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- White Heat - The Next "Memphis"?

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Author

Topic

PeterP  
I start counting

Posted - 06/05/2009 : 03:37:23



34 Posts

I know that generally speaking Dusty's White Heat album isn't considered one of her best and not by Dusty either.

However, it is an album I have always liked a lot. Both of its time and ahead of its time and in many ways superior to what was happening musically at the time of its release.

Of its time in production values because that's what people were doing then, anything else was either old hat or not yet been thought of.

Synthesisers and drum machines were the new, or relatively new toys in the recording studio and programmers were still learning what to do with them and how to do it.

But musically it was ahead of its time and not so very different in some ways from the later Reputation album. Although production had moved on and machines being used (or over-used) more intelligently, had White Heat been re-released to coincide with Dusty's re-emergence and a whole new audience, it would have done as well, if not better.

The stand-out track for me is Blind Sheep. I've loved it ever since I first heard it and Gotta Get Used To You was a club monster that didn't get picked up at the time but may still make it to a DJ's sequencer and get remixed. Ditto Donnez Moi.

I don't think the album was, or ever has been appreciated as much as it should. It was way too different for anyone other than already hardened Dusty fans, but in the fullness of time I think it has weathered very well and "may", just like the Memphis album did, yet be discovered as an album worthy of a place in anyone's collection.

Give a cat a fish and it will eat for a day  
Teach a cat to fish and it will mope all day  
because no-one gave it any fish

memphisinlondon  
Where am I going?  
☆☆☆

Posted - 06/05/2009 : 09:57:19

Hi PeterP

I really enjoyed reading your post. We had a thread about this album last year but I think only a few of us contributed to it. It would be good if your thread gave others a chance to discuss it.

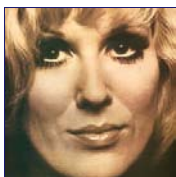
I think Dusty was proud of this album.

A few of us here think the album is great and that it's stood the test of time. 'Soft Core' appears to be the overall favourite track.

'Gotta Get Used To You' is my favourite track.

It's a good album but it ain't no Memphis. It's a great 'what if' album.

Memphis



United Kingdom  
3565 Posts

Ever since we met...

**MissDustyFanatic**

Where am I going?



Posted - 06/05/2009 : 10:47:50

USA  
2606 Posts

I wrote something on this earlier, but my Internet gave out on me and I lost it. The gist of it (which I'll try reposting later) is that I think 'White Heat' deserves to be ranked up with 'Dusty In Memphis', 'Longing', and the Jeff Barry produced album (usually referred to as 'Faithful') as her strongest, most artistic statements.

Here's a link to the (archived) thread about 'White Heat' that Memphis mentioned:

[http://www.dustyspringfield.info/forum/topic.asp?ARCHIVE=true&TOPIC\\_ID=3989](http://www.dustyspringfield.info/forum/topic.asp?ARCHIVE=true&TOPIC_ID=3989)

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

Edited by - MissDustyFanatic on 06/05/2009 10:56:17

**memphisinlondon**

Where am I going?



Posted - 06/05/2009 : 13:02:52

United Kingdom  
3565 Posts

'her strongest, most artistic statements' - what does this really mean in the Dusty canon? Maybe some of her singles are even greater.

The Jeff Barry album is a strong artistic statement - are you kidding me, Taylor? No, I see, you're not...

Memphis

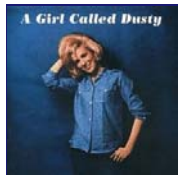
Ever since we met...

**Brian**

Where am I going?



Posted - 06/05/2009 : 13:43:57

United Kingdom  
2058 Posts

I adore 'White Heat', but I don't think it will ever be widely accepted worldwide as 'Memphis' is. The people who vote for 'Memphis' most probably haven't heard many of Dusty's albums anyway - i.e the general public.

'WH' has one of the best album covers - it IS Dusty.

I think if there is a contender it's got to be 'Everything's coming up Dusty' - far more satisfying than 'Memphis'.

