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Author

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daydreamer

Moderator



Posted - 02/11/2009 : 17:08:03



United Kingdom
5404 Posts

I'm sure I posted this article once before but as we have new members others who may not have read it first time around, I thought it worth posting again. It's part of a much longer article by Brian Higham, which I've posted a link to at the bottom. There are also two pictures of Dusty with Brian there too.

THE GOLDEN GARTER DAYS (and Nights)

But now and then, when a top artiste appeared, it could be a real buzz and everyone had to be on the ball.

One such artiste was the great Dusty Springfield.

She was due to appear for two weeks and I had just finished doing a week for Cliff Richard. Cliff was not too happy with the house PA system and he had wanted echo on some of his stuff but this was a facility they did not have on the house system.

David Bryce, Cliff's personal manager, asked if I could help; we go back a long way. So I rang Jim Marshall the week before Cliff was due to appear and he had two 2x15 power cell cabs with horns and a 9 channel mixer sent up to the shop (Barratts) and a two hundred watt and fifty watt slave amp.

I put the system in on the Sunday using a Watkins echo unit for the effects Cliff wanted and on the Monday band call it sounded really awesome. It was much better than I expected and Cliff was over the moon.

That week was fabulous and it was great to meet up with Terry Britain (left) again who had played guitar for Cliff for many years.

He was a local lad from Wythenshawe who went on some years later to write a massive worldwide hit for Tina Turner called What's love got to do with it. Terry is a very nice guy and genuine person which is quite rare in the old rock 'n' roll scene.

The week with Cliff really flew by and before I knew it, I was giving up my Sunday again to take the Marshall PA system out. We had used some gold plated AKG microphones, which looked pretty cool, which I was now about to remove.

Unusually there were some people already in the club and that included some of the house band and its iconic leader Derek. The mikes were at the side of the main stage, so I started to get on with the job of taking the system down and by now I realized that all the action was because Dusty Springfield had arrived.

She had requested a band call on the Sunday as well as the Monday. I watched and listened for a while and it turned out that she was not happy about the house PA system. Now, for a girl, she turned out to be quite savvy and during a short break in the rehearsals she wandered around for a while and finally walked over to where the Marshall speakers were situated on the side stages.

I was just sat there when she walked over, looked at the gold plated mikes and asked to try one. I explained that they were for a different system which was being removed today but that they would not work on the house system as it was low impedance and they were high. She then asked who it was for; I said I put it in for Cliff last week because his management were not happy with the house system. She said 'OK', smiled, said 'thank you' and walked back to the stage area.

It must have been all of two minutes before Mack, the stage manager, with band leader Derek in tow approached me and asked if Dusty Springfield try the Marshall PA that Cliff had used the previous week.

I explained that I had come in on my day off to move it back to the shop but they were adamant that she wanted to try it, so I said 'okay pal, its all yours'. I thought that at least I did not have to dismantle the whole thing and I could now have a lazy Sunday.

I put the mikes back on the stand and reconnected them to the PA amp, switched it all on (including the echo unit) and was making my way to the stage door when Mack called me and said that Dusty Springfield was now insisting that I operate the dammed thing for her during the rehearsals.

By now I was really pissed off with the whole thing and my lazy Sunday was going down the pan, rapid. I went back stage where (from here lets call her Dusty) Dusty was now waiting. She was most polite and thanked me for helping her out. She then asked me to go through a list of her songs and started to tell me where she wanted echo and where she didn't. Well, I was bowled over it was my second huge star in two weeks.

As the time went on we were getting on really well and before long all the cue tabs were written down and ready for the rehearsal which went really well.

I arrived at the Garter on the Monday night to be greeted by Mack the stage manager who told me that Mike Robbins wanted to see me in the office urgently. Apparently at the morning sound check and rehearsal had not gone to plan and Miss Springfield was less than happy.

As I made my way to the office I had a good idea what was about to happen and sure enough, Mike tells me the band call had gone really badly and Dusty was quite upset at not getting what she wanted.

Now let me make one thing quite clear before I carry on. It was well documented that Dusty Springfield was a difficult person to work with but this was a bit of an urban myth. Whoever said it in the first place didn't tell the absolute truth. What she liked in point of fact was to have things done correctly she was a perfectionist and she made sure that this was the case. Why not? She was a super star at the height of her career and she deserved to have it right. So, anyone who bad mouthed her and said she was temperamental had most likely had a rollicking for not doing their job properly - and rightly so.

