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- 'What's It Gonna Be' - Dusty's 1st Chart Failure

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Author Topic

humboldt
I'll try anything
★★

Posted - 17/05/2009 : 01:30:02



United Kingdom
1704 Posts

'What's It Gonna Be' was released as a single on 22nd Sept 1967. It was a Jerry Ragovoy/Mort Shuman song which Shuman produced.

Dusty's chart success in 1967 had been disappointing with 'I'll Try Anything' peaking at #13 and 'Give Me Time' stalling at #24. Philips of course IMHO missed having a huge hit by hiding 'The Look Of Love' on the 'b' side of the latter! Anyway I remember that the reviews were good so I thought that it was bound to be hit. Now if my memory serves me well (I was only 15) I don't think that it got much airplay and Dusty did not appear on TOTP as she was out of the country. After having had 13 straight top 40 hits Dusty had her first ever chart flop!

This record is my second favourite Dusty single and has been overlooked by many fans which is sad as I think that it really deserved a better fate. Unknown to me at the time there was another version released around the same period by Susan Barrett on RCA that I have since learned was really big on the Northern Soul scene. I didn't hear Susan's version until the '90's and without wishing to be unkind it's no match for Dusty's but many NS fans prefer it.

What are your thoughts about Dusty's version please? Do you like it or not? Why did it bomb? Do you think that Susan Barrett's version perhaps took sales away from Dusty's if they were both released around the same time? I've always wondered who actually recorded it first as some folks maintain that it was Susan?



Humboldt

memphisinlondon
Where am I going?
★★★

Posted - 17/05/2009 : 02:17:47



United Kingdom
3565 Posts

Hello!

I'm just recording a playlist for a compilation CD. It's made up of the Dusty inspired soul I've been listening to for many months now. I've only included one Dusty track on this (there'll be a Dusty compilation recorded separately). It's 'What's It Gonna Be' following Marvin's 'This Love Starved Heart...' which wasn't released at the time (this is interesting...maybe it wouldn't have been a hit because not enough people would have bought this great track? Or Maybe Marvin just didn't think it was good or Marvinly sophisticated enough to be released).

Marvin - This Love Starved Heart Of Mine (It's Killing Me)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k87C_T8BkiM

I don't know why Dusty's single failed. It's great and one of my favourite Dusty tracks. Lack of promotion and the fragmented soul scene in the UK? From my untutored reading of the pop scene at that time there weren't enough Northern Soulers to create a decent hit in any case. And they were starting to treasure collectable obscurity over quality? So Susan (never heard of her) Barrett was preferred?

And the lack of consistency again. Dusty was actually turning out great singles that are loved to this day...in retrospect. At the time maybe they were just too different. I don't think listeners could keep up with her. She was really out there often at the cutting edge of pop and changing track. Nobody in the UK collected such a diverse and eclectic catalogue of performances apart from maybe the Beatles. Unlike the Beatles, Dusty paid the price with failure and yet it's just this kind of quality and diversity that makes her so special today - and less dated than the Beatles.

It's just a shame that it's taken so long for new public appreciation to catch up with the original fans. Saying that it would be good to know what the original fans thought of this single and whether they bought it.

Memphis
Ever since we met...

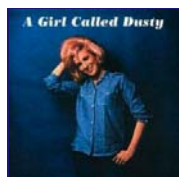
Edited by - memphisinlondon on 17/05/2009 02:28:33



Cardiff Bluesgirl

I'll try anything
★★

Posted - 17/05/2009 : 13:30:43



United Kingdom
1809 Posts

dont know the sequence of events that you have asked about but I did buy it,I bought everything she did as I was a total fan. I would have bought her singing the phone book!! I think she just didnt seem to be marketed well at that time but it may well have been her own fault as she flitted in and out of the Country and maybe the powers that be in those days didnt like it that she wanted more control over what she did than some singers who just turned up and did what they were told to do.she was ahead of her time and as Simon has said she wanted to have proper input to her work and I bet they didnt like working with her sometimes. remember then women didnt get treated the same as men and she would have driven them crazy wanting to have more input managing her career etc. look how she stood up for herself and those around her when she went to South africa. noone else at that time would have had the guts to do what she did. I think she paid heavily for being outspoken.

"every day I find you're in my heart and on my mind"

liz.



humboldt

I'll try anything
★★

Posted - 19/05/2009 : 09:04:29



United Kingdom
1704 Posts

Just pushing this up.

What are your thoughts about Dusty's version please? Do you like it or not? Why did it bomb? Do you think that Susan Barrett's version perhaps took sales away from Dusty's if they were both released around the same time?

I've always wondered who actually recorded it first as some folks maintain that it was Susan?



