

Let's Talk Dusty!

The Ultimate Forum for Dusty Springfield Fans

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Overdubbing

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Overdubbing

by [Corinna](#) » Mon Oct 15, 2012 8:03 am

I've been reading the article about Overdubbing on Wikipedia, and while some examples of singers using overdubbing seem arbitrary, this quote seemed utterly adequate:

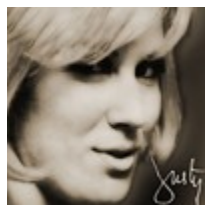
"Singers in particular have also used the practice to perfect a recorded performance over several takes. Singer Dusty Springfield is widely reported to have painstakingly assembled individual phrases over time in order to record the ultimate performance."

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overdubbing>



Cor xx

*Dusty Springfield, that's a pretty name
Pretty as a pearl
What a pretty girl*



[Corinna](#)

Site Admin



Posts: 8252

Joined: Wed Dec 16, 2009 8:52 pm

Location: Stockholm, Sweden

- [Website](#)

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Re: Overdubbing

by [karen](#) » Mon Oct 15, 2012 8:52 am

Something about Dusty I think we can all agree with Cor.. 😊🎵

Richard Carpenter trying to explain overdubbing.. could have said more... 🤖

The Carpenters - Richard explains overdubbing



[karen](#)

I only want to be with you



Posts: 18106

Joined: Thu Dec 17, 2009 6:48 pm

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [daydreamer](#) » Mon Oct 15, 2012 3:44 pm

I blame the Pet Shop Boys for Dusty now being thought of as someone who overdubbed, or recorded lines and words one at a time! When she recorded with them, she could do that, the technology was there and her confidence wasn't great but she didn't always record like that and it annoys me when people make out that she did. I've been lucky enough to hear some studio out-takes and she started a song at the beginning and went to the end! If she didn't like it, or someone else didn't like it, they stopped and went back to the beginning. Some alternate vocals on the last box set were full songs, no overdubs, no messin'



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

Carole x



[daydreamer](#)

Moderator



Posts: 3667

Joined: Thu Dec 17, 2009 8:17 am

Location: Cheshire, England

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [Corinna](#) » Mon Oct 15, 2012 6:41 pm

You know, I did wonder that, CG. It would have been a hell of a job slicing together those little phrase tape fragments... (Not that I don't believe it wasn't done, though.)

But I admit that I thought of the Pet Shop Boys interview, too!
Cor xx

*Dusty Springfield, that's a pretty name
Pretty as a pearl
What a pretty girl*



[Corinna](#)

Site Admin



Posts: 8252

Joined: Wed Dec 16, 2009 8:52 pm

Location: Stockholm, Sweden

- [Website](#)

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [IWannaBeABluesSinger](#) » Mon Oct 15, 2012 7:05 pm

Even back then she was regarded that way though. When her friends, who had attended her seventies recording sessions, were told that she was going to perform live in 1979 they expressed surprise. "Can you sing a song all the way through?" they asked.

Maggie



[IWannaBeABluesSinger](#)

I've got a good thing



Posts: 1681

Joined: Sun Apr 24, 2011 3:54 am

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [Corinna](#) » Mon Oct 15, 2012 7:10 pm

And where does that quote come from?
Cor xx

*Dusty Springfield, that's a pretty name
Pretty as a pearl
What a pretty girl*



[Corinna](#)

Site Admin



Posts: 8252

Joined: Wed Dec 16, 2009 8:52 pm

Location: Stockholm, Sweden

- [Website](#)

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [daydreamer](#) » Mon Oct 15, 2012 9:52 pm

She was singing live on TV in the mid and late seventies, (there's a wonderful version of Since I Fell For You from 1975) and her voice was as good then and later in the decade as it was in the sixties. Her friends, if they doubted her, should have had more faith.

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

Carole x



[daydreamer](#)

Moderator



Posts: 3667

Joined: Thu Dec 17, 2009 8:17 am

Location: Cheshire, England

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [IWannaBeABluesSinger](#) » Mon Oct 15, 2012 10:13 pm

Indeed Carole, but they had only heard her stop-and-start studio work. They were the ladies she knew from AA and many of them didn't know she was Dusty Springfield until they went to the studio to offer their support.

