

From back-up to centre stage. Into the spotlight.

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By Richard Johnson; Observer senior reporter

Back in 1989, a young girl with her eyes set on becoming a dancer, would, on the encouragement of her sister, audition to do studio harmonies for singer Tinga Stewart.

The youngster was Marie Gittens, better known as Twiggi.



"I had never done anything like this before, and I was so nervous, but managed to pull it off well. This led to me being introduced to the likes of Boris Gardiner and Ruddy Thomas, and I did studio work and live performances for them both."

Once word got out, Twiggi signed on as the third member of Toots Hibbert's 54-46, following the departure of Jeneive.

In 1993, during a performance with Japanese reggae artiste Naki at Japansplash, Penthouse Records Donovan Gemain spotted Twiggi and took her under his wing.

She not only did harmonies for stablemates Buju Banton and Wayne Wonder, but also recorded tracks of her own including I Want Your Love and It's Too Late.

Today, Twiggi calls Florida home and is still recording and performing as a solo artiste, but backing vocals is always on the cards.

"It is a double-edged sword. Some people will always see me as a backup singer, not as a solo artiste. But it pays, so I am always grateful when it comes" she says.

Twiggi's latest release is the song Superhuman.