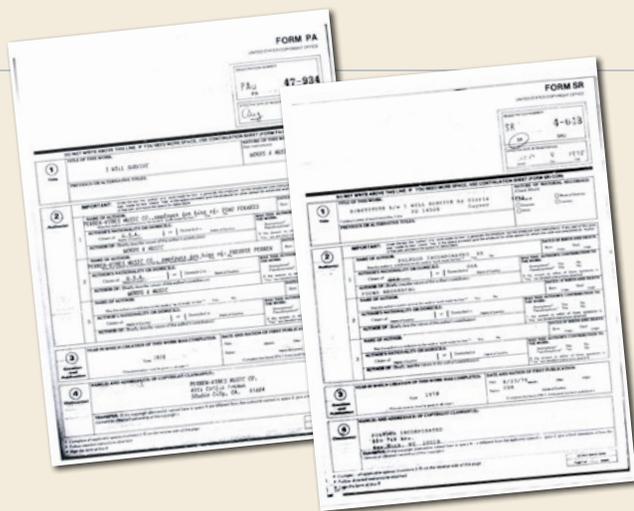


“I Will Survive” Original Work, Derivatives, and Covers

ALISON HALL

Gloria Gaynor’s iconic 1978 hit “I Will Survive” is recognized in the Library’s National Recording Registry. Today, multiple generations enjoy the song, and Gaynor continues to perform the hit around the world, including at the Library’s Bibliodiscotheque. Dino Fekaris and Freddie Perren wrote the words and music to the song as a work made for hire for Perren-Vibes Music Co., who submitted the original copyright application. Polydor Incorporated submitted the copyright application for the original sound recording of the single and for Gaynor’s album *Love Tracks*, which contained the song as one of its tracks.



Since its 1978 release, “I Will Survive” has been recorded and released many times. Gaynor recorded a derivative work of the song translated into Spanish, “Yo Vivire,” in 1979, and Polydor Incorporated registered that version for copyright protection. The next year, Discos Musart S.A. registered Juan Torres’ album *Amor en la Discotheque*, which also included a recording of the Spanish translation. Two more derivative works were registered in 1994 when PolyGram Records, Inc. released remixes of Gaynor’s English and Spanish versions of the song.

Covers of “I Will Survive,” in different styles of music, began to hit the charts soon after the original. Billie Jo Spears’ country version was one of the first. It appeared on her album *The Billie Jo Spears Singles Album*. Chantay Savage recorded a soulful rendition of it on her album *I Will Survive (Doin It My Way)* in 1996. In 2002, Cake recorded a rock-based version on their album *Fashion Nugget*, and in 2007, The Puppini Sisters recorded a 1940s-style version on their album *Betcha Bottom Dollar*. For each of these releases, the owners of the sound recording submitted copyright applications for the entire album.

Other albums submitted for copyright protection containing “I Will Survive” include *Touch* by Gladys Knight & The Pips in 1981, *Get The Party Started* by Dame Shirley Bassey in 2008, and *Aretha Franklin Sings the Great Diva Classics* in 2015. Both Gaynor’s recording and covers have appeared in many movies and soundtracks. In 2014, “I Will Survive” was released on *Rio 2 Music From The Motion Picture* and in 2016 on the *Angry Birds Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*.

When asked how she would encourage other artists to enjoy other interpretations of their copyrighted work, Gaynor said, “I would encourage them to recognize every interpretation as a tribute to them, since imitation is the highest form of compliment.” Gaynor also encourages artists to register both the music and lyrics and the sound recordings of their songs, especially if the owner of the sound recording is not the owner of the lyrics. She says that “artists should register both the music and lyrics and their sound recordings of their songs, so that each creator gets proper credit for his or her input on a song. Also, if someone uses one part without the other the creator still gets credit for his or her creativity.”



PHOTO BY SHAWN MILLER

Gloria Gaynor sang at the Library’s Bibliodiscotheque event on May 6.