I don't think she ever did for the hell of it. She had Joe Public to think about and more to the point she had worked bloody hard to get where she was. When things were running smoothly, you never heard her complain but she was quick to say well done when things were really together - that I can vouch for personally.

The upshot was that Dusty had insisted that I work the PA for her, so I went up to her dressing room and we went through list of songs again. One of the songs she did was Windmills of your mind so the que from Dusty was 'I would like to do this song from the Thomas Crown Affair, Windmills of your mind'.

As soon as she said 'mind' I pressed the foot switch on the echo. She sang 'round' and the echo repeated 'round, 'round, 'round', fading gradually. It was just as she wanted it and having got the first night over, everyone breathed a collective sigh of relief.

Everything went fine until the fourth night - all the ques were spot on and the house band, augmented with brass, sounded terrific.

It came to Windmills of your mind but Dusty said 'I would like to do this song from the Thomas Crown Affair ... round' There was no echo as she didn't give me the right que and add ' Windmills of your mind'.

Panic! I hit the foot switch and hoped that she realised that she had made a mistake. The rest of the set went fine but when she came off she made straight for me and said 'You missed your bloody que for Windmills you little s--t.'

I spent the next 20 minutes with her and the management, trying to explain that it was not my fault and that the mistake was hers. It eventually got sorted out and all was peace and quiet again. But this was the calm before the storm!

THE SATURDAY I WILL NOT FORGET

Friday and Saturday were always big nights at the Golden Garter, especially when you had such a big star like Dusty Springfield appearing and this particular Saturday was building up quite nicely. Because it was so busy, such a big show and with me working for Dusty as well as playing for dancing, we only had to do three spots instead of four. There was a big review type thing with all the dancing girls and Shep's Banjo Boys - gawd love em! Then there was us, then top of the bill - you know who. I have to say that it was a really good show.

Dusty came back stage a few minutes before she went on, just to check things were ok. She looked stunning.

The band struck up and the mc introduced Dusty.

'Ladies and gentlemen a big welcome live on stage tonight, the fabulous Miss Dusty Springfield'.

The atmosphere was absolutely electric - you could feel it in the air; it was almost touchable and it gave you goose bumps. Even my goose bumps had goose bumps.

She went through the curtain and out to her audience and the noise was absolutely deafening even back stage, so it must have been awe-inspiring out front.

Now all artist's from big stars to club singers do a false tab number. For those who don't know, its when they sing one of their big hits or best songs and then go off but then come back on and do another couple of songs.

Now all artist's from big stars to club singers do a false tab number. For those who don't know, its when they sing one of their big hits or best songs and then go off but then come back on and do another couple of songs.

Dusty's false tab number was the fabulous Preacher Man. The show had gone smoothly without a single hitch. I was sat back stage soaking up the atmosphere and doing all the ques and listening on my monitor speaker to Dusty belting out Preacher Man when all of a sudden I couldn't hear her voice, I could hear the band but not her. I looked at the amp and the monitor, all the lights were on.

I could hear the band but not Dusty.

The next thing I remember was the curtain flying open from the on stage area and Dusty appeared flying down the steps and what she didn't call me has not yet been written or invented yet.

She was absolutely incandescent with rage. 'You f---in! ba----rd! What the hell did you do, you little sh*t? How dare you f---k me around like this! You will never work here again! Why is the bloody mike not working? What the f---k is going on? Get me the f---kin manager. I won't be working in this bloody hole another minute.'

I don't need to tell you that all hell broke loose back stage with her yelling at me and me yelling back, saying 'I don't know what the f---kin hell happened. I just lost you on the monitor!'

Through all this, the band was still playing: real pro's. I tell you, it was surreal.

All the management came from nowhere. The stage manager was running around like a headless chicken, Mike Robbins was a whiter shade of pale and trying to calm Dusty down but that seemed to make things worse than ever (but the band played on).

All her people and her personal assistant were trying to calm Dusty down. She eventually went back on and did her last 2 songs using the house system. It goes without saying that regardless of what had happened, she went down an absolute bomb.

She then stormed off to her dressing room with the whole management in tow. In the meantime, I discovered that the HT fuse had blown in the main amplifier. Unfortunately it was just one of those things that no one could have foreseen happening.