Maggie



[IWannaBeABluesSinger](#)

I've got a good thing



Posts: 1681

Joined: Sun Apr 24, 2011 3:54 am

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [Mikey_C](#) » Mon Oct 15, 2012 10:55 pm

The phrase I have seen used for her technique is *punching in*. According to Wikipedia, it's been around since the early days of multitrack recordings: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punch_in/out It's because of her perfectionism that she resorted to this technique so often, but it was by no means unusual,

particularly among the Motown stars she loved. Of course, we all know she could sing perfectly live, so could have got away with not doing this. I see it as an aspect of her wanting to exploit studio technology as far as she could; she was producer in all but name for her recordings, which was highly unusual in the '60s, particularly for a female artist.



[Mikey C](#)

Little by little



Posts: 31

Joined: Thu Oct 04, 2012 10:44 pm

Location: Waterlooville, UK

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [allherfaces](#) » Tue Oct 16, 2012 7:24 pm

Corinna wrote: And where does that quote come from?

Always better to include the source of information, as we've talked about before. 😊

x

Bosseh

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



[allherfaces](#)

Someone who cares



Posts: 5815

Joined: Thu Dec 17, 2009 8:15 am

Location: Boston MA

[Top](#)

[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [IWannaBeABluesSinger](#) » Wed Oct 17, 2012 12:25 am

allherfaces wrote:

Corinna wrote: And where does that quote come from?

Always better to include the source of information, as we've talked about before. 😊

And whenever I can remember the exact source I will always include it. But I'd have to re-read every book and article to find that one. If I come across it I will update.

Maggie



[IWannaBeABluesSinger](#)

I've got a good thing



Posts: 1681

Joined: Sun Apr 24, 2011 3:54 am

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [Corinna](#) » Wed Oct 17, 2012 7:40 am

I think what Nancy means (and what I meant) is that it should be obvious from your post that it's not first-hand knowledge, but a quote (or a paraphrase).

Your post leaves it open for people to read it "as if" you had first-hand knowledge. It's misleading to people who don't know it's a quote.

I believe we have a responsibility for what is written on the boards. We don't want hear-say and misquotes to be spread here. Dusty's had quite enough of that, didn't she...

If you haven't been there, don't write it as if you have.

Cor xx

Dusty Springfield, that's a pretty name

Pretty as a pearl

What a pretty girl



[Corinna](#)

Site Admin



Posts: 8252

Joined: Wed Dec 16, 2009 8:52 pm

Location: Stockholm, Sweden

- [Website](#)

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [Hampson](#) » Wed Oct 17, 2012 2:01 pm

IWannaBeABluesSinger wrote: Even back then she was regarded that way though. When her friends, who had attended her seventies recording sessions, were told that she was going to perform live in 1979 they expressed surprise. "Can you sing a song all the way through?" they asked.

Maggie

I can remember reading that quote, and I am not sure where, but I thought it was DWD. I do know it was one of the ladies from the AA meetings. It would take me too long to find and I don't currently have much time. I'll try and find it later.

But going back to the subject matter and Dusty going over and over her songs to get them perfect. If an artist was creating a masterpiece, then he would go back over it many times and erase the bits he didn't think was quite perfect and correct the painting or drawing. So I don't really see why it wouldn't be acceptable to do the same with a piece of music. It is only natural to want to do your best work for your audience, especially if you are a perfectionist. I feel sure most recording artists do that, and don't photographers do the same, they touch up photographs to get the desired result for the subject. Where there is the technology to do it, it will be used.

Wend



[Hampson](#)

Wasn't born to follow



Posts: 2600

Joined: Thu Dec 17, 2009 9:23 am

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [Mikey C](#) » Wed Oct 17, 2012 8:00 pm

Hampson wrote: But going back to the subject matter and Dusty going over and over her songs to get them perfect. If an artist was creating a masterpiece, then he would go back over it many times and erase the bits he didn't think was quite perfect and correct the painting or drawing. So I don't really see why it wouldn't be acceptable to do the same with a piece of music.



That's the way I look at it. She wasn't doing it to cover up any lack of skill; she just must have had such a clear idea in her mind of exactly how she wanted it to sound, she couldn't rest until she had achieved it. That's the mark of a true artist. The most important thing is that the records do not *sound* at all over-produced. If you didn't know the effort that had gone into the sessions, you would never guess.



[Mikey C](#)

Little by little



Posts: 31

Joined: Thu Oct 04, 2012 10:44 pm

Location: Waterlooville, UK

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [IWannaBeABluesSinger](#) » Thu Oct 18, 2012 3:36 am

Corinna wrote: I think what Nancy means (and what I meant) is that it should be obvious from your post that it's not first-hand knowledge, but a quote (or a paraphrase).

