

The Archives of Let's Talk Dusty!

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Not seeing Dusty as tragedy?

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JMFRPL Little by little

Posted - 26/11/2006: 16:21:13



123 Posts

When we had Dustytalk taken away from us, I unfortunately lost a thread where I asked the above question. A lot of you may know (and/or misunderstand me because of it) that over the years I've been grappling with some strong, and yes, negative feelings when it comes to things Dusty. Mainly because of disappointments as to how she is/was treated; not being able to shake thoughts of her "lost" years; because of "friends" who hurt her reputation-wise, emotionally, or even physically; and because of "friends" who let me and other friends down. So I need reminders to not see things Dusty (and herself, even) as tragic. Think that'll help a lot.

Clive I'll try anything Posted - 26/11/2006: 17:25:10



I think it is important to remember the fact that Dusty emerged from her lost' years to find renewed commercial success with the Reputation album and it's singles.

I think in the years after that maybe she began to accept how highly she was thought of (belated recognition of Dusty In Memphis etc.) by peers and public alike.

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1455 Posts

Tim Where am I going?

Posted - 26/11/2006: 18:04:48





Well, J - a very warm welcome from us on here.. It's sad Dustytalk is no longer active but hopefully you will be able discuss such issues on here and share your personal insights with all of us.



United Kingdom

Working backward here as I keep thinking of different angles on this!

Much as Paul McCartney has come through a period of contempt, and is now respected as one of the elder statesmen of rock - after a period of ridicule, Dusty latterly received a great deal of respect from the establishment during the later part of her career, when people really began to assess her impact and realise there had never been, and never would be anyone like her again. Look at her triumphant appearance on the respected show 'Later With Jules Holland' for evidence of the respect of her peers. AND it's STILL building. These days her sexuality is even accepted, integrated back where it belongs into her life story - and not before time.

I don't think you will find many Dusty fans would say Dusty's life was tragic as a whole. No-one can deny it had some very sad episodes and she was emotionally very troubled at times. It was a miracle that she recovered from those dark days. That she did was down to a combination of her own inner strength and the love and support of some key people around her. None of those people in themselves were perfect - maybe some brought their own issues into play, but of course it is not for us to judge them, given most of what we know is journalistic heresay.

The public are wise these days as to the distortions of the media's looking glass and are sceptical as to who is a hero and who a villain in a biography. In truth we can ALL be a little of both hero and devil at times. Of course we feel massively protective of Dusty - and rightly so - but we should be careful of judging others when we were not present in the situations as they arose. Dusty went through some dark times where she was floundering

out of control. I don't think it is accurate or helpful for us to sanctify her at the expense of other people in her life during those times. I'm sure, like many artists, she could be an absolute nightmare to live with, as well as an absolute joy.

It would be all too easy to read the more sensational aspects of Dusty's life - be they accurately reported or not - and become depressed at her life story. Particularly if we are not in a happy frame of mind ourselves. But so many people who knew and loved Dusty would tell you that she had a great sense of fun and adventure too, that lifted her and those around her during those hard times

Dusty's later years were comparatively serene as she learned to 'go easy on herself' manage her demons and call the shots regarding the music business. The 10 years from 1989 - 99 are relatively undocumented in all her biographies - because she was a happy middle aged lady pottering about her life and there was nothing sensational to write about!

Her illness was a great tragedy in itself but I like to think that she triumphed in the courageous way she dealt with it, and derived great comfort from the love of the people around her - people who love her despite of and because of who she was - Mary Catherine Isobel Bernadette O' Brien - the shy Irish girl that singlehanded created Dusty Springfield. Apart from her fabulous musical legacy she has also left us a story, a parable if you like, to learn from.

