

# Let's Talk Dusty!

The Ultimate Forum for Dusty Springfield Fans

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## Dusty and songwriting

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### Dusty and songwriting (#p35916)

by **st louis blues** » Sun Oct 10, 2010 5:59 am

I was thinking that one of the biggest mistakes Dusty made was not to continue writing. If one considers that at the early point in her solo career she was most influenced by the girl group sound and Motown her attempts to write in these styles was not half bad. From a lyrical standpoint "Once Upon a Time" and "Something Special" fit in with the girl group "boy meets girl" type of song. I mean look at how the Beatles writing progressed from just their first few albums. I was thinking her lyrics for these two was no better or worse than the words for "Love Me Do." Now as a major Beatles fan like myself I'm not saying she could have produced from her pen something to equal "Sgt Pepper". However, I think she was capable of doing more than she thought she could.

How about "Go Ahead On" and "I'm Gonna Leave You." These are more R&B and I think both are good songs. It's a shame she didn't write more with Madeline and or Leslie. I read an interview where she mentions Tom's writing and says it comes very easily to him, but she labored over songwriting. So why did she stop writing? Well, here is my opinion and dime store theory for what it's worth. Her lack of confidence crippled her in this also. She always compared her talents in a negative light when it came to Tom because he was noted for and had much success as a writer. Then there was Norma Tanega. I believe since they were so close and Norma was writing such quirky and at times beautiful songs Dusty felt she couldn't compare with her either. These were two people whom she probably loved and was in awe of so she chose not to pursue it.

Later in life, after she had been through so much, Dusty could have returned to writing and it may have been a catharsis for her. After all, Bonnie Raitte and Emmylou Harris were known more for their singing, but in their later years began writing their own songs. In fact, that is when Bonnie started having her greatest success. Many writers who provided songs for Dusty like Carol King were now singing their own songs and the pool of great songs was getting smaller. Had Dusty worked on her own writing she might have come up with some good stuff. I wish some younger artist would cover some of Dusty's songs and get the attention of younger fans and critics who might not be aware of her many talents. I would love to hear Amy Winehouse cover "I'm Gonna Leave You." I also wish Dusty was here and could cover Amy's "Love Is A Losing Game." I guess I will end my long winded post for now. Hope I didn't bore you guys.

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### Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p35930)

by **Clive** » Sun Oct 10, 2010 8:54 am

I definitely agree Dusty should have continued writing SLB, I think if she could have found a regular songwriting partner it would have helped as Dusty said herself she wasn't disciplined enough to stick at writing if ideas weren't coming easily to her.

In the 60s her recording manager Johnny Franz preferred if Dusty came up with the b-sides of her singles as it meant her record label didn't need to pay publishers for the use of other songwriters songs.

Also if Dusty had continued to write it would also have helped her a lot financially.

I read an interview done at the time of *It Begins Again* where Dusty mentioned she had an almost completed song of her own but didn't want to include it on the album just for the sake of it as she felt it mightn't be as strong as the other material. I don't know what ever became of this song as I never heard it mentioned again.

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### **Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p35974)**

by **Tommy Stevens** » Sun Oct 10, 2010 3:39 pm

***Clive wrote:***

In the 60s her recording manager Johnny Franz preferred if Dusty came up with the b-sides of her singles as it meant her record label didn't need to pay publishers for the use of other songwriters songs.

Also if Dusty had continued to write it would also have helped her a lot financially.

They would have still had to pay the publisher. It's just that some of the money would have gone to Dusty. Of course, her label might have had a music publishing arm, so they could have ended up paying themselves. And not paying Dusty, probably.

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### **Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p35993)**

by **daydreamer** » Sun Oct 10, 2010 5:06 pm

I think that in later life, she would have loved to have been one of those female singer/writers that she admired so greatly but I doubt she would ever have felt her songs were good enough. Such a shame, she really did have it in her, but in her own words, she was too "lazy" to really pursue it.

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### **Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p36004)**

by **Corinna** » Sun Oct 10, 2010 5:34 pm

When it comes to Dusty, "lazy" can really mean "afraid", imho.

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### **Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p36005)**

by **Cardiff Bluesgirl** » Sun Oct 10, 2010 5:38 pm

yes she would never have thought she could be as good as Tom for one thing. 😞

Dusty was a free Spirit and she would never have been able to sit herself down to be that constructive. still we got the best of her, the best voice and the wonderful stage presence. 🍷

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### Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p36030)

by **Chris80** » Sun Oct 10, 2010 7:13 pm

I think she would have needed an adequate songwriter partner with a similiar taste of music. If you look back there are a bunch of songwriter teams like Bacharach/David, King/Goffin, Lennon/McCartney, Wilson/Love, Greenwich/Barry ...

I think the advantage in a team is that you can push each other, so it's easier and faster to write songs. I wonder if Dusty tended more for melody or words 🤔

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### Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p56351)

by **IWannaBeABluesSinger** » Thu May 12, 2011 3:35 am

"I wonder if Dusty tended more for melody or words?"

