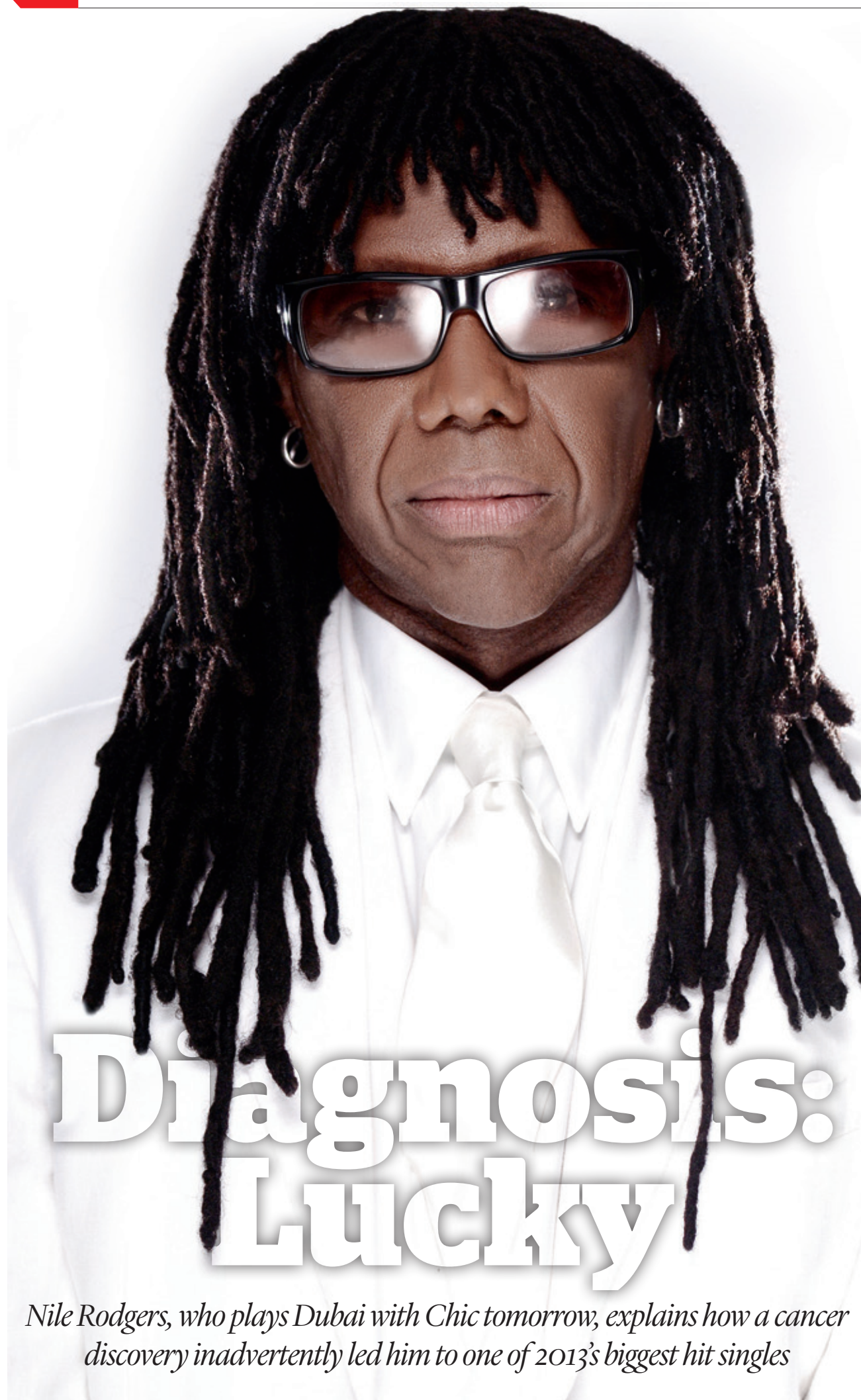


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COVER



Nile Rodgers, who plays Dubai with Chic tomorrow, explains how a cancer discovery inadvertently led him to one of 2013's biggest hit singles

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LIVE FAST, DIE young and have a good-looking corpse. This line, first uttered in the 1949 film *Knock on Any Door*, would later become a defining mantra of the rock and roll lifestyle – one whose dangers Nile Rodgers knows only too well after more than four decades in music.