When thinking about her feelings regarding her life I tend to go by Dusty's own words. In an interview from I think 1994 - she said 'damaged people are dangerous because they know they can survive.' Undeniably she felt damaged by her childhood, and I would guess her sense of not belonging, her guilt and disapproval of herself, additionally she was assailed by her bipolar disorder and substance addictions, all of which tallied up the damage quota as well. All this happened at a time when society was less able to acknowledge and treat these problems. She - along with many other 1960's stars - pioneered the way we see and deal with those afflictions - as well as pioneering her role as a woman fighting for artistic control over her musical career. It was undeniably a hard route she had to take and it took its toll. But the fact that against ALL these odds - she turned her life around -is nothing short of miraculous and thoroughly inspirational - and I don't think this is EVER made enough of. She earned her inner strength - she was a late developer emotionally and it did nearly cost her her life.

If you look at Fraser's huge stock of mp3s on here of her musical appearances alone - you can only guess at Dusty's career workload in her heyday. Travel and accommodation were primitive, business mysogynistic and manipulative, equipment and general human respect notably lacking - God, no wonder she buckled under the strain of it all at the end of the 60s. So often it seems those people who are least well equipped to deal with fame have the talent and drive that invites such an ascent and indeed demands they make the climb in the first place. And when they get to the other side? Well of course there is 'no easy way down' and that's when they are prone to getting lost.

Dusty had many good cards and bad cards dealt to her. Some she played well - others, perhaps through no fault of her own, she didn't. Hell - nobody's perfect. She was a fighter and she triumphed over some very difficult odds. When it came down to it she brought a lot of people a great deal of happiness, and as fans and custodians of her memory we should always focus on and promote that. That kind of intuitive and enduring love for her will transcend any shoddy journalistic records. It's probably our job as fans to understand her, accept all aspects of her life and to pass her musical legacy on.

In later years Dusty found serenity and wisdom - And so despite her untimely demise - I feel her life came full circle in that she finally accepted herself and as been said elsewhere - acknowledged how great she was. She did realise how much people loved her and I don't think she would be surprised that her legend continues to grow - she was far too intelligent not to anticipate that. I like to think she is up there watching us, and would want only the best for those people generous enough in spirit to give time to thinking of her.

It's so true that life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we deal with it, so I always look at the long game...the bad stuff happens for us to learn

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and grow from. If I find myself focussing too much on the bad things I try to remind myself of that. I think Dusty had the same philosophy, and if she didn't see her life as tragic - well then - neither should we. As an artist approaching my middle age I am inspired by her story and sometimes I use it to steer myself towards a more positive frame of mind.

Sorry this may be a bit random, but I am getting over a horrible cold which has seriously outstayed its welcome.

Hope that helps you, anyone else's thoughts on this issue?

Edited by - Tim on 26/11/2006 18:26:30



Jane Little by little

United Kingdom 239 Posts



I think one of the problems that can be encountered when any of us admire another is that there can be occasions when identities become muddled. Dusty's life was Dusty's life and hers alone. Many of us can empathise with many of her difficulties and to an extent feel her pain. Subsequent to her death of course much of what has been written brings out the protective instincts in us. One thing we should avoid though is to personalise these emotions too much - it certainly can't help Dusty and it certainly doesn't help us as individuals.

Tim has so eloquently painted the picture of an extraordinary woman with extraordinary talent - she won't be the first and certainly won't be the last person who has essentially suffered a burn out in her career. How she came through those 'lost years' (not my term but its a useful tag in the given context) is inspirational to say the least. It cannot be underestimated the sheer courage, grit, determination, strength of character and so on, required and it is a testament to the woman that not only did she come through it all but also managed to very successfully re-engage with her career. Of much more significance for Dusty, in my opinion at least, is that she fought for and won the opportunity to be happy 'within her own skin'. I surmise from much of what I've read and her later interviews that she was much more at ease with life and herself. It is tragic that she died comparatively young but I truly believe that she was at peace with herself and the world - something which many people can only aspire to. We know that many unsavoury things have been said but at the end of the day what Dusty achieved is there for all to see in her music. In the grand scheme of things there aren't that many people who have given so much pleasure and enjoyment to others throughout their lives - Dusty is one such person and that certainly isn't a tragic outcome. Anything thats written now cannot hurt Dusty herself and that is important to remember.

