

Let's Talk Dusty!

The Ultimate Forum for Dusty Springfield Fans
<http://www.dustyspringfield.org.uk/forum/>

Decscribing Dusty and/or her singing as a 'colour'...

<http://www.dustyspringfield.org.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?f=7&t=1467>

Decscribing Dusty and/or her singing as a 'colour'...

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by **Carole R.**

Posted: **Tue Sep 21, 2010 11:42 am**

This link: <http://luminousmuse.wordpress.com/2010/...usty-blue/> sees Luminous Muse comparing Dusty's voice to the deep blue colour used in a church's stained glass window..



Unusual 'take' on things I thought. 🤔

I know that when we think of a Dusty colour we tend to think of Pink, Purple and even "vodka".. 🍷 🍷

However, on giving this topic further thought, you may just wanna compare it to *another* colour. 🤔

What d'ya think? 😊

CR xx

Re: Decscribing Dusty and/or her singing as a 'colour'...

by **Corinna**

Posted: **Tue Sep 21, 2010 11:53 am**

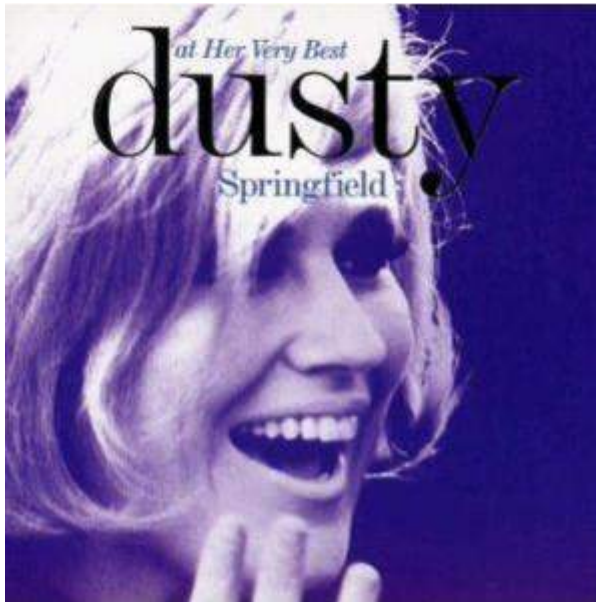
What a great new thread, CR! 🍷 🍷

And what a wonderfully and lovingly written piece on Dusty. ❤️ I'll copy it in here:



The oldest stained glass windows of Chartres Cathedral, made in the 12th century, glow

with panes of a deep special blue. It's a color whose formula no artist or scientist has been able to recreate.



Among the recordings of the 1960's is a voice of deep blue, a shade as impossible to recreate as the blue in the glass of Chartres. It belonged to an Irish Catholic woman born Mary Isabel Catherine Bernadette O'Brien, who reinvented herself as Dusty Springfield.

We can't know what spiritual meaning Chartres blue might have had back then, but some of us who lived through the '60s know that Dusty's voice uniquely expresses the spirit of that time (more so than her beehive wigs and sequined dresses). You can hear the wild hope and joy of those times in her voice, the eroticism, the silly pop fun. More often you hear frustrated longing and abject sorrow expressed with a brutal honesty unheard of in white singers up to that time.

Like all the Three Graces, Dusty grew up in a home filled with classical music. Her first band, the Springfields, sang a kind of super cheery folk music. Her voice already stands out. As she later explored pop, country, jazz and R&B, her voice expertly took on disguises that caused many to assume she came from the deep South, or that she was black. All those styles ultimately filtered through her voice and came out that unmistakable Dusty blue.

Her voice didn't just adapt to suit different genres. It changed for each song. It also changed in the course of some songs, typically from some version of a smaller voice to a very BIG full voice. An old trick for a singer with power, holding some of it back before you let it loose, but not many have used it like she did.

From the "The Best of Dusty Springfield":

She's in full voice throughout her breakout hit, "I Only Want to Be With You." The sun of early '60s optimism shines throughout the song. She belts out "Stay Awhile," the voice even fuller, but now there are clouds. She's a force of nature, blowing with desperate need.



In “Wishin’ and Hopin’” she employs her favorite trick: going small to large. Her wishes and hopes start with short staccato phrases, sung like she’s in complete control, obsessively ticking down a list. By the time she reaches “That won’t get you into his arms” her control is slipping. In the next phrase, she loses it, “So if you’re looking to find love you can share,” revealing desperation. Her voice has opened up some, but still she holds something in reserve, and it’s central to the meaning of the song. What she’s been holding back is explicit here: “Just do it, and after you do you will be his.” Even though its sexist message makes us uncomfortable today, she’s done such a great job that we can’t avoid enjoying her misguided hope.

The voice in “Little By Little” is a cousin to the full voice in “Stay Awhile,” only this time it’s a fullness of anger. In the release, the lyrics reveal just what’s happening: “Little by little, bit by bit, I’m going crazy and you’re causing it.” Yet I hear relief in her voice, as though going a little crazy might not be such a bad idea in this sad situation.

“You Don’t Have to Say You Love Me” is her masterpiece. She lays into the minor verse at medium strength, but with the sorrow turned up to ten. She hits the major chorus, puts the light of hope in her voice, but doesn’t really turn up the power much. She’s afraid to, as if this desperate gambit - offering all her love for nothing in return - is still likely to be rejected. It’s only in the last chorus, modulated up a whole step, that she loses control and lets her full need show, “Believe me, believe me.” What makes the song so devastating is that an element of her need is the same as in “Wishin’ and Hopin’.” I don’t think there’s a song or singer that’s better expressed the perilous conflation of doomed love and sexual need.

In “I’ll Try Anything,” the small voice of the verse, “You belong to somebody else and not to me,” is tired, but not resigned, ‘cause it knows the work ahead: She’ll try anything, “cheat and I’ll lie, to make you my man.” And you best believe she will.

I would have loved to have seen the look on Burt Bacharach’s face when he heard what Dusty did with “The Look of Love.” She’s invented a completely new voice here, a tiny thing with the power of a chorus of sirens. Here it’s not fear that has her holding back, but languor, like she’s so full of desire that it’s put her in some trance where it’s all she can do to get it together to open her mouth.

Most of these songs are torch songs. I don't know of anyone who carried a hotter, brighter flame. A lot of that heat is plainly erotic. Often I hear that voice as making love, but not in the obvious, vulgar sense (Except perhaps in "Look of love."). She's not so much making love to us listeners, but for us, conveying warmth to our hearts.

She does more than torch songs. "Wayfaring Stranger" is chaste, religious, and she conjures another suitable voice, a silvery flute.

Dusty was largely responsible for introducing Motown to England, inviting Detroit acts onto her TV show. In an interview she tells of practically falling down the first time she hears Martha Reeves' "Heatwave" - an experience I remember having myself. Dusty sings "Heatwave," "Dancing in the Streets," and "Nowhere to Run," with an unalloyed joy that's miles away from the pathos of her torch songs.

She lets her body move on these Motown songs, but in most of the video footage of her her body is severely restrained even as that huge voice comes right out. What I love is this little shy smile she lets out every once in a while at the end of a phrase, a young Catherine O'Brien who knows she's just done really good.

Elton John, in an interview, nails an aspect of the appeal of performers like Dusty; - their vulnerability, that we're "waiting for them to crack up at any moment."

She did for a time, in LA, with drugs and booze. But then she got herself together and restarted her career in midlife, achieving several hits with the Pet Shop Boys. In late interviews she seems to have really found some peace and wisdom. It shames me that I'd somehow assumed from all her on stage look that she was somehow a little ditsy. What we see in those interviews is a focused, smart, wise woman.

She was a heroine who was brave enough to demand unsegregated concerts in South Africa, even though they endangered her career. And who brought Black performers to England, along with superior American recording techniques that she had to fight with sexist engineers to adapt. She was a gay woman she was at least semi-out practically before anybody in pop culture.

Above all, she gave us one of the greatest pop voices of the 20th century, a voice that was pure 1960s, and always pure Dusty. She died in 1999 on the day she was to receive her OBE from the Queen, ten days before she was to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

If I could, I'd sing to her now:

"You don't have to say you love me, just be close at hand.

You don't have to stay forever, I will understand.

Believe me.

Believe me."

She didn't stay forever, and I don't understand, except in a way she did, because her voice is right here, close at hand, on my ipod.

© 2010 by John Manchester

Re: Describing Dusty and/or her singing as a 'colour'...


by **Cardiff Bluesgirl**

Posted: **Tue Sep 21, 2010 12:07 pm**

well Carole, I loved the article and I think she is the whole stained glass window. total colour, rich sound, gentle soft hues then red hot vibrancy. I always think of the obvious I suppose when thinking of her in colour

one of my all time favourites of hers

"my colouring book" "colour it blue" 🥰

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450px-chartres_vitrail.jpg (28.06 KiB) Viewed 1483 times

Re: Describing Dusty and/or her singing as a 'colour'...

by **Carole R.**

Posted: **Tue Sep 21, 2010 12:48 pm**

To expand this theme, if you like?:

I suppose its possible to think of individual songs as a colour?..

eg. 'In The Winter' although I love it, ❤️ it *is* a tad grey.. 😞

CR xx

Re: Describing Dusty and/or her singing as a 'colour'...

by **Cas19**

Posted: **Tue Sep 21, 2010 1:19 pm**

Carole I was just getting my head round what colour I thought Dusty was, now I have to crayon in all her songs too! 😊😊😊

Casx

Re: Describing Dusty and/or her singing as a 'colour'...

by **Cardiff Bluesgirl**

Posted: **Tue Sep 21, 2010 9:05 pm**

I read up about the author of this and he is a musician, so thats even better because he understands her from that aspect. 🥰👍 its a lovely article about her so if he looks on here then thankyou for writing it. 🥰👍

Re: Describing Dusty and/or her singing as a 'colour'...

by **Carole R.**

Posted: **Tue Sep 21, 2010 9:13 pm**

Yea, I must admit, its one of the 'nicest' and *thoroughly* positive articles that I've ever read about Dusty and her music. 🥰

Big Respect to John Manchester aka 'Luminous Muse'.. 🥰👍

CR xx

Re: Decscribing Dusty and/or her singing as a 'colour'...

by **karen**

Posted: **Tue Sep 21, 2010 9:24 pm**

Yes this is a beautiful ,and colourful aspect of her songs her singing her voice and all the emotion that she put into everything she sang, thank you for this John. 🙌👍

Re: Decscribing Dusty and/or her singing as a 'colour'...

by **jeffery**

Posted: **Wed Sep 22, 2010 1:59 am**

Yeh ! 😊 I'm diggin' John Manchester. That is one of the nicest tributes to La Dust I've ever read.

I've always perceived her to be colouring the emotion of the song with her voice. I think she did too.

She chose the songs she wanted to sing, so they must have moved her emotionally. Whenever I hear the Rolling Stones' *She's a Rainbow* I think of Dusty.

She comes in colours ev'rywhere.

She combs her hair.

She's like a rainbow.

Coming, colours in the air.

Oh, ev'rywhere.

She comes in colours.

Re: Decscribing Dusty and/or her singing as a 'colour'...

by **trek007**

Posted: **Wed Sep 22, 2010 10:19 pm**

Its certainly lovely to read such positive comment about Dusty..thank you John Manchester..a good northern name !!

I think of the rainbow in relation to Dusty ..so lovely after a shower reflecting in the sunshine.

Re: Decscribing Dusty and/or her singing as a 'colour'...

by **Sue**

Posted: **Wed Sep 22, 2010 10:27 pm**



What an excellent write up and what a lovely idea from John Manchester. Dusty, like the beautiful stained glass window can never be reproduced..... ❤️⭐

Sue xx

Re: Decscribing Dusty and/or her singing as a 'colour'...

by **Cardiff Bluesgirl**

Posted: **Sat Sep 25, 2010 3:26 pm**

I am surprised this article hasnt had more response from the site members here as its one of the best and newest articles about her,and we are generally starved of write ups about her from people we dont know. 😊

I hope if John Manchester looks on this site he isnt too sad about the lack of interest in his article. I liked it anyway and he did a lovely piece about her, so thanks John 🙌👍

