among those earliest of songs and in fact following on from that tape it was decided to send the yet to be named band into Advision Studios to record a version of 'Sour Turns Sweet' as their debut single with another original song called 'From the Bottom of a Well' as its B side. The recording proved unsatisfactory and the proposed single was shelved.

Undeterred by the early set back and disappointment linked to the aborted plans for their debut single, during October the songwriters went into 2 studios, *Regent Sound* and *Central Sound* in Denmark Street, London, to make a follow up demo comprising 8 new songs. All but 1 of the songs has since been identified and Banks has stated that "none of them ended up being recorded"⁴ so it is reasonable to conclude that 'A Winter's Tale' is not the missing song. Of the songs confirmed as being on this second Jonjo demo, 4 appeared on the *Archive 1967-75* box set in 1998 ('Sea Bee', 'Hairs on the Arms and Legs', 'Hidden in the World of Dawn' and 'The Mystery of the Flannen Isle Lighthouse') all mistakenly listed as coming from 1968. The tracks that are known by title alone from this tape are 'Barnaby's Adventure', 'Fourteen Years too Long' and 'Lost in a Drawer'. Perhaps, one day, someone will confirm the identity of the unknown song.

It took a rejection letter from Jonjo Director Joe Roncoroni, dated 29 November 1967 and sent directly to Peter Gabriel, for things to start to turn around for the young song writers. Banks and Gabriel considered how to win back King's approval and very quickly wrote and recorded a new song called 'The Silent Sun' (on a mono tape

machine in the school dining hall), specifically designed as a “sort of Bee Gees pastiche” making the most of King’s admiration for the brothers Gibb.

The calculated approach paid dividends and King quickly agreed to ‘The Silent Sun’ being professionally recorded at *Regent B* studios, which most likely happened over the Christmas school holidays in December 1967, with Charterhouse friend Chris Stewart being added to the line-up on drums. ‘That’s Me’ was recorded as the proposed B side, and so far as is known, the band didn’t take the opportunity of recording additional songs for future releases at this session.

It was at this point though that the name ‘Genesis’ was conceived, signalling in King’s view the beginning of both a new sound and his production career. The appearance of the writing credit ‘Genesis’ on the Carlo Pavone single is a strong indication that it would have been impossible for ‘Chi Ti Ha Dato La Sua Vita’ to have appeared in 1967, given that the name ‘Genesis’ doesn’t feature in the band’s story until the very end of that year, leaving insufficient time for a record to be recorded and manufactured bearing that name.



‘A Winter’s Tale’, stock copy, on Decca Records

From here, so far as ‘A Winter’s Tale’ is concerned, details become sketchy. While the writing and recording of ‘The Silent Sun’ is well documented, in all reference works that I have read, ‘A Winter’s Tale’ doesn’t get a mention until its appearance as a UK single on 10 May 1968. So to identify the most likely dates for the recording of the Genesis original and the Carlo Pavone cover version, one has to rely on the facts

as they are understood and use assumption or probability to suggest the most likely scenario.

With no evidence to support ‘A Winter’s Tale’ being recorded by Genesis in 1967, it must be considered more likely that it was written and demoed sufficiently early in 1968 to allow for its eventual release in May that year.

The only confirmed recording date involving Genesis in the first 3 months of 1968 is for a 4 song demo recorded at *Central Sound* on 13 March 1968, a picture of which was first reproduced in the *Genesis Archive 1967-75* booklet. The significance of this date is that it wasn’t during the school holidays and wasn’t even a weekend. So it appears the band’s demo sessions could just as easily take place during term time

which is not particularly helpful when trying to suggest a possible date for when 'A Winter's Tale' was demoed.

However the sessions for their master recordings most likely were done in school holidays where the band could devote more time to recording and mixing as necessary without spending hours outside of the classroom. Clearly when it came for them to make the *From Genesis to Revelation* album, it is well documented that this is the case but for 'A Winter's Tale', I can only go with an assumption that they did so. The most likely time for recording the master tapes for 'A Winter's Tale' then becomes the half-term week in mid-February 1968. 'The Silent Sun' took no more than 7 weeks from master recording to release, so on that basis, any later than the last week in March 1968 would probably be cutting it fine to do the master session for 'A Winter's Tale' and have it readied for release on the confirmed date. By this reckoning the session would have to have been no later than in the final week of term before the Easter holidays commenced at the end of March. If the band were about to break up for 3 weeks, one would assume they'd wait until then, but unless Decca elected to rush production of the single through as a priority – which isn't likely for a young band with no hits to their name – they wouldn't have made the known release date.