Now I had to go and get ready quickly to play the last spot for dancing. As I left the back stage area, Mack the stage manager said to me 'Can I have a word with you before you leave tonight'.

I replied that it was not my fault and it was just one of those things. I added that I wouldn't be spoken to or swore at like that by her or anybody else - especially as I was doing her a favour.

We (the Golden Garter Trio) played the last spot and after I went up to our dressing room and took off my make up. Yes, I did say make-up - Max Factor 24 or 28, I can't remember.

The dressing room phone rang. Dave Buckley, my drummer, answered it and said 'Brian you are wanted in the front office, now', to which I replied 'I am going home. I am pissed off with the whole affair and I know they want to give me the bullet - not just for this row with Dusty Springfield but because I won't bloody well dance in the revue. So tell them they can stuff their job up where the sun don't shine, I have had it up to here.'

I turned and walked out of the dressing room door slamming it so bloody hard it very nearly came off its hinges.

By the time I got downstairs, the assistant manager Steve Kalton was there and he very politely asked me to go to the office with him. He then explained that they (the management) were well aware that it was not my fault but they would like to talk to me and so I went to the office where somewhat surprisingly I was greeted with smiles and a big 'Hello Brian'. That in itself was a bit unnerving.

Before anybody could say anything, I said 'Fire me if you want but it was not my fault'. They explained that they had talked things out with Dusty and that she was now aware that it was just a very unfortunate thing to happen and despite the fact that she had threatened not to work the second week that she now would IF I sorted out the PA and on condition that I did the second week for her, for which the management would pay me extra for my trouble.

I could not believe my luck, so I agreed to do it once I found out how much extra I was going to get. Oh, I'm all heart (££££££££). The next day Sunday, I spent nearly all of it putting in a spare amp on to the same system with a bleed to the main house system so in the event of any HT fuses blowing, all I had to do was put the jack for her mike into the next main input which I had now preset so if the worst did happen it would just seem like a drop in volume for a second or two. Well, that was my master plan anyway.

WOULD IT WORK? I HOPED I WOULD NEVER HAVE TO FIND OUT

After the first week, could anything else go wrong?

I arrived at the Garter on Monday night and we did our first two spots as usual and there was all the other stuff going on - Shep's Banjo Boys, the revue, etc. When it came to top of the bill time, I made my way once again back stage and as I approached the mixing console, Mack the stage manager was standing there. He turned to me and said 'I hope all goes well tonight Brian, I really do',

I turned around looked him straight in the eye and said to him 'If Dusty says one wrong word to me tonight, I am straight out of that door)and I won't be coming back except to pick up my money and my gear'. Well,

there was the usual hub-bub back stage while we waited for Dusty to arrive. All of a sudden Dave McDonald my bass player came through the stage door and said she on her way.

We stood there back stage in a line - me, Mack and the two Dave's. When you think about it now, we must have looked pretty bloody stupid - it looked more like a guard of honour. Anyhow the stage door opened door and she appeared (wearing the dress in the pictures) and she looked a zillion dollars - definitely the Wow factor.

She then looked over in my direction, walked right up to me and took both of my hands and pulled them up to her bosom - holding both hands really tightly. We could not have got any closer if we had tried. She looked me straight in the eyes and said 'Brian, I am so sorry for what happened last week and all the things that I said to you. I realised that it was not your fault and its been worrying me all yesterday and today. Will you please accept my apology? I am truly sorry for everything I said, honestly I really am.'

Ok, you know what came next but I will tell you anyway. I melted like a piece of butter, went all goo goo and said 'Please don't give it another thought and thank you for the apology'.

She then asked me to work the rest of the week for her, which I agreed to. She then gave me a kiss and said 'Lets have a good night tonight'. I have to tell you that Monday night was one of the best nights ever.

The rest of the week went without a hitch and you would think that we had always known each other. She treated me like I was her best friend. Later in that week, I took my wife Carole to meet her and they both sat in the dressing room comparing contact lenses and glasses as they were both blind as bats without them.

After all these years, I still find it hard to believe that I spent that precious time with one of the biggest stars this country had ever produced and we were just like really good mates.

THE FINAL SATURDAY

The last night finally arrived and just when you think things could not get any better, they actually did.