Although I do not feel it is my right to judge other people per se, for all the points Tim raises, I do however think that it is perfectly valid to debate the whys and the wherefores of certain publications, the motives of others and so on. Very often sound, solid debate can be very enlightening not least because it enables us to appreciate different perspectives.

Janie xx

Edited by - Jane on 26/11/2006 22:13:47



Jonathan Little by little

United Kingdom

Posted - 26/11/2006: 22:28:04

Thanks Tim and Janie, beautifully put and so, so eloquent. the work load on her must have been immense. Always having to sound/look your best, what a toll!

Love Jonathan

quote:



Tim Where am I going?



Posted - 26/11/2006: 22:38:36



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Although I do not feel it is my right to judge other people per se, for all the points Tim raises, I do however think that it is perfectly valid to debate the whys and the wherefores of certain publications, the motives of others and

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so on. Very often sound, solid debate can be very enlightening not least because it enables us to appreciate different perspectives.

Janie xx

United Kingdom 3422 Posts

Thanks for your kind comments, Jane and I agree with you. Respectful debate is fine, just no slagging and no pelting people with brussel sprouts!



paula x



Posted - 27/11/2006: 01:38:00





All of the Above...well said.



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USA 5012 Posts



123 Posts

Posted - 27/11/2006: 03:04:38



Good words, all. The other point, however, is how I deal with the feelings I have against people who did her wrong?



allherfaces

Posted - 27/11/2006: 03:55:04







Hi James, I think that's too big and personal a question for anyone else to answer for you.

But I'm just so sure that Dusty wouldn't want you to be causing yourself grief over this.

What is it they say....living well is the best revenge.

Better to do something good than to react to what can't be changed, so go out an spread the Dusty love.

14235 Posts

Best. Nancy

"Yesterday's gone. Love lead me on."

~Roll Away



Birdie Breeze

Little by little

248 Posts

Posted - 27/11/2006: 04:10:28





[quote] Originally posted by muuz

Well, J I don't think you will find many Dusty fans would say Dusty's life was tragic as a whole. No-one can deny it had some very sad episodes and she was emotionally very troubled at times. It was a miracle that she recovered from those dark days. That she did was down to a combination of her own inner strength and the love and support of some key people around her. None of those people in themselves were perfect - maybe some brought their own issues into play, but of course it is not for us to judge them, given most of what we know is journalistic heresay.

Hi Tim, the story of Dusty's recovery has never been told - it still remains very much a mystery...but when it is....James will know that by and large, his instincts are spot on, and that I, for one, do hear him. Things will be coming out - down the road, that will make him and - I would think - most of the fans very relieved and proud...and I imagine, quite surprised - but in a really good way....

Dusty went through some dark times where she was floundering out of control. I don't think it is accurate or helpful for us to sanctify her at the expense of other people in her life during those times. I'm sure, like many artists, she could be an absolute nightmare to live with, as well as an

absolute joy.

There are great lessons in those times - she kept them private, but obviously she learned a great deal. Just listen to the music. Dusty suffered from alcoholism and had co-factors, which are not the sole domain of artists. Yes, many alcoholics can be difficult to live with/deal with - unless you have some serious support (alanon) and/or training (therapists). If you have the skill, knowledge, insight, humour, support and a manner of living that allows you to cope, then...no problem.

People can ONLY drive you crazy IF you let them. If you let them - YOU let them. No fair blaming someone else for your feelings. I will not budge on that one - nor would people in the mental health field. Everyone is responsible for their own feelings, and sometimes there is an emotional price we pay with friends, family, loved ones. Finding support is a good thing.

And, James, while I cannot speak for the whole group here - they are a lovely bunch and you will find support here. Good to see you.

It would be all too easy to read the more sensational aspects of Dusty's life - be they accurately reported or not - and become depressed at her life story. Particularly if we are not in a happy frame of mind ourselves. But so many people who knew and loved Dusty would tell you that she had a great sense of fun and adventure too, that lifted her and those around her during those hard times.