Humboldt



MissDustyFanatic

Where am I going?
★★★

Posted - 19/05/2009 : 11:15:24



USA
2606 Posts

I do like it, but I personally feel that the production and music overpower her vocals, or at least compete with them to the point of drowning her out in spots.

"I've got to be where my spirit can run free..."

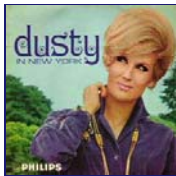


tcowanatc

I start counting

Posted - 19/05/2009 : 14:43:55

First heard this from Radio Luxembourg, playing on a transistor radio (that dates me!!) and always loved it although it was different to what had gone before (but didn't Dusty always ring the changes??!!). According to Paul Howes' Complete Dusty Springfield, there was quite an array of backing singers that included Carole King, Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson and I assume Madeline Bell - what a pedigree!! Like MissDustyFanatic I also would have liked Dusty's voice to be more upfront rather than slightly overpowered by the backing. Interesting the slight variations between the mono and stereo versions of the song. Afraid I don't know who first recorded the song.



United Kingdom
86 Posts

Henry



humboldt
I'll try anything
★★

Posted - 19/05/2009 : 19:32:13

Here is Susan Barrett's version.
<https://www.yousendit.com/download/MnFqeW54bEF3TGdLSkE9PQ>



United Kingdom
1704 Posts

I had always assumed that Dusty recorded the original & only version of this at the time. However upon discovering Susan's version I have read, mainly on Northern Soul sites, hers was the first version. I'd love to know the real truth. I had hoped that the 2nd edition of Paul Howes's book would address this issue but it didn't.

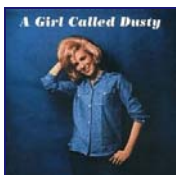


Humboldt



Brian
Where am I going?
★★★

Posted - 19/05/2009 : 20:39:01



It will always be a mystery to me that this wasn't a huge hit. I seem to remember it was 'Record of the week' on Johnnie Walker's Radio 1 lunchtime programme and got daily play to what was a big listening audience at that time. I cannot recall Dusty doing any promotion on it though (prove me wrong!), which might have been a major contributing factor. It DID make the top 50 - but I think it only got to 47? Personally I think it's one of the best Dusty singles.

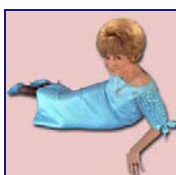
United Kingdom
2058 Posts

Brian



humboldt
I'll try anything
★★

Posted - 19/05/2009 : 21:02:25



Brian, it DIDN'T chart so as I said it became Dusty's first ever chart failure. She didn't promote it so that went against it. I often wonder if it sounded 'too American' if that makes any sense? Oddly enough it was a hit in the USA peaking at #49 & spending 8 weeks on Billboard's Hot 100.

United Kingdom
1704 Posts

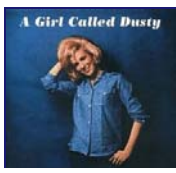


Humboldt



Brian
Where am I going?
★★★

Posted - 19/05/2009 : 21:51:04



quote:

Originally posted by humboldt

Brian, it DIDN'T chart so as I said it became Dusty's first ever chart failure. She didn't promote it so that went against it. I often wonder if it sounded 'too American' if that makes any sense? Oddly enough it was a hit in the USA peaking at #49 & spending 8 weeks on Billboard's Hot 100.

United Kingdom
2058 Posts



Humboldt

Oh shucks 🙄 - I'm wrong 🙄...but wait a minute

I knew I'd seen 'What's it gonna be' in a chart at 47!..out comes the scrapbook and THERE IT IS!...at 47 in the Oxford Mail chart - the top 50 'record sales' in Oxfordshire for the week. Obviously we in Oxfordshire appreciated Dusty more than the rest of the country!
We were the county that had 'Agadoo' by Black Lace at number one a good 2 weeks before the national chart, which goes to prove my point we were up and 'hip' 🙄...phew - saved by the Mail...and I'm only 62 🙄

Brian



humboldt
I'll try anything
★★

📅 Posted - 19/05/2009 : 22:03:45 🗨️ 🏠

Nice try Brian 🙄



Humboldt



United Kingdom
1704 Posts

Peter Walmsley
I start counting

📅 Posted - 19/05/2009 : 22:06:47 🗨️ 🏠



Humboldt, thanks for posting the Susan Barrett version of this number. First time I'd heard it and I'm grateful to you. I have no idea whose recording came first, hers or Dusty's, but IMHO Dusty's is infinitely better. I too got out my scrapbooks to refresh some fading memories of when it was released. The reviewers all said they thought it was terrific but wouldn't be a great hit; although, Stevie Winwood in Melody Maker said, "Aretha Franklin? Oh, wait a minute, it's Dusty. Yeah, great! Very nice and it should be a big hit. I like everything about it - the song, the arrangement and the performance."

