



STEVE KIPNER

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Singer/songwriter/producer Steve Kipner's career spans over three decades, from Olivia Newton-John's mega-selling 1981 hit "Physical" to the 1999 hits "The Hardest Thing" by 98 Degrees and Christina Aguilera's "Genie in a Bottle." Another Kipner song, "Anyway," is included on the 1999 RCA solo debut for singer Kevan Edmonds, formerly of the group After 7 ("Ready or Not," "Can't Stop"), produced by Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds.

Born in Cincinnati, OH, Kipner has musical talent in his genes. His father, Nat Kipner, co-wrote with Johnny Vallins the gold single "Too Much, Too Little, Too Late" by Johnny Mathis & Deniece Williams (number one R&B for four weeks, number one pop, spring/summer 1978). While still a child, Steve Kipner moved with his parents to Brisbane, Australia, where his father was stationed as a member of the U.S. Air Force. At 16, he had a number one 1965 Aussie hit with "Giggle Eyed Google Eyegoo" with his band Steve and the Board for Spin Records.

Later in England, Kipner, as part of the duo Tin Tin with Steve Groves scored a hit on Ateo Records with "Toast and Marmalade for Tea." Produced by his old friend Maurice Gibb of the Bee Gees, the tune went to number 20 pop, spring 1971. Spending some time in London, he was introduced to Peter Beckett. Later, Kipner co-wrote two songs for Beckett's band Player, who later hit with the 1978 gold single "Baby Come Back."

Producers Mike Curb and Michael Lloyd invited Kipner to the United States to work on a band project, Friends, for MGM Records during Christmas 1973. Settling in the Los Angeles area, Kipner started doing background vocals for various recording artists and writing songs. He began singing in coffee bars to expose his original tunes. To make ends meet, Kipner began selling house plants out of a Volkswagen van with a friend around Hollywood. He scraped together \$600 to buy a 4-track Teac tape recorder.

Coming across a band that practiced in a garage in his neighborhood, Kipner struck a barter deal: he'd loan them his Teac in exchange for them backing him on his song demos. The partnership proved successful. One day while selling plants and handing out his cassette demos, Kipner met RSO record executive Al Coury's secretary, who invited him upstairs. The meeting got Kipner a singles deal with the label. Kipner's major songwriting success started when he played the demo of "Let's Get Physical" to his manager Roger Davies and it was overheard by Olivia Newton-John's manager Lee Kramer who was in the next-door office. Kramer originally wanted the song to help promote one of his other clients, Mr. Universe.

Produced by John Farrar and co-written by Kipner and Terry Shaddick, "Physical" pumped its way up to number one pop, staying in place for an astounding ten weeks beginning November 21, 1981. The song received airplay on all kinds of radio stations including urban radio. Another Kipner hit, "Heart Attack," co-written with Paul Bliss, peaked at number three pop, spending 21 weeks on the charts after its debut on September 4, 1982.

In 1998, Kipner hooked up with keyboardist David Frank of the pioneering synth duo the System. The two began collaborating on songs and scored a summer 1999 Top Five pop hit for vocal group 98 Degrees with "The Hardest Thing" from the platinum LP 98 Degrees and Rising (Motown). The duo followed that up with "Genie in a Bottle" by Christina Aguilera who had been featured in the Disney animated feature Mulan.

Kipner was also involved in an recording project for the Chicago-based National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse through songwriter/producer Jack Kugel. Others involved included Stephen Stills, Ann Wilson of Heart, Olivia Newton-John, All 4 One, Michael Bolton, and Timia.

During 1999, Kipner had product coming out on the self-titled debut CD for LFO (Arista) which included the single "Summer Girls" and four tracks for singer T'gana (Hollywood): "Pain," "Give Me," "All the Love," and "There Is a Love." Other songs in Kipner's catalog are Chicago's Grammy-nominated "If She Would Have Been Faithful" and "Hard Habit to Break" (number three pop, summer 1984), Changing Faces' "My Heart Can't Take Much More (All Day All Night)," Color Me Badd's "The Last to Know," Janet Jackson's "Two to the Power of Love," Joe Cocker's "Take Me Home," Cher's "I Paralyze," and George Benson's "20/20" (number 15 R&B, late 1984).

Kipner's 1980 Electra solo LP Knock the Walls Down was reissued as a Japanese import that same year. ~ Ed Hogan