Well, I'll step up and take responsibility for not telling the actual story. It was a private time for her, and, really...I had hoped that no one would be fool enough to try to tell the personal deets without balancing them with her recovery story -- but -- that was not to be. Someone only cared about maintaining a position of power -- and making a fast quick buck went and ran to the tabloids.

Apart from her fabulous musical legacy she has also left us a story, a parable if you like, to learn from.

Welll...the one that has been crafted has more holes in it than a nice slice of swiss cheese, but...I agree...at the end of the day....when it is actually, fully, told....there is loads to learn from.

At this point, it's a pretty big scary mess. There is so much misinformation and just....you know, she was waaaay over the heads of most....many of her friends simply did not have the coping skills she needed. She was an armful...and so were the times she lived in!

And then, there were people who wanted her to BEHAVE and make them lots of money...and, it didn't work out that way for them...so....you find anger and bitterness and ongoing piss taking....which, I don't know....she really wasn't well....and...it's like expecting someone with a broken leg to run a race for you....and putting them down when they didn't perform as well as you would have liked. It's a mindset that makes my skin crawl. They treat greyhound dogs better. Some fans, in their enthusiasm can be the same way - they just want the next song to come out or a tour - more more more - for their own needs. You can kill yourself trying to make other people happy. It's not a good thing. No is the best word when there are health issues.

She DID learn to say No....she did take care of herself - I don't call them the lost years - I call them the found years. She survived because of them. She would not have otherwise. It would have been easier on both of us if I had carried her up Mount Everest on my back...but, eventually...came a point in time where I knew I could give her a shove and she'd beable to fly out of the nest on her own....and...she did...but, it wasn't cos I carried her....she developed coping skills.

Undeniably she felt damaged by her childhood, and I would guess her sense of not belonging, her guilt and disapproval of herself

She didn't remember much of her childhood...but, things came back when she was with me. She always belonged, somewhere. She knew she belonged in AA. She wasn't very guilt ridden...she could be ungrateful....and, certainly she was aware others could disapprove...but...that's their problem!

additionally she was assailed by her bi-polar disorder

You know what? I cannot agree that she was bi-polar. I mean, they used to call it manic depression. It's this sort of waste basket dx that they started handing out like tootsie rolls.

I collected and read Dusty's medical records - at her request - when she was in LA - I worked with her doctors - therapists - AA sponsor, and a number of her ex's (not you, Teda)...and....I worked with her on a daily basis to pull her through - and - we discovered what made her better - what made her worse, and at this point - having gone through that whole process - successfully - and having done an enormous amount of research since then....

I know EXACTLY what it was, and it wasn't that she was bi-polar.

She was able to take what she learned and apply it, successfully, for the rest of her life.

It will help a great great many people - someday.

As is - all of that is remaining, private.

And, why not?

and substance addictions, all of which tallied up the damage quota as well. All this happened at a time when society was less able to acknowledge and treat these problems.

Well, we were out in the wilderness - her #1 doctor didn't pull me over and say "Whatever it is you are doing- it is the only thing working and we can't do it - if left with us, she is hopeless" for nothing. I knew that was true, but, getting pulled over and sat down and told point blank by her top doctor was....

Let me just say, she was an enormous responsibilty for me....and what we did together, as a matter of fact, worked....and...kept working for her, for the rest of her life.

I have nothing but the greatest admiration, love and respect for her.

In my book, she was a complete and total champ.

She - along with many other 1960's stars - pioneered the way we see and deal with those afflictions - as well as pioneering her role as a woman fighting for artistic control over her musical career. It was undeniably a hard route she had to take and it took its toll. But the fact that against ALL these odds - she turned her life around -is nothing short of miraculous and thoroughly inspirational - and I don't think this is EVER made enough of.

It will be...at the end of the day....when all the lights get turned on - there will not be any going back to any of the tabloid fodder....it's going to all be dismissed as the doings of people who seriously did not understand her and used her as a meal ticket...

She was a late developer emotionally and it did nearly cost her her life.

