



The Archives of Let's Talk Dusty!

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Getting It Right

Printer Friendly

An honest account of Dusty's life

Author

Topic

carrollh

I start counting

Posted - 03/08/2008 : 23:33:15



United Kingdom  
9 Posts

Dear All, i would like to buy a book which give's an honest account of Dusty's life and musical achievements, can anyone suggest a good book please?

Thanks

Helen

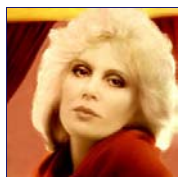
Edit: Moved to 'Getting It Right' section.. Will

Tim

Where am I going?



Posted - 04/08/2008 : 00:29:48



United Kingdom  
3422 Posts

Hi Helen - (noting where you come from) I googled Amazon UK - as this shows what's available new. Cut and paste this link into your browser.

[http://www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref=nb\\_ss\\_b/202-3042078-6034245?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=dusty+springfield](http://www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref=nb_ss_b/202-3042078-6034245?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=dusty+springfield)

Before I make a recommendation - just a general note. Most books that have been published on Dusty have been useful and informative in some way. There's some forthcoming titles in this list which I think will be worthwhile, but they are untested water. Among these is Annie J Randell's academic appraisal of Dusty as an artist - which focuses on her pioneering achievements in the music industry. I think I would choose that in preference to Laurence Cole's study as Annie is known personally by a few of us on LTD and we trust her to do right by Dusty.

Talking of doing right by Dusty, and a book that didn't - 'Dancing With Demons' has been largely rubbished and discredited as it delved very deeply into Dusty's personal life. It was something of a rush (hatchet)job, was NOT authorised despite the cover claim, and has been felt to be exploitative, unbalanced and a betrayal of Dusty by certain people whom she trusted - (or maybe latterly DIDN'T trust). So I WON'T be recommending that one.....LOL.

I should also mention Paul Howes' Complete Dusty Springfield' as it's the BIBLE regarding Dusty's music - covering almost everything she recorded or demo'd - and is very well annotated - the comments and quotes - often from Dusty herself - make a thoroughly good read.

The Lucy O' Brien book is probably the most straightforward read - and a good starting point - but if you are like me you will want to read them all in turn - perhaps even DWD. So to answer your Q. I would go with the O'Brien to start with.

Phew... maybe I should review for Richard & Judy's Book Club..

T 😊

'I still like Daffy Duck. Can't think of anyone I like better. Actually that's who I'm having an affair with. Difficult but rewarding!'

Edited by - Tim on 04/08/2008 00:44:13

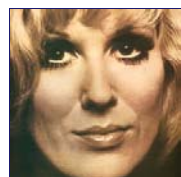


**memphisinlondon**

Where am I going?



Posted - 04/08/2008 : 00:57:06



United Kingdom  
3565 Posts

Good question, Helen. But there isn't one...yet. There's a new books thread buried a month or so ago here. It should be easy to find. That will tell you about 3 books that are coming out around September and are available for pre-order on Amazon.

In the meantime there's only Lucy O'Brien's book 'Dusty' and Penny Valentine's 'Dancing With Demons'(DWD)that are worth a scant look. Both have mistakes and inaccuracies in them but they'll give you a flavour of Dusty as a woman and an artist - but they are not definitive, can be inaccurate, are lazily researched and they don't start off by understanding how important Dusty really was IMHO. Times have moved on. DWD is sloppy as well as controversial but it's probably an essential (painful) read if you're really interested in Dusty at a certain time without air brushing.

There are lots of fascinating newspaper articles and interviews posted here that are of historical worth. And I find, at the end of the day, that Dusty's albums tell Dusty's story quite eloquently too. I particularly like Michael Bayley's site for biographical material on Dusty. If you haven't found it yet it's here:

<http://www.cptelecom.net/mbayly/>

Memphis  
Ever since we met...



**dusty\_freak**

I've got a good thing



Posted - 04/08/2008 : 13:16:20



Australia  
5805 Posts

Yeah negative on DWD, mind you i haven't read it all.

I agree with Tim, the Complete Dusty Springfield is excellent for all info regarding the music.

Clare xoxo

"You know you've got it if it makes you feel good..."



**Dougie**

I start counting

Posted - 10/08/2008 : 07:50:30



Australia  
97 Posts

quote:

*Originally posted by carrollh*

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Thanks

Helen

Edit: Moved to 'Getting It Right' section.. Will

As everyone has stated that book has yet to be written, but maybe one day.....