Your post leaves it open for people to read it "as if" you had first-hand knowledge. It's misleading to people who don't know it's a quote.

I believe we have a responsibility for what is written on the boards. We don't want hear-say and misquotes to be spread here. Dusty's had quite enough of that, didn't she...

If you haven't been there, don't write it as if you have.

I've re-read my post a few times and I really don't think that anyone interpreted it the way you did. It's clear that I'm remembering something I came across, and I used the quotation marks in the correct places to indicate what was said, so I can't see how my "post leaves it open for people to read it "as if" you had first-hand knowledge. It's misleading to people who don't know it's a quote. "

There is nothing in what I wrote to indicate that I was there and have "first-hand knowledge".

Anyway - it's definitely not misleading because it is an accurate re-telling of something that has been published. I promise.

Maggie



[IWannaBeABluesSinger](#)

I've got a good thing



Posts: 1681

Joined: Sun Apr 24, 2011 3:54 am

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Re: Overdubbing

by [jeffery](#) » Thu Oct 18, 2012 4:13 am

Mikey_C wrote: The phrase I have seen used for her technique is *punching in*. According to Wikipedia, it's been around since the early days of multitrack recordings: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punch_in/out It's because of her perfectionism that she resorted to this technique so often, but it was by no means unusual, particularly among the Motown stars she loved. Of course, we all know she could sing perfectly live, so could have got away with not doing this. I see it as an aspect of her wanting to exploit studio technology as far as she could; she was producer in all but name for her recordings, which was highly unusual in the '60s, particularly for a female artist.

I'm there Mickey 🍷 No one had to "show" Dusty anything ! She knew what she wanted, and how to go about achieving the sound that she wanted.



I think she loved working in the studio, and learning about the latest innovations. 🧐 Maybe her perfectionism was a little driving, but we all love

the results. 🍷

"The man with the child in his eyes" Jeffery



[jeffery](#)

Someone who cares



Posts: 6517

Joined: Thu Dec 17, 2009 11:34 am

Location: Norwalk, Ohio - USA (Great Lakes Region)

[Top](#)

Re: Overdubbing

by [simonbell](#) » Sun Oct 21, 2012 10:45 am

Interesting discussion, and good moderating!

There is a difference between overdubbing & punching in. Sometimes when a singer has finished recording a vocal, one or maybe two phrases are not quite as good as the rest. Rather than rerecord the whole thing it is normal practise to "drop in" (or punch in) a replacement vocal for those phrases. It's actually more difficult that just singing the whole thing, but can speed the process up. The engineer is really in charge, as the singer starts singing a few bars before the drop in spot, otherwise it will sound obvious.

Overdubbing is recording exactly the same vocal on top of what the singer has already recorded. A lot of singers did this in the 60s (notably Motown females), and Dusty certainly did it on her early recordings. Now & then you can hear the two vocals when they are not quite identical (everyone rushes for A Girl Called Dusty!).

simonbell

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Re: Overdubbing

by [dave d](#) » Sun Oct 21, 2012 6:28 pm

Is that how Dusty tried to recreate Phil spectres "wall of sound" or was it achieved by using a tape over tape method?
DUS 7Y. Vegemite sandwich anyone?



[dave d](#)

I'll try anything



Posts: 146

Joined: Thu Dec 17, 2009 11:23 am

Location: in the middle of nowhere

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

■ by [BornTooLate](#) » Sat Oct 27, 2012 1:24 am

If you're interested in the wall of sound you should read the Phil Spector biography *He's a Rebel*. Throughout the book there's detailed accounts of Spector in the studio and his encounters with people who tried to emulate his production style (most notably Bruce Springsteen and Jim Steinman, but they were in the 1970s). Listen to songs like "Born to Run" or Meat Loaf's "You Took the Words Right Out of My Mouth" and you should tell that they're obviously Spector-inspired. I think "Don't Worry Baby" by the Beach Boys was written with Ronnie Spector in mind, by the way, and I think that also has the "wall of sound" style.

There are also loads of books about the record industry.

I'll also recommend the book *Please Please Me* which is a book about the British Invasion. It has details about specific recording artists but what I find more interesting are the sections dedicated to producers and arrangers. This is something that I'm getting into in my thesis because of analyzing influence and such things, so this is fresh on my mind. Fun that other people are thinking of it, too! It's mostly heard on her first two singles, both the A and B sides. You can really hear the contrast when listening to the single version of "Once Upon a Time" then listening to the alternate take, and when you listen to the french recording of "Stay Awhile" because both are toned down. It's a very difficult production sound to get right.

