

# i wrote that

Tim Laws, songwriter, producer and co-founder of Song Tank\*, the professional online music community, talks to **M** about co-writing *Dreams* with Gabrielle



I think it was about 1991 when *Dreams* came about. I was 21 at the time and Gabrielle was in a girl band. She had come over to my studio, which was in a potting shed at the bottom of my Mum and Dad's garden.

I was a producer and generally working on backing tracks and remix ideas and stuff like that. A lot of my inspiration for writing comes from it. I had this backing track and I gave it to Gabrielle to see if she could write something to go with it. Gabs said she had a poem she could put to it called *Dreams Can Come True*. She came back, we worked on a few melodies and that was it – it was that simple. I've found from experience that the great songs often are written like that; the ones you really struggle with often don't make it.

On first hearing Gabrielle's voice, I was bowled over and knew that she had the potential to be a star. Now everyone we were playing *Dreams* to,

loved it. We had a white label made, but Gabrielle was looking to get a proper deal. I know that she was turned down flat by quite a few companies, which was weird because the buzz on street level was quite big.

Then Ferdy Unger Hamilton who was working for Go! Discs at the time, discovered the record. The story goes that he was in a record shop in Bristol, absolutely fell in love with it and tracked Gabs down and the rest is history really. That was about '93, so it took 18 months from writing the song to it actually being played on mainstream radio. It was certainly out there a long time before it ever crossed over commercially.

Gabrielle's vocal on the track is so distinctive that it hasn't been covered as far as I'm aware in the 16 years since. I actually think the song itself is so simplistic it needs a really characterful vocal to carry it off. I think that's the reason it has stood the test of time and it is an ageless song, very organic, very acoustic. It could be a record that came out yesterday, 15 years ago, 35 years ago.

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