Dougie....😄



**Snowbird**

Little by little



Posted - 10/08/2008 : 08:14:17



Hi Helen 😊

First off, WELCOME to LTD! I hope you have a fabulous time here.



USA  
463 Posts

We've all got a lot to say about a wonderful lady who gave us so much that we'll never run out of things to talk about.

Please know that what I am about to say, with regards to "An honest account of Dusty's life," is strictly my personal opinion. It goes without saying that each of us here at LTD are here out of great love and admiration for someone who has touched all of us very deeply in VERY DIFFERENT ways.

I've read all of the books that are available on Dusty, except, "Anti Diva, by Carole Pope. For me, this book is not about Dusty, but, rather Carole Pope. I treasure my copy of "The Complete Dusty Springfield." It's a more than excellent read for all who want to know the complete story of the time and the music of Dusty. But, I have to say that "Dancing With Demons," perhaps not a perfectly accurate account of a life lived, is the book that touched my heart and soul at the core. I was driven to read this book, not because I wanted to, but because so many people told me not to. They told me there were terrible things written about her in this horrible book. I'm sorry - I didn't find that to be true at all. What I found was a story that made me laugh till I cried, and made me cry till I wept in sorrow. The truth, the sadness, the comedy and the vulnerability that made Dusty, Dusty, I found, was on every page in that book. For me, "Dancing With Demons," was like a diary an old friend had left behind for me to read. Nothing in the pages surprised me. I found nothing shameful. All I found was a beautiful human interest story about a woman who lived life like we all do - doing the best we can with what we have to work with. Perfection is sometimes born of chaos. Courage can only be born of a will to survive under any circumstance. I see Dusty's music as close to perfection as one can get. And her courage, an inspiration. I don't know the "connection" that any of the members of LTD have with Dusty Springfield, but, for myself, it's the courage that I found on every page of DWD that ties me forever to her. Can it be that when we look at someone as being more than human, or, larger than life, we begin to lose sight of the fact that nobody's perfect? Well, that's my opinion, and I'm sticking to it!

.....and my beautiful soul is weeping. xo

Love,  
Leigh



**memphisinlondon**

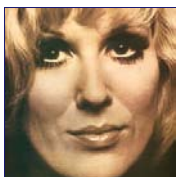
Where am I going?



Posted - 10/08/2008 : 11:45:43



Dear Leigh



United Kingdom  
3565 Posts

This is not a discussion thread about DWD but, nevertheless, I just had to say that I had a similar experience of the book to you. And I agree with everything you say (so eloquently as usual).

I read the first edition in October 2000. It was preceded by serialisation in one of the Sunday papers and promoted as a scandalous expose. It was relatively soon after Dusty's passing and this was the only new book to come out. It was not a fitting memorial and, particularly at that sensitive time, it was perceived by many as a shocking invasion of Dusty's privacy. It seemed like a rushed money making exercise and the sloppiness attests to that.

But even with all its deep flaws, mistakes and half-truths this is the book that made Dusty real to me in the way you describe. However, I don't think it's a book that can be recommended as 'an honest account of Dusty's life and musical achievements' because of its particular and narrow focus.

Memphis  
Ever since we met...



**bobbie**  
I start counting

Posted - 01/09/2008 : 01:27:13



Dear Leigh,  
You wrote so eloquently of DWD. I too found the book to be so very



USA  
75 Posts

much Dusty. And realize the most private Dusty may have cringed had she known so much would be shared, BUT the ladies who wrote the book, mistakes and all, loved her and, from what I've read, were with her to the end. I've known beautiful, incredible, charismatic people who were just impossible but you loved them just the same. Sometimes reading DWD I'd become overwhelmed with sadness and have to put it away. I know everyone on this site would have moved heaven and earth to have made her life easier. The truth is, and was, SHE WAS LOVED, to what extent she knew it would be interesting to know.



**bobbie**  
I start counting

Posted - 01/09/2008 : 01:49:47

The people Dusty chose to be close to all seem to echo the same sentiment..too many voice the same thing."Dusty was hell bent on destruction and we both knew it." And no matter how much you loved her you couldn't fix it. It seems towards the end she found peace and hopefully felt the love that was there for her. I know this is off topic but reading these postings really generates very strong feelings.