“Rock and roll is a uniquely lethal business,” says the guitarist and producer – the last remaining member from the original line-up of disco act Chic.

“Or maybe it just seems that way. But I have to say that too many of my friends have passed away at a very early age,” adds Nile, who lost all four of his bandmates between the ages of 43 and 54.

Nile, 61, co-founded Chic in the mid-1970s. The band scored U.S. number one hits *Le Freak* and *Good Times* before Nile went on to produce for everyone from David Bowie on 1983's *Let's Dance* (which remains Bowie's best-selling record) to Madonna on 1984's *Like A Virgin*.

More recently, Nile has had to contend with the death of Velvet Underground frontman Lou Reed last month from liver disease at the age of 71.

The fellow New Yorkers knew each other from the early days playing Max's Kansas City – the legendary Manhattan nightclub which was frequented by a who's who of '70s superstars such as Andy Warhol, Iggy Pop and Aerosmith.

Nile last saw Lou in late 2011, when both were booked to perform live in London on the long-running BBC show *Later... with Jools Holland*.

“We were laughing and joking,” he tells us over the phone from a hotel in Dublin. “Lou didn't have an overly jovial personality, so I think that whenever I was around and could make him laugh, he dug that. I was shocked when I heard he'd passed away because when I saw last him he didn't even seem ill.”

NO TIME FOR REST

Nile's own brush with mortality came three years ago when he was diagnosed with an “extremely aggressive” form of prostate cancer.

But instead of withdrawing

from professional commitments to focus on his recuperation, Nile threw himself into work harder than ever.

“I decided I would let the doctors do what they do,” says Nile, who claims to sleep only three hours a night, “and my part of the therapeutic process would be to do the thing that makes me feel the best. So I went on this absolute tear-up of writing and performing more than ever.”

That decision not only preserved Nile's sanity during a deeply challenging time, but also eventually saw him return to the top of the charts from the UK to Lebanon to Australia.

After entering the studio with Daft Punk, with whom he had shared a longtime mutual admiration, Nile wrote and recorded a trio of tracks with the French electro duo: *Give Life Back to Music*, *Lose Yourself to Dance* and *Get Lucky*.

All three songs – the latter two of which also featured vocals from Pharrell Williams – were included in Daft Punk's fourth studio album, *Random Access Memories*, which was released in May to huge critical



Rock and roll is a uniquely lethal business, or maybe it just seems that way.”

Nile Rodgers

acclaim and topped the charts in more than 20 countries.

Meanwhile, *Get Lucky* took on a life of its own as a juggernaut party anthem. Sweeping radio stations, weddings, nightclubs and everywhere else across the globe, the funky track has sold 8.7 million copies to date (second this year only to Robin Thicke's *Blurred Lines*, which also featured Williams).

But its origins were far more humble.

“At the time, Daft Punk didn't even have a record deal or anything like that,” he says. “I didn't know when *Get Lucky* was coming out, I didn't think of anything other than making the best record possible. That's all I cared about.”

And while Nile is delighted about the track's incredible success, he's also happy to retain a comfortable level of anonymity in the public eye.



NILE BRINGS CHIC to Dubai on Friday night to perform at this month's Sandance festival on Nasimi Beach, which will also feature the likes of Jamiroquai, Rudimental and Basement Jaxx. See www.sandance.ae for tickets and more information.



Nile with Daft Punk and Pharrell Williams in the music video for *Get Lucky*

"For all the years and all the hit records I've had, most people would have no idea who I am," insists Nile. "I still walk down the street and take the subway carrying my own guitar and nobody bothers me at all."

"Every now and then someone asks for an autograph or a picture, but for the most part that's how I live and I've always lived that way."

He also claims to have turned down a judging role on the first season of *American Idol*, despite the best efforts of the show's creator, British entertainment mogul Simon Fuller.