It was a fabulous show and Dusty was just awesome. At the end of her set, before the last number, she thanked the band for being so wonderful (and they had been terrific). She also gave me a little mention, you know 'I would like to thank my back stage sound man for looking after me for the last two weeks', that kind of thing.

After the show there was a little party in Dusty's dressing room just for a few close friends. After about half an hour, she took me to one side and thanked me once more for being there for her. She then said to me 'I would like you to have this as a gift from a very close friend' and she then handed me a package and on the outside wrapping it said 'To Brian, the voice saver - all my love Dusty'.

She told me to open it - by now everyone was nosing around. I undid the wrapping and inside was an oblong shaped box, which I opened and inside was a beautiful Parker pen, engraved on the cap it read 'To Brian, many thanks, love Dusty'.

I have to tell you there were tears in my eyes when she gave me a big hug and a kiss; everybody in the dressing room gave a round of applause. It was a night and a moment that I will never forget.

Dusty Springfield kept in touch with me for quite a while after our time at The Golden Garter; the odd phone call now and then, usually when she was a bit down as her career started to wobble but generally she was pretty up beat and cards form here and there.

She rang me at the shop quite regularly but as with most long distance friendships, the calls became less and less especially when she went to America.

I only ever saw her once again some years later at the BBC in Manchester and you would think that we had been together only yesterday as we sat laughing and reminiscing in the beeb canteen. I think the people in there thought we were a pair of crazy people, laughing like a pair of loons.

I still have that wonderful gift, the pen that she gave me but sadly we no longer have Miss Dusty Springfield - which is our sad loss. I often get out the pen just to look at it and to think she spent the whole of Saturday afternoon looking around Manchester looking for a gift just for me. How lucky was I to deserve such attention from a star as big as Dusty Springfield - not just a star but someone I could call 'a friend'.

Now, how many nobody's can say that.

I bet she still wows them up there with all the other stars. Give em hell Dusty.

<http://www.manchesterbeat.com/mystory/brianhigham/brianhigham.php>

Carole x

"There's a part of you that's a part of me..."

Edited by - daydreamer on 02/11/2009 17:18:45

allherfaces
Administrator
★★★★★

Posted - 02/11/2009 : 18:35:26

thanks for posting that again. Still a good read and Dusty has "that hair" in the photos. :)

x N

There's something in my soul that will always lead me back to you.



USA
14235 Posts

Cas19
Wasn't born to follow
★★★★★

Posted - 02/11/2009 : 18:41:25

Yes I think you did post it before Carole, I read it again myself the other day and I thought how great the photos were. Its a good article, thanks for posting it again.



8313 Posts

Casx

'Something in your eyes'

daydreamer
Moderator
★★★★★

Posted - 02/11/2009 : 20:14:12

I tried to copy the photo's but it wouldn't let me, so well done there Cas 😊 Remember these as well? All taken at the GG. Wish I could find where I copied and filed these earlier! Anyone already got them on their system to re-post?

http://www.magnumphotos.com/Archive/C.aspx?VP3=ViewBox_VPage&VBID=2K1HZOMGQEIF8&CT=Search&DT=image



United Kingdom
5404 Posts

Carole x

"There's a part of you that's a part of me..."

Edited by - daydreamer on 02/11/2009 20:33:58

boztiggs
Where am I going?
★★★

Posted - 02/11/2009 : 20:54:00

I loved reading that, especially when she took his hands and apologised so beautifully, thats Dusty, no matter what bloody Anne murray or anyone else says. She could have sworn at me all day long.



Neil 😊



United Kingdom
3367 Posts

trek007
I'll try anything
★★

" Here in the gloom, of my lonely room, i hold his photograph and pray ill see him soon oh-oh"

Posted - 02/11/2009 : 22:27:38

Nice to read this article again.

It must have been worth being shouted at!!

Trek.
often called Carole.



United Kingdom
1100 Posts

Cas19
Wasn't born to follow
★★★★★

Posted - 03/11/2009 : 09:16:39

Heres the other one then Carole, it wouldn't allow me either...call in the troops...Dene to the rescue! LOL! I clicked on the last link Carole but theres nothing there, am I doing something wrong? I can't see the pics.