USA  
75 Posts

**memphisinlondon**  
Where am I going?  
☆☆☆

Posted - 01/09/2008 : 04:27:37

Hi Bobbie

I just had to comment on that 'hell bent on destruction' line. I guess you mean self destruction. What we get in 'Dancing With Demons' is descriptions of a woman in deep pain, deep clinical depression but I can't remember anything in the the book that offers that kind of explanation. We are just given the shocking and heart breaking behavioural symptoms. Dusty was hospitalised several times and presumably she was diagnosed there.

Maybe her friends were witless and stupid to say she was hell bent on self-destruction. What would they have done in Dusty's place - pulled themselves up by the bootstraps. What for when there was no road ahead? But maybe, like most friends in similar places, they were just helpless and in despair. For me, it's all in the fortune telling emotion and lyrics in the 'Memphis' tracks 'No Easy Way Down/I Can't Make It Alone'. I think the failure of 'Memphis' was the start of Dusty's breaking point. I think she did break down. Dusty said she had been very 'bruised' by her time in the USA; I think it was far more hurtful and deeply damaging than that.

In time, Dusty came back like a Phoenix. It was only cancer that could beat her. By the end Dusty must have known how much she was so very loved. She really needed that knowledge back in the 70s when no-one knew where she was. But, crucially, Dusty seemed to understand her audience's 'love' as commercial record sales (I don't blame her) and good sales evaded her until the late 80s when, in retrospect, it was getting too late. No friend or doctor could deliver that kind of 'love' in the '70s through to the early '80s when she really needed it.

Memphis  
Ever since we met...



**bobbie**  
I start counting

Posted - 01/09/2008 : 12:20:01

Dear Memphis,

Thank you for responding. Page 123 of "Anti Diva", "Dusty was hell bent on destruction, and we both knew it." When you read the chapter on Dusty you feel Carole's helplessness to help Dusty. "These episodes left me shaking and numb. It was frustrating not to be able to discuss her behaviour with her. She would only let me see so much of her.....she was silent about her past and the origin of her demons." "I finally accepted the fact that I had no control over her behaviour. I was vain and naive enough to think that my loving her



USA  
75 Posts

would make everything all right. She was so lost and I cared deeply about her, but it was f\*cking up my life. I didn't have the tools to deal with her problems, and I could barely contain my anger and resentment."


**memphisinlondon**

Where am I going?



Posted - 01/09/2008 : 22:02:00


 United Kingdom  
3565 Posts

Thanks Bobbie,

I have Carole's book here. I've only read the Dusty chapter and I only read it once. I remember those words. Yes, what could anyone do? I sometimes think (with not much evidence but enough clues) that her parents must have truly messed Dusty up. Music and success were Dusty's way out of that mess, a way to paint bright colours over the cracks; an anchor and a way to channel all that powerful emotional energy. I think she learned later that there were other anchors, higher powers and channels. And she was able to heal herself. I hope so anyway.

Memphis  
Ever since we met...


**bobbie**

I start counting

Posted - 02/09/2008 : 01:17:28


 USA  
75 Posts

Memphis,

I love your insight, also that we are on the same page where La Dust is concerned. But witless and stupid are a bit strong when one speaks of the 60's and 70's mentality. At least in the US psychotherapy was not so accepted, nor utilized. I would have gladly shared my therapist with Dusty. Not that she hadn't been exposed or referred to one after the hospitalizations for cuttings, overdoses et al. Then again, maybe some just can't be helped..Elvis, Garland, with all that genius, maybe they're missing an element we mortals take for granted.

On another note, please forgive my spelling...I really miss spell check.


**memphisinlondon**

Where am I going?



Posted - 02/09/2008 : 01:48:59


 United Kingdom  
3565 Posts

Hello again Bobbie,

I love your insight too. Yes, we're on the same page. And I do think of Dusty alongside people like Elvis. These people had genius which set them apart and alone. The people around them didn't have the power to help because they were mostly followers and dependants - and maybe that's why they were chosen. Dusty did get help eventually through great friends but it was later on when she'd decided to help herself. I guess wanting to help yourself is always the key.

Witless and stupid are a bit strong. But if I had a good friend that was demonstrating strange and dangerous behaviour I'd be counselling and trying hard to steer that friend to help. I mean trying really hard. Luckily, I've never been in that position. But I think I understand what Carole was saying. Sometimes there's nothing you can do, especially when you've really tried and been beaten back and disappointed over and over. You have to get out because otherwise you'll be damaged too.

I miss spell check too. I'm always having to go back and correct myself!

Memphis  
Ever since we met...