Whenever Genesis actually demoed 'A Winter's Tale' (and from the above this appears to be sometime in January 1968) it needed to find its way onto a tape (most likely with other songs on it for consideration) to circulate to would-be clients. If as Rael Matrix suggests there were ready made links between Decca/Jonjo and RCA/Arc to speed things up there is still the matter of the Italian lyrics to consider. So how long would it reasonably take for 'A Winter's Tale' to end up with Carlo Pavone's recording manager or management team and for that song be paired with a new set of words? With no rule of thumb to go on for touting a song requiring a foreign lyric to be delivered, and bearing in mind that Carlo Pavone wasn't limited to recording at specific times of the year it's virtually impossible to put dates on when the session for 'Chi Ti Ha Dato La Sua Vita' actually took place. Therefore it's necessary to look at the output of Arc Records that year in order to establish an approximate release date.

Frustratingly most releases on Arc Records carry no date information on the record label and this is the case for ANC 4147. However they do each carry a matrix number prefix, and according to the entry for the Arc label given on Discogs.com, this can be used to identify the year of its release. This matrix numbers of the Carlo Pavone single are TKAW 24350 and TKAW 24351 for A and B sides respectively. According to the breakdown on Discogs.com, the TKAW prefix equates to 1968. So we have very good evidence for confirming the record was released in 1968.



'Chi Ti Ha Dato La Sua Vita' 7" with promo stamp

On 45Cat.com, a website that specialises in providing details of 7" singles issued worldwide, there is a list of Arc singles from 1964-70 which indicates that a total of 22 singles were issued on the label that year. ANC 4147, the catalogue number of the Carlo Pavone single, is the eleventh single when placed in numerical order. It is reasonable to assume that it is highly unusual for any label to release records in strict numerical order so it is

not possible to say with any degree of certainty that ANC 4147 was prepared for release mid-way through 1968. However, until significant and credible research into the sequence of Arc TKAW releases is carried out it's difficult to draw any firm conclusions either way.

In the absence of that research I would suggest that given the time needed for Genesis to have recorded a demo of 'A Winter's Tale' for distribution to any prospective client through to the appearance of promo records of a foreign language version of the same song, it's likely that this would take several months to be fully realised. So it's just about possible that the Carlo Pavone single may have been readied for release before Genesis' second single made it to the shops, although this is by no means conclusive and for all we know at this stage it could just as easily have been sometime after the Genesis single appeared. The search for clues therefore continues but at least after reading those Gabriel quotes all those years ago and wondering about what record this may have been and, more importantly, what it sounds like, we at least now know the basic facts.

More significant information may yet come to light, not least because all the major players in this story are still around to offer more insight. Added to this is the fact that the master tapes for the Genesis Jonjo recordings were recently re-discovered in a warehouse in London after being feared destroyed many years ago. Thankfully the tapes are in good shape and were quickly returned to Jonathan King by fellow producer Steve Levine who found the long lost tapes.

Fortunately, Jonathan King wasted little time in taking an opportunity to breathe new life into the old tapes and in 2017 released *Genesis 50 Years Ago* as a digital download album. Interestingly among the tracks on this release is a version of 'A Winter's Tale' featuring several false starts and some intriguing studio chat.

However, following an exchange of emails between myself and Jonathan King, it appears that the multi-track tape that may have provided a confirmed recording date for 'A Winter's Tale' hasn't been found among the recently unearthed cache.

Frustratingly then we are no closer to knowing exactly when Genesis demoed or recorded their version of 'A Winter's Tale' and until we know more about this or the series of releases by Arc Records, the search for clues surrounding the Carlo Pavone cover version goes on.

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Thanks to Simon Funnell, Dave Lewis, Mino Profumo and Elio (Rael Matrix) for their invaluable assistance with this article.

References

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