I beg to differ. Her music emotionally, speaks volumes, often in very subtle extremely sophisticated ways.

The Archives of Let's Talk Dusty! - N...

The real actual underlying condition she suffered from is not publicly known, it did affect her behaviour, and it wasn't an emotional issue at all.

If you look at Fraser's huge stock of mp3s on here of her musical appearances alone - you can only guess at Dusty's career workload in her heyday. Travel and accommodation were primitive, business mysogynistic and manipulative, equipment and general human respect notably lacking - God, no wonder she buckled under the strain of it all at the end of the 60s.

Judy Garland had the same presssure cooker - crazy workload - it kills people. I am soooo deeply impressed and happy that you have come to this very real solid FACT. Her underlying condition was a plus in the early days but it, the stress of the work, and the drinking made her unwind into the outerbounds by 70's I A.

Some people are genetically capable of working like horses, and thriving from it, Bette Midler has great DNA that way. Dusty just didn't have the make-up for it. I'll leave it at that for now....but...it wasn't her fault.

I just worked 18 days in a row, had thursday off, and went back on friday, yesterday, and today...but...l come from a different irish stock - with a healthy dose of scot tossed in...this isn't to say, I wasn't cranky today....I was.....

So often it seems those people who are least well equipped to deal with fame have the talent and drive that invites such an ascent and indeed demands they make the climb in the first place. And when they get to the other side? Well of course there is 'no easy way down' and that's when they are prone to getting lost.

She was actually, found. It was also in the work, she got lost....at different points. I can honestly say that basically all the songs she sang that the PSB's wrote, didn't reflect her personal life. She joked she was a "Method Singer" on those....So, getting lost behind the music can become a reality...with songs like those, she didn't need a mask. They were a mask of their own. Sometimes, it really was... a job.

Sorry this may be a bit random, but I am getting over a horrible cold - which has seriously outstayed its welcome.

Hope you feel better - soon. I'm fried. myself, and am headed to bed, soon.

Hope that helps you, anyone else's thoughts on this issue?

Welll....LOL....you asked!

Birdie

http://www.myspace.com/birdiebreeze

Edited by - Birdie Breeze on 27/11/2006 04:22:45











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Although I completely see where you're coming from, I guess I feel differently because I just absolutely admire and idolise Dusty to the point where she just isnt a tragic figure in my mind, overall. But I find thinking about her 'lost' years and all that she went through in that period very tragic.

Love,

Australia 3323 Posts Mads xxx



Posted - 27/11/2006: 10:52:49





IISA 1535 Posts

Gypsy Rose Lee I'll try anything **

Posted - 27/11/2006: 11:21:00

Cortisol.....



Birdie.

USA 1535 Posts

Do you never tire of slapping people in the face? "Tootsie Rolls"? Indeed!

Gee, guess I was diagnosed Bipolar before it was "trendy"! Funny how it's damn near killed me too many times to count - and, if that didn't do it, the alcoholism wasn't far behind. Since I was diagnosed bipolar at 13 and it's run through generations of my paternal family, I expect it was there before "Tootsie Rolls" were invented.

After 31 years of involvement with AA, I think I just might know a thing or two about Alcoholism - and, every trendy explanation for it which has come down the turnpike.

You mislead these good people here. Dusty was a bipolar as they come and NO ONE, I repeat NO ONE has ever really come upon the real causes of that disease... many theories - nothing definitive other than it's a malfunction of the electrical system of the brain - a PHYSICAL BRAIN DISEASE - not a "mental" disease! Call it whatever you will - Manic Depression, Bipolar, Fairy Dust - it's still the same damn thing - our moods swing out of control and we have the highest rate of suicide in the entire population - NOTHING TRENDY THERE! So much for "Tootsie Rolls"...

R



United Kingdom

458 Posts



I so agree, Ro! My Father was Manic Depressive and so is my elder sister, and getting the medication right is a very complex thing. The illness is still

Love Jonathan



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not really understood yet.