I would echo those thoughts but I don't know why it wasn't a success, and I don't suppose Dusty did either.

Peter x



humboldt
I'll try anything
★★

📅 Posted - 20/05/2009 : 00:20:09 🗨️ 🏠



Right, thanks to Paul's book we know two facts. Dusty finished recording 'What's It Gonna Be' on 27th July & it was released on 22nd Sept 1967. Susan Barrett's version was issued on **RCA 9296** but I don't know when. However Jefferson Airplane's single 'Ballad Of You And Me And Pooneil' was issued on **RCA 9297** and that entered the Billboard Hot 100 on 2nd Sept 1967. So did Susan release her version around late Aug 1967? Is Susan American as the scan I have states that the single was made in the USA? I wish that I could finally solve this mystery!

Humboldt



spooky
Little by little
★

📅 Posted - 20/05/2009 : 05:13:38 🗨️

I love Dusty's version too and am curious about its failure. Good luck to the



USA
372 Posts

Peter Walmsley
I start counting

Dusty detectives.

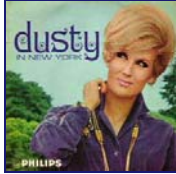
Hello Peter Walmsley! Nice to see you posting!

Annie

warten und hoffen...



Posted - 20/05/2009 : 12:44:19



United Kingdom
66 Posts

paula
Moderator
★★★★



USA
5012 Posts

Hello, Annie! I've just finished reading your book and much enjoyed it. Also enjoyed hearing you on the radio. Nice to hear from you! Peter x



Posted - 20/05/2009 : 15:13:16

I love this song..one of my Dusty favorites..among many. 😊

It's one of Dusty's more FUN songs.. a feel good song with a great groove while sending out that emotional vibe she transmits so well. The music at times is a little too loud over the vocals but Dusty isn't singing in one of her quiet whispers..it's just that she mixed her vocals in the back...but it doesn't seem to bother me on this song.

thanks for posting Susan Barrett's version..I always thought this was a rare one ..one that maybe only Dusty sang. Never heard of Susan Barrett but with a little research found that she is American and her songs are usually of a jazz/ show genre...not a lot out there but this is what I found...

<http://schuon25-ix.blogspot.com/2007/05/susan-barrett-i.html>

<http://schuon25-ix.blogspot.com/2007/05/susan-barrett-ii.html>

paula x



humboldt
I'll try anything
★★



United Kingdom
1704 Posts

Sweetbaby
I'll try anything
★★

Canada
1466 Posts

Posted - 20/05/2009 : 16:34:40

Thanks Paula. I found that too last night but I'm not sure if it's the same Susan Barrett. The voices don't seem to match but it's whole different genre!



Humboldt



Posted - 20/05/2009 : 18:41:46

😊 It's not likely RCA Victor would release the Susan Barrett album in 1966 & the next year release a single by a different singer with the same name.

BTW Susan Barrett - who's at least assumed to be the same as the RCA artist - was Dusty's labelmate in 1963: she recorded a Barry Mann/Cynthia Weil song named *Chico's Girl* for Philips. The song was to be the followup to the Crystals *Uptown* - also by Mann/Weil - but Phil Spector rejected it. Bernadette Peters remade it for her 1980 self-titled album:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrV_ggKVO1o
(This clip's note mistakenly credits a 1966 version by The Girls as the original.)

As far as Susan's *What's It Gonna Be* factoring into Dusty's version flopping:

typically a Northern Soul favorite was overlooked on its release & only with the passage of time gained currency with Northern Soul aficionados. Many - perhaps most - Northern Soul faves were "stray" US releases which eventually drifted across "the pond" & I'd be very surprised if Susan's version of WIGB had a UK release contemporaneous with Dusty's.

Certainly WIGB doesn't deserve the "distinction" of being Dusty's first non-charting UK single. I'd attribute its shortfall to its simply not sounding like a hit to the Brit dj's of the day - & by 1967 the names of the stars that had shone on Swingin' London evidently no longer had the cachet to guarantee airplay.

According to the chart info at Grant Whittingham's A Girl Called Dusty site WIGB reached #29 in Australia while it reached as high as #9 on the chart for CHUM-AM radio in Toronto. I've also found a local chart for CKLG in Vancouver that ranks WIGB as high as #14 - I must confess I was living in the CKLG broadcasting area at the time but don't recall hearing Dusty. During the 20 years I spent in Toronto CHUM had converted to an oldies station format but alas WIGB's Top 10 status in 1967 didn't earn it one retro-spin that I ever heard.



humboldt
I'll try anything
★★



United Kingdom
1704 Posts

Posted - 20/05/2009 : 20:17:05

I am beginning to think that if there was only one Susan Barrett then she had a very strange career. Here's what I've just discovered about 'Mixed Emotions'.