I think the most Wall Of Sound style recording of Dusty's is "Stay Awhile" because of the blending of the instruments, the way the vocals sound far away, and because of the glockenspiel (omg I spelled that right...)



I could clearly talk about this all day. And rock out the whole time.

Also- Dusty didn't record any songs that were made famous (meaning a hit single rather than album cut) by Phil Spector, did she? I've been thinking about that lately.

~Carolyn

*Do re mi fa so la ti,
Let's get together and make whoopee...*



[BornTooLate](#)

I'll try anything



Posts: 207

Joined: Mon Oct 17, 2011 12:37 am

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

■ by [BornTooLate](#) » Sat Oct 27, 2012 1:28 am

P.S. I know this was kind of a tangent from overdubbing-for-perfection vs. actual recording technique for effect, but it came to mind while reading the thread because of the nature of the idea and because of the Wikipedia reference. The Wall of Sound Wikipedia page mentions Dusty.

~Carolyn

*Do re mi fa so la ti,
Let's get together and make whoopee...*



[BornTooLate](#)

I'll try anything



Posts: 207

Joined: Mon Oct 17, 2011 12:37 am

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

■ by [Kyles Beguiles](#) » Mon Dec 24, 2012 8:43 am

daydreamer wrote: She was singing live on TV in the mid and late seventies, (there's a wonderful version of Since I Fell For You from 1975) and her voice was as good then and later in the decade as it was in the sixties. Her friends, if they doubted her, should have had more faith.

Has any video/audio of that performance surfaced since it aired? I would love to see/hear it as that is one of my favourite Dusty live songs.

As for the alleged overdubbing usage, I read about it in *Dancing with Demons* and of course heard Neil Tennant speak of it in interviews, but as I never had the privilege of being in a recording studio with Dusty I reckon I will live in mystery as to how she actually crafted her recorded vocals yet bask in the glory of that voice and all the captivating sounds it produced.

"This rusty dusty heart of mine

How you've made it shine..."

"When in doubt, turn the echo nob up!"

"So you're the little lady who makes all the music..."



[Kyles Beguiles](#)

Where am I going?



Posts: 610

Joined: Thu Dec 09, 2010 3:12 am

Location: Jersey Shore, USA

- [Website](#)

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

■ by [Graham2010](#) » Mon Dec 24, 2012 5:01 pm

Well she never went back and overdubbed her little mistake near the end of the track for Some of your lovin' so I do not think she did this until much later

[Graham2010](#)

I'll try anything



Posts: 162

Joined: Tue Jul 06, 2010 6:17 am

[Top](#)

[Re: Overdubbing](#)

■ by [donellac](#) » Sat Mar 30, 2013 1:16 pm

IWannaBeABluesSinger wrote:

allherfaces wrote:

Corinna wrote: And where does that quote come from?

Always better to include the source of information, as we've talked about before. 😊

And whenever I can remember the exact source I will always include it. But I'd have to re-read every book and article to find that one. If I come across it I will update.

Maggie

This is going back to an old discussion, I know. But I thought the reaction to WannaBeABluesSinger's words was a little tough.

I have recently read the interview Dusty gave to Chris Bourke in 1990, when she was in New Zealand promoting Reputation.

In response to Chris's question - Have you any plans to sing live again? her response was "No. Maybe in the future. Friends in Los Angeles used to come into the studio and watch me record, overdubbing line after line. Then when I was going to do some live work, they said, 'But can you sing a whole song at once?'"

So Dusty herself said that her friends weren't sure she could sing a whole song at once!

Donella x

Yesterday when I was young the taste of life was sweet as rain upon my tongue!



[donellac](#)

Where am I going?



Posts: 704

Joined: Tue Feb 26, 2013 10:58 am

Location: Glasgow, UK

[Top](#)

[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [IWannaBeABluesSinger](#) » Sun Mar 31, 2013 8:46 pm

Thank you Donella.

Maggie



[IWannaBeABluesSinger](#)

I've got a good thing



Posts: 1681

Joined: Sun Apr 24, 2011 3:54 am

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[Re: Overdubbing](#)

by [donellac](#) » Sun Mar 31, 2013 9:38 pm

You are welcome Maggie!

Donella x

Yesterday when I was young the taste of life was sweet as rain upon my tongue!



[donellac](#)

Where am I going?



Posts: 704

Joined: Tue Feb 26, 2013 10:58 am

Location: Glasgow, UK

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