**daydreamer**

Moderator



Posted - 02/09/2008 : 07:31:43



Can I just say that I think it's all too easy to blame the parents. Dusty may have had the same problems if her upbringing had been totally different. Some people are just wired differently. And as for Carole Pope, she was in Dusty's life for a very short time in the grand scale of



United Kingdom  
5404 Posts

things and she chose to kiss and tell to make some money. Doesn't put her high up on my list of people to be admired.

I'd say wait for the new batch of books and see if there's something more rounded than DWD, especially as you're interested in the "musical achievement" side of things too.

Carole x

***"The days have come and gone since you were here..."***

Edited by - daydreamer on 02/09/2008 07:36:28

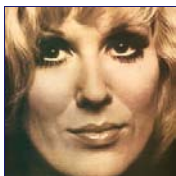


**memphisinlondon**

Where am I going?



Posted - 02/09/2008 : 23:22:41



United Kingdom  
3565 Posts

Thanks, Carole. I always appreciate what you have to say. Dusty was certainly wired differently like most great artists. She couldn't have produced her best works otherwise. Her equilibrium was finely balanced. Her safety nets were not strong enough. I think of that little girl finding a way to exist and that easily telescopes into the 70s and early 80s. The Jean Rook interview on this site is very telling. Dusty is so matter of fact about her child-hood and drivers.

<http://www.dustyspringfield.info/137601/139201.html>

But when I hear her sing 'I Am Your Child'...well, there are no words... I do look forward to the books and for a better understanding of what it took for Dusty to bring me such soul full music. I don't admire Carole Pope; I think she was telling some truths but her chapter is a rather facile snapshot. There's a good book out there somewhere. I hope it's in the next batch.

Memphis  
Ever since we met...



**paula**

Moderator



Posted - 03/09/2008 : 02:16:04



USA  
5012 Posts

looking forward to that new batch o' books 😊

paula x



**daydreamer**

Moderator



Posted - 03/09/2008 : 07:19:52



United Kingdom  
5404 Posts

From Google alerts.....

Dust to Dust  
Published: 05/09/08

Absolutely no excuses here for plugging no less than FOUR books on our Dust either newly published or soon to be released.

In the Middle of Nowhere by Laurie Cole  
Middlesex University Press (30 Sep 2008 UK)  
This is the first book-length study of Dusty Springfield's contribution to popular culture in terms of race, gender or sexuality, and will appeal to both fans and readers with a general interest in popular music or cultural studies.

An intimate portrait by Sharon Davies  
Andre Deutsch Ltd (6 Oct 2008 UK)  
This new biography, written with the active cooperation and assistance of Dusty's lifelong friend and secretary, Patricia Rhodes, and of Simon Bell, who lived with her through the last six months of her life, promises to be a timely reminder of the art and style of a performer

who said of herself, "My face is white, but my soul is black."

Queen of the Post Mods by Annie j Randall  
Oxford University Press. (1 November, 2008 USA),  
(Mar 2009 UK)

Focusing on the years from 1964 to 1968 this book pays special attention to Springfield's close collaboration and friendship with American gospel singer Madeline Bell, the distinctive way Springfield combined US soul and European melodrama to achieve her own musical style and stage presence and her camp sensibility.  
oup-usa.org

It's Hard Being Queen by Jeanette Lynes.  
Freehand Books (Published September in Canada)  
One of Canada's best-loved poets takes on one of the most compelling divas in sixty-one audacious poems. It's Hard Being Queen paints a compulsively readable portrait of an extraordinary life. Each page is infused with wit, drama, and, of course, music.  
freehand-books.com

Carole x

***"The days have come and gone since you were here..."***

Edited by - daydreamer on 03/09/2008 07:20:31



**Jen**  
Little by little  
★

Posted - 06/09/2008 : 20:55:03



Canada  
175 Posts

Jeanette Lynes' book of poetry came out here about 2 weeks ago. 🙄

It will be available online soon. I have a contact with the publisher, and will keep an eye on the various Amazons - I will post again when it is more widely available.