MIXED EMOTIONS

Susan Barrett

New York City: April 10, 1959

Susan Barrett (born Susan Brookman) (vcl); Kenyon Hopkins (arr, cond) with orchestra.

- a. (22688) Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea (Harold Arlen/Ted Koehler) - 1:41
- b. (22689) Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby (Billy Austin/Louis Jordan) - 2:26

<https://www.yousendit.com/download/MnFpU2Vpd0lsamQzZUE9PQ>

Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby

- c. (22690) Undecided
- d. (22691) Mixed Emotions (Stuart Louchheim) - 2:18

New York City: April 14, 1959

Susan Barrett (vcl); Kenyon Hopkins (arr, cond) with orchestra.

- e. (22701) It Only Hurts When I Laugh (Coleman/Ebb/Klein) - 2:12
- f. (22702) Should I? (Nacio Herb Brown/Arthur Freed) - 2:48
- g. (22703) Laughing On The Outside (Bernie Wayne/Ben Raleigh) - 2:26
- h. (22704) After My Laughter Came Tears (Roy Turk/Charles Tobias) - 2:19

New York City: April 22, 1959

Susan Barrett (vcl); Kenyon Hopkins (arr, cond) with orchestra.

- i. (22733) Bewitched, Bothered And Bewildered
- j. (22734) Hey There (Richard Adler/Terry Ross) - 3:02
- k. (22735) I Get Along Without You Very Well (Hoagy Carmichael) - 4:12
- l. (22736) Run Away (Carolyn Leigh/Larry Coleman) - 2:25

Issues: a-l on Capitol T/ST 1266.

Samplers: j also on Capitol 8-29384-2 [CD], Alliance/Gold Rush 29384 [CD]

titled CAPITOL SINGS BROADWAY: MAKIN' WHOOPEE.

Producer: Andy Wiswell

NB. It's a Capitol release from 1959. Not RCA from 1966.

So then Susan goes kinda pop/NS!

US Philips - No One But You (can't find a date)

<https://www.yousendit.com/download/MnFpU2VqMGNrUm1Ga1E9PQ>

No One But You

RCA8888 - Susan Barrett - She Gets Everything She Wants / A Grain Of Sand - 1966

<http://www.yousendit.com/download/MnFpU2VuTkFCsnJIRGc9PQ>
A Grain Of Sand

RCA9017 - Susan Barrett - Walking Happy / How Can You Hold On To A Dream - 1966

RCA9296 - Susan Barrett - What's It Gonna Be / It's No Secret - 1967

<https://www.yousendit.com/download/MnFpU2VnUzg5eFVLSkE9PQ>
It's No Secret

RCA9384 - Susan Barrett - Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye / Sunny - 1967

Next she appears in a couple of movies.

In 1969 Susan Barrett starred in 'The April Fools'.

Then she falls off the face of the earth!

I have had a reply from Paul Howes who said that the jury's still out as to whose version came first. However Paul did say that as Jerry Ragovoy produced Dusty's recording of his own song, it's a fair assumption that it was to Dusty that he first gave the song and that she was therefore the first to record it. He added that presumably Ragovoy and his publishers would not have given authorisation for the release of the Barrett version ahead of Dusty's. This would have been a requirement as a recording of the song had yet to be released. (Goin' Back is a text book case.) Of course it's not a 100% certainty.

I think that probably sums it up for me but I suppose that RCA could have gone ahead and released Susan's version first and then sought retrospective permission. Who knows! Anyway Dusty's version should have been a massive hit.



Humboldt

Edited by - humboldt on 20/05/2009 20:20:15



Sweetbaby

I'll try anything



Canada
1466 Posts

Posted - 20/05/2009 : 22:06:50

😄 **The April Fools** actually stars Jack Lemmon & Catherine Deneuve: Susan Barrett has a featured role as "Singer". Reportedly the first third of the film takes place at a party & features what one reviewer tantalizingly describes as "an almost surreal '60s version of *I Say a Little Prayer for You*" - it would make sense if Susan were the performer. **The April Fools** seems to show up on TV fairly often: I'll keep an eye out for it to confirm Susan's contribution. BTW the film's theme song is a Bacharach-David original which was Dionne Warwick's last hit of the '60s: it's a Bacharach song I think might have been better suited for Dusty than Dionne (altho D.Wa's version is commendable - on the first line her voice is a ringer for Karen Carpenter's!).



Posted - 22/05/2009 : 14:59:23

n/a
deleted

The way I see it "What's It Gonna Be" contained WAY too many tempo changes & made it a bit awkward for the average listener. I of course loved it ! You have to have a really superior song like "I Close My Eyes & Count To Ten" to get away with that many tempo changes. IMHO, Keith

It Begins Again...



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