"I told Simon that I'm not a judge of talent, so it's unnatural for me and it would look phony," he says, adding, "I already have enough money."

'I WAS ALMOST DRIVEN TO TEARS'

Although not motivated financially, Nile's relentless work schedule in recent times has seen him working with David Guetta, Chase & Status and dance music's current golden boy, Avicii.

"He's one of the best

composers I've ever worked with," Nile says of the 24-year-old Swede, "and we've already written six songs together. I just love him."

He has also embarked on a performing schedule with Chic which would tire out artists one-third of his age.

"Just last night we did a show here in Dublin and Bono from U2 came," Nile recounts. "He said to us, 'My goodness, how many shows have you played this year?'"

"We all looked at each other and said, 'Well, it's easier for us to tell you how many days we didn't play!' That would be about 30 of the last 365 days."

This tireless run also saw Nile step onto the stage at the famous Glastonbury Festival for the first time this summer – an emotional experience in which the English crowds chanted his name and began a singalong of *Get Lucky*.

"It was amazing, life-changing, extraordinary," he says. "I had to work to be professional not to cry – I was almost driven to tears because I had never seen so much outpouring of love and appreciation for what I've done."



Nile calls Avicii "one of the best composers I've ever worked with"

I'd never heard people chant my name in my life and then when they started singing *Get Lucky*, that really blew me away."

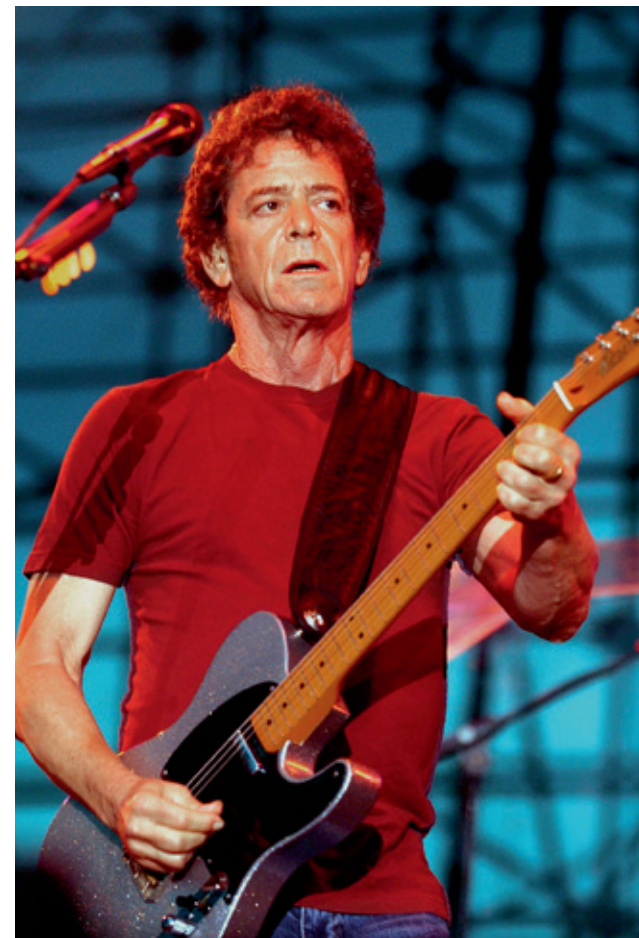
"It's something I'll never forget. It was a really special night."

(Incidentally, the British press agreed. "Some of the greatest pop music ever made, expertly played by a ferociously well-drilled band. It was fantastic," said *The Guardian* of Chic's set, while *The Telegraph* announced that Nile and company "stole the show").

One month later, Nile received even more incredible news – announcing on Twitter that he had received the all-clear from doctors on his cancer.

"Maybe I'm a little immature, but I believe in very simple concepts," Nile tells us about his recovery. "Someone once told me long ago that if you have a job to do, it gives you a reason to wake up the next day."

"I made it so that I had a job to do 365 days a year. I have no reason to die – I have a reason to wake up the next day."



Lou Reed, a longtime friend of Nile's, passed away recently