Jen  
😊😬



**allherfaces**  
Administrator  
★★★★★

Posted - 06/09/2008 : 21:29:40



USA  
14235 Posts

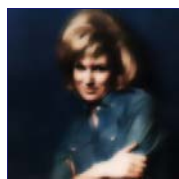
Please post info as soon as you have it.  
I'm thinking about writing a paper on it! : )

~You thrill me with a holy kind of bliss. . . .So closer (closer)



**Jen**  
Little by little  
★

Posted - 07/09/2008 : 00:59:24



Canada  
175 Posts

Hi Nancy,

How desperate are you?! 🌍 I have one signed copy set aside for the next raffle, and one unsigned. I could put one in the mail on Monday if you are getting "twitchy"!! 😬

Jen  
😊😬



**MissDustyFanatic**  
Where am I going?  
★★★

Posted - 07/09/2008 : 01:29:56



USA  
2606 Posts

quote:

Originally posted by Jen

Hi Nancy,

How desperate are you?! 🤔 I have one signed copy set aside for the next raffle, and one unsigned. I could put one in the mail on Monday if you are getting "twitchy"!! 😊

Jen



Ah, the perks of being an Admin 😊

"And I can play the game of life...to win"

Edited by - MissDustyFanatic on 07/09/2008 02:40:50



📅 Posted - 24/09/2008 : 23:07:10 🗨️ 🏠

For all it's faults, real & imagined 'Dancing With Demons' is essential reading.



Humboldt



**humboldt**  
I'll try anything  
★★



United Kingdom  
1704 Posts

**Baby Blue**  
Where am I going?  
★★★

📅 Posted - 25/09/2008 : 04:42:15 🗨️

I agree Humboldt, but we need to be careful as both of us might get stoned now 🤪

Marty

quote:

Originally posted by humboldt

For all it's faults, real & imagined 'Dancing With Demons' is essential reading.



Humboldt



**humboldt**  
I'll try anything  
★★



United Kingdom  
1704 Posts

**Baby Blue**  
Where am I going?  
★★★

📅 Posted - 25/09/2008 : 07:57:38 🗨️ 🏠

Thank goodness for the voice of reason. I was beginning to think that I was the only one who had read the book without having a hissy fit. I understood & loved Dusty much more as a result.



Humboldt



📅 Posted - 25/09/2008 : 18:36:32 🗨️

As you said the book has many faults not even worth getting into as we all know them, but it's still a must read. If you don't love Dusty





more after reading DWD, you just don't have a heart.



Marty



USA  
3185 Posts

**memphisinlondon**  
Where am I going?  
★★★★

Posted - 25/09/2008 : 21:14:34



I think most of us agree nowadays but where's the book about Dusty's musical achievements (not just Paul Howes)? Where's the carefully researched biography that at least gets her birthplace right and early addresses right? Tells us a little more about her family background. And more about the important 1967-1971 years. Hopefully, they're coming up soon.

Memphis  
Ever since we met...

United Kingdom  
3565 Posts

Edited by - memphisinlondon on 25/09/2008 21:16:51



**JMFRPL**  
Little by little  
★

123 Posts

Posted - 28/10/2008 : 23:51:42

quote:

*Originally posted by Baby Blue*

As you said the book has many faults not even worth getting into as we all know them, but it's still a must read. If you don't love Dusty more after reading DWD, you just don't have a heart.

Marty

Ah, but it may not be JUST about Dusty, it's about the writers too. Many people still don't get it when I protest against That Book. I'm not taking it out on Dusty...it's the "friends" who seemed to not care about her or the hurt the fans felt.

And Marty, there are people who don't have a heart out there, sadly. Some of which I feared would treat Dusty like an Amy Winehouse or something. At least Dusty still acted classy in public even at her worse times!!! Even worse, there are people who dislike others just for being themselves. I know we've come across a few at one point.

I'm just tired of worrying about it all. I'd rather remember Dusty for her music and the person SHE wanted us to know.

Edited by - JMFRPL on 29/10/2008 00:51:28



**Isparks18**  
Little by little  
★



USA  
132 Posts

Posted - 08/12/2008 : 13:08:34

Carole G always a reasoned voice. I remember one thing you said back when--Dusty was not the "messed up" person in the 60's when she was having her greatest success. This came later when she fell on hard times. Does this have anything to do with it? I think the O'Briens are not that different than lots of families. My dad was a musician and it made for an unusual upbringing to say the least. I managed to hold it together for 33 years to retire from your "friendly" oil company. We are wired differently, but I would not single out her family as the reason Dusty lost her way.

Carole Pope is such a name dropper!

Sparks

Sparks



**Hampson**  
I've got a good thing  
★★★★

Posted - 11/12/2008 : 12:58:10

quote:

2010-07-28

## The Archives of Let's Talk Dusty! - A...

*Originally posted by Isparks18*

Carole G always a reasoned voice. I remember one thing you said back when--Dusty was not the "messed up" person in the 60's when she was having her greatest success. This came later when she fell on hard times. Does this have anything to do with it? I think the



United Kingdom  
4703 Posts