Obviously I am speaking from the position of the research that I have been able to do on Dusty over the years - this is limited to the press, biographers and stories from people who knew her.

I always take everything both Birdie and Ro say into account, whether conflicting or in agreement. My theory is that from the research that I have done - and people I know with experience of the condition -it is very likely Dusty was bi-polar. But until we have a full report on her entire life from other sources than DWD - we just can't say for sure.

I await further information with interest.





United Kingdom 3422 Posts







Birdie.



USA 14235 Posts

A firm remimder to you that debate and discussion on these boards must be respectful.

When you 1. dismiss other people's opinions as trivial and 2. dissect other people's posts line by line or paragraph by paragraph to show where they are mistaken and you are correct, you are not being respectful.

We all know you believe you played a very important role in Dusty's life and that you think you know the truth about her diagnosis or etiology of symptoms, etc., so there's really no need to keep repeating that, especially when you are not revealing what that "truth" is. In short, this kind of oneupping is not really respectful discussion either.

Nancy

"Yesterday's gone. Love lead me on." ~Roll Away



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Posted - 27/11/2006: 18:52:45

Everyone's opinions are equally valid at LTD. Members must accept this and it would be helpful to our spirit of community and mutual respect if posts were made without dissecting those of others.

thanks



United Kingdom 4205 Posts







Posted - 27/11/2006: 19:35:55

[quote] Originally posted by allherfaces

Birdie.

A firm remimder to you that debate and discussion on these boards must be respectful.

When you 1. dismiss other people's opinions as trivial and 2.dissect other people's posts line by line or paragraph by paragraph to show where <u>they</u> are mistaken and <u>you</u> are correct, you are not being respectful.

I'm very clear that Tim has collected his information from a variety of sources, and I do not think that he made up things on his own. Much of this is simply stuff that has been circulating, and I don't hold Tim responsible. I think that you read too much into things.

There is no intent to be disrespectful of Tim.

He is not the information he has found.

I understand this, completely, and am quite fond of Tim!

Really! I am!

Please do not put a spin on things any other way, as that would be most disrespectful of where I am coming from.....and, to Tim, as he has done a great job of collecting bits that are out there....

I've been on the internet since it was Unix only - no graphics. The method that I use to answer posts is standard basic internet form, which started with USENET - It's a cl;assic form. Myself and many others have been answering posts this way since...the 80's.

I do think that there are differences between people who have been on the internet for many many years and everybody else. Example. In Unix, for using USENET, we had a function called The Kill File. It would allow you to enter someones usenet address, and never ever see another post from them again. Boy, did that keep the peace! We all loved it. Stopped a million flame wars. So, what happens? Newbies come along, with browsers - AOL - and so forth and if one old timer said to another "Use the kill file" or "I'm putting you in my kill file" etc...the newbies would FREAK OUT. They would think it was far out mafia lingo and someone wanted to kill them....Oy, Oy.

So....the best advice to people out here...is you take things how you take them and sometimes it is so far away from what the person even meant...it's crazy.

How to avoid this? Don't take things so seriously, it's the internet...and...learn to ask questions before assuming anything.

It will save you all kinds of bother that wasn't needed to begin with.

And by the way...

We all know you believe you played a very important role in Dusty's life and that you think you know $\underline{\text{the}}$ truth about her diagnosis or etiology of symptoms, etc., so there's really no need to keep repeating that, especially when you are not revealing what that "truth" is. In short, this kind of one-upping is not really respectful discussion either.

Um, it's still Dusty's private life, it's my private life - I am very much a private figure and not a public one - and I am sorry you chose to think I am not being respectful of either her or myself....I am....we came first then, and we come first now, and I am sorry that you confuse this with some kind of one-upping with Tim - It really boils down to taking care of her and MYSELF. Everybody has benefitted TREMENDOUSLY by that, so far...so...what's the problem? I haven't even heard a thank you. not that I am here looking for one. I'm not, and while, I have chosen what media to express my story in, it definitely isn't the internet! So sorry to disappoint...but, it isn't going to happen here. Have a great week. Birdie