Casx

'Something in your eyes'



8313 Posts

daydreamer
Moderator
★★★★★

Posted - 03/11/2009 : 09:52:46

I just looked too and they've disappeared! They were there yesterday, 5 of them. We have seen them before and I thought I'd saved them somewhere, but I can't find them. One was Dusty with money spread on the floor, another sitting with her head on her arm waiting for a taxi and another sitting with a plate of eaten food in front of her. Two others on stage.

Carole x

"There's a part of you that's a part of me..."



United Kingdom
5404 Posts

Cas19
Wasn't born to follow
★★★★★

Posted - 03/11/2009 : 13:33:27

Had a good look through my pics and came up with these, are these the ones you meant? I can't find the others though I will probably have saved them.

Casx

'Something in your eyes'



8313 Posts

Edited by - Cas19 on 03/11/2009 14:53:35

Cas19
Wasn't born to follow
★★★★★

Posted - 03/11/2009 : 14:53:06

Wasn't giving up! 😊 I've found some more.

Casx

'Something in your eyes'



8313 Posts

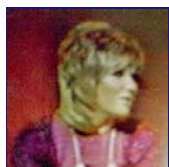
Sara
I'll try anything
★★

Posted - 03/11/2009 : 17:28:09

I read all this last night... dunno what to say. Never seen it before. Thankyou!:)

Sara x

Something inside has died and I can't hide, and I just can't fake it





1163 Posts

daydreamer

Moderator



Posted - 03/11/2009 : 17:38:47



They're the ones, thanks Cas 😊 I'm now going to save them properly. The only other one that was there was Dusty taken from the back on stage with both hands up and very long nails!

Carole x

"There's a part of you that's a part of me..."



United Kingdom

5404 Posts

ErgoFergo

I'll try anything



Posted - 03/11/2009 : 17:39:55



Cas, those pictures are amazing! Thanks for posting them. I've never seen them before (although that's not so unusual). 😊

Vicky

x



United Kingdom

1047 Posts

Cas19

Wasn't born to follow



Posted - 03/11/2009 : 18:47:28



Is it this one Carole? Only she has a different dress on here! You do realise I'm going cross eyed looking through millions of photos? 😊

Casx

'Something in your eyes'



8313 Posts

jonny

Little by little



Posted - 03/11/2009 : 19:16:17

200 Posts

dont forget the 'oi, be quiet' pointy one

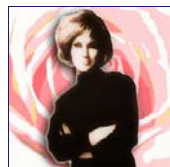


allherfaces

Administrator



Posted - 03/11/2009 : 19:23:50



Such a treasure. Thank you all for posting the pics.

x N

There's something in my soul that will always lead me back to you.



USA

14235 Posts

daydreamer

Moderator



Posted - 03/11/2009 : 19:39:05



Yes Cas and yes Jonny! Thank you 😊

Carole x

"There's a part of you that's a part of me..."



United Kingdom

5404 Posts

Carole R.

Where am I going?



Posted - 03/11/2009 : 22:06:48



Thanks for the article and photos. 🍷

I loved the 'goosebumps on top of goosebumps' phrase. 🍷



2242 Posts

I also love the offstage private pics, I think some of those show us just how much it takes out of a performer who wants to give their all whilst on stage.

The adrenalin 'rush' before a performance and then the draining of the adrenalin after its all done and dusted, must be terrifically exhausting. Dusty looks shattered on a couple of those pics.

CR xx



daydreamer
Moderator
★★★★

Posted - 03/11/2009 : 22:18:20



United Kingdom
5404 Posts

Carole R.
Where am I going?
★★★

Posted - 03/11/2009 : 22:27:19

Here's a little article about a lady who used to be resident compere and singer at the Garter. She mentions Dusty as does one of the people commenting below the article.

http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/s/1179654_singers_starry_nights_at_the_golden_garter_club

Carole x

"There's a part of you that's a part of me..."



Carole R.
Where am I going?
★★★

Posted - 03/11/2009 : 22:27:19

Oh...So there may be some pics at the Museum of Science and Industry, then?

..Interesting 😊

CR xx



2242 Posts

Cas19
Wasn't born to follow
★★★★★

Posted - 04/11/2009 : 05:34:16

Thank you for the link Carole, I wish I could look at the photos she had there.

Casx

'Something in your eyes'



8313 Posts

Dee Votion
I start counting

Posted - 04/11/2009 : 22:19:48

Love these Carole, such a great story.

Andrew x



33 Posts

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