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Robin Gibb's "Juliet" was a massive hit in Europe in the summer of '83. With its strong melody, engaging vocals and electronic drumbeat it fitted in perfectly with the typical dance-pop style that became hugely successful on the European continent. "Juliet" held the top spot in the German charts for six consecutive weeks, and that same summer a poll in the "Bravo" popzine saw Robin eclipse Michael Jackson of "Thriller" fame in popularity. If the Bee Gees' sixties and seventies successes lay the foundation for Robin's stellar status in Germany, no doubt "Juliet" cemented it, and, his star never waned in Europe's largest country.

Over the years, initially inspired by the synth-pop of The Human League, Robin developed an affinity for the "Europop/Eurodance" genre, with the success of the Pet Shop Boys' singles, and later of Cher's massive hit "Believe", strengthening his belief in the commercial value of the style. And from the eighties onwards, most Bee Gees albums would include a killer gem in the genre, as illustrated by a.o. the exhilarating "Fallen Angel" on the "Size Isn't Everything" album, and the superb "Embrace" on "This Is Where I Came In". If these songs had been released on single, they would undoubtedly have done very, very well in the dance dominated European charts.

The unreleased "Broken Wings", recorded in 2008 as part of the "50 St Catherine's Drive" sessions (2007-2008), is another prime example of Robin's ability to come up with strong, commercial and danceable pop records. Based on an unfinished eighties song called "Don't Go", "Broken Wings" is in Robin Gibb's own words, "a potential smash hit". Indeed, the recording boasts a haunting melody over a hard-hitting dance beat, with lyrics touching the spiritual, and irresistible, raving vocals. And, in style, again, very "Euro-beat". There are two versions of "Broken Wings". The original featured vocals by Robin only, but aware of the track's potential in his biggest market, Robin felt he needed to give it an extra edge, which he found in the Central/Eastern European voice of Valeriya, and so in the summer of 2008 a duet version of "Broken Wings" was recorded. * Robin's instincts in this matter were in my opinion confirmed when early in 2009 promos of "50 St Catherine's Drive" were emailed to record companies (in view of brokering a record deal), and, the German head of a major international record company picked up his phone within the hour to make inquiries about "Broken Wings", and, to ask who the female singer on the track was ... Indeed, whereas it would be nice for Robin's fans to have the original version featuring his vocals only to be included on say the "Catherine's Drive" album release, in terms of hit potential it is the duet with Valeriya that stands out. In fact, if someone would tell me I could pick only one song off Robin's unreleased solo set to be released in Germany, I would without hesitation choose "Broken Wings" (featuring Valeriya thus). Some records "scream" hit, and I believe this one just does that exactly. Robin thought so too. It may possibly be a less fitted (first) single choice for Anglo-American markets, I'm convinced though it's a contender for the top ten (and higher) in Germany, and by extension other European continental countries. And, the perfect "summer hit" and "follow-up" of "Juliet". Additionally, under the unfortunate circumstances, "Broken Wings" would be an "easy" single to market. Two sets of professional photos of Robin and Valeriya exist, one shot in London, the other on location in Riga. There is professional footage of Robin and Valeriya performing together on television on two separate occasions. In other words, putting together a videoclip and press kit shouldn't exactly be a headache. And at the risk of being somewhat blunt, Valeriya is alive and kicking, and thus physically capable to promote a single release in person on prime time tv and major radio stations ...

The funny thing too about summer hits is that holiday makers pick them up and take them home. A hit in Europe in summer is often a hit in the UK in September. A big single hit preceding an album release, isn't that supposedly an ideal starting position?

So it is summer again. And again, "Broken Wings" is not released on single.

A. G.

* to avoid any misunderstandings the dance remix of Broken Wings that Valeriya's people came up with in 2010 is not the same as the studio version that Robin recorded with V in 2008, the latter being the version I'm referring to here .