The main point however is - DUSTY NEVER MADE A BAD ALBUM!

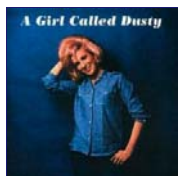
Brian

**Cardiff Bluesgirl**

I'll try anything



Posted - 06/05/2009 : 14:18:46

United Kingdom  
1809 Posts

Jury out on this methinks? I think that her early albums edge it for me, probably because I am ancient. I love "a girl called Dusty" and "everything's coming up Dusty" having said that I do have a great fondness for the last one. I think it's difficult not to like "roll away" or "what is a woman to do"

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

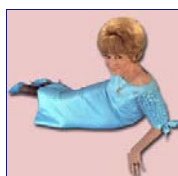
liz.

**humboldt**

I'll try anything



Posted - 06/05/2009 : 15:00:27



United Kingdom

Brian, I have to disagree with your statement that 'Dusty never made a bad album'. In my opinion Dusty did indeed make a bad album. I'm referring to 'Living Without Your Love' which is so bland & MOR that I can hear the clattering of cutlery, crockery & glasses as the super club set eat their chicken Maryland! Since getting the CD I have only played it once and filed it under 'F' for forget.

Now back to 'White Heat'. When I got my vinyl copy as a US import back in nineteen hundred & frozen stiff I wasn't very sure what to

make of it. John Peel had alerted me to it when he played 'Donnez Moi' so I knew that I liked at least one track. I suppose that it was 'of it's time' and I did play it a few times before moving on to other things. So it came as a delightful surprise when I bought it upon its CD release in 2002 to discover that it was a real treasure. For me it was Dusty's last great album as I love all the tracks bar one. A lot of early '80's music has not stood the test of time but 'White Heat' comes out well. It really is a very strange album and in hindsight does not fit in with its 1982 time frame. 'Blind Sheep' (what in the hell is that all about) could have been released today as could have the Elvis Costello song 'Losing You'. It's a pity that it was not given a UK release at the time and that Dusty seemed to just abandon it as who knows what may have happened. Still it's all just 'what if'. BTW I have just noticed (I am playing it as I type) that on page 6 of the CD booklet that it's the wrong 'Losing You' credits that are listed. Duh!



Humboldt

Edited by - humboldt on 06/05/2009 17:07:59



**Brian**

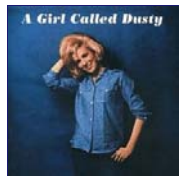
Where am I going?



Posted - 06/05/2009 : 16:45:45



'Living without your love' is also my LEAST favourite Dusty album too, but 3 tracks save it -the title track, 'I'm coming home again' and for me the stunning 'You've really got a hold on me' - I LOVE that song...back to WH everybody



Brian



United Kingdom  
2058 Posts

**Sara**

I'll try anything



Posted - 06/05/2009 : 17:23:47



I wouldn't call 'Living without your love' a bad album either, but yeah overall it is "unstunning", as Dusty put it, when you compare it to some of her other work.

White Heat is an amazing album, I'd put it in my top 3. Definitely my favourite from all her later albums (since Cameo)



Sara x



1163 Posts

**Cas19**

Wasn't born to follow



Posted - 06/05/2009 : 17:51:24



Brought up on 60's Dusty's music, at the time this album for me was a totally different sound. I prefer the earlier stuff. theres only two tracks I like 'Losing You' and 'Soft Core'...tho' for years I wasn't keen on that one either. Its not an album I play an awful lot.



Casx

8313 Posts

**'Something in your eyes'**



**tcowanatc**

I start counting

Posted - 06/05/2009 : 18:36:41



I think I commented on this album before somewhere - I bought it in Oxford Street HMV as an import many many years ago and couldn't believe what I was seeing - then when I took it back to my brother in law's place where we were staying at the time I couldn't believe what I was hearing - I really loved this album, (my wife not so impressed!!). "Blind Sheep" makes it with "Natchez Trace" as my two least favourite Dusty recordings, but I continue to be stunned each time I listen to





United