According to accounts of the songs she co-wrote with Madeline Bell and Lesley Duncan Dusty wrote the music on her guitar and then they helped with the lyrics.

Last edited by **IWannaBeABluesSinger** ([./memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=482](#)) on Sat May 14, 2011 10:06 pm, edited 2 times in total.

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### Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p56390)

by **jeffery** » Thu May 12, 2011 2:39 pm

😊 Song writing and music isn't quite like building a house.

By many accounts it just comes out of you like a fountain. 🗿

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### Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p56392)

by **Corinna** » Thu May 12, 2011 2:41 pm

By other accounts, it's 1% inspiration, and 99% transpiration. 😂

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### Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p56943)

by **Tommy Stevens** » Tue May 17, 2011 4:53 am

*jeffery wrote:*

[:] Song writing and music isn't quite like building a house.

By many accounts it just comes out of you like a fountain. 🗿

Don't believe those accounts. Having written a few dozen songs, I'm more inclined to believe Leonard Cohen when he says a lot of it is pounding your head on the floor looking for a rhyme.

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### Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p56944)

by **jeffery** » Tue May 17, 2011 6:03 am

**Tommy Stevens wrote:**

*jeffery wrote:*

[:] Song writing and music isn't quite like building a house.

By many accounts it just comes out of you like a fountain. 🙄

Don't believe those accounts. Having written a few dozen songs, I'm more inclined to believe Leonard Cohen when he says a lot of it is pounding your head on the floor looking for a rhyme.

🙄 Yeah, you always flip both sides of the pancake. 😊

But I've seen so many interviews where the artist's testimony is something like:

" I wrote that hit in the seat of an airplane on a 2 hour flight . "

or : " He wrote that hit on the back of a napkin in a diner at lunch. "

Don Henley, and Glenn Frey wrote the hit *Desparado* the first evening they were together as a songwriting team.

The Beatles were taken back when Hendrix played Sgt. Pepper for them after learning it basicly over night.

The song had just been released, and it took them weeks to write.

Brian Wilson is another I know who has said some of his hits were inspirational. He just heard this melody in his head, and put it out instructing the other members of the band what to play.

Others I've heard claim to finish an album in a matter of a few days or a week.

I know some do labor at it, but it seems that for the gifted it just comes. 🙄

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## **Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p57010)**

by **Tommy Stevens** » Tue May 17, 2011 7:34 pm

*jeffery wrote:*

I know some do labor at it, but it seems that for the gifted it just comes.

Nah, those are the people who just get to make their own myths. Dave Marsh had a good line about Keith Richards' story that he dreamed the guitar riff to Satisfaction. That, even if it is true, it ignores the hundreds of hours spent practicing and building up callouses on aching fingers. "What, you thought you got to dream guitar riffs for free?"

Then there's all the work the songwriter puts in after the dream. Paul might have dreamed the melody to "Yesterday," but there's a reason he didn't stick with calling it "Scrambled Eggs." (I think he should have stuck with that but I'm probably in a minority here.)

Basically, if you want to be able to write a good song in two hours, the best way to go about it is to write a couple of dozen crappy songs first. I've heard singers talk about how they wrote one of their classics when they spent a month trying to write a song every day, but they never talk about what happened to the other 30 songs they wrote that month.

There is one other technique for writing a great song in a couple of hours. It's called "getting lucky." Sometimes writers manage to hit on a really good idea. No one would call Micky Dolenz a great songwriter, but "Randy Scouse Git" was a pretty impressive first song. (On the other hand, most people would call Paul McCartney a great songwriter, but he had to work at it. "I Lost My Little Girl" isn't quite as impressive.)

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### **Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p57021)**

by **jeffery** » Wed May 18, 2011 4:47 am

🤔 Boy Tommy ? That's pretty brash to dash so many successful artists as if they were mere braggards.

I don't think success brings them all down to that level. They have you out numbered you know.

Song writing is a lot of work, a little luck, and now and then a genuine epiphany. 🎵 🤔 🎵

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### **Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p57111)**

by **Tommy Stevens** » Wed May 18, 2011 7:31 pm

*jeffery wrote:*

:roll: Boy Tommy ? That's pretty brash to dash so many successful artists as if they were mere braggards.

I don't think success brings them all down to that level. They have you out numbered you know.

Song writing is a lot of work, a little luck, and now and then a genuine epiphany. 🎵



Yeah, it is a lot of work, that's exactly what I'm saying. You don't get that luck or that epiphany unless you put in all that work, and when you do get that epiphany, you have to put in more work so you're not singing "Scrambled Eggs." I guarantee that every time someone knocks off a song in a couple hours, it's because he'd been walking around with an idea in his head and playing with it for a while. Songwriting is a skill just like any other.

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### **Re: Dusty and songwriting (#p57116)**

by **jeffery** » Wed May 18, 2011 8:45 pm

😊 I hear what you're saying Tommy. Toward the end of their tenure I'll bet there were times in the studio when some of the Beatles wanted to throttle each other. But they still had songs to write, and had to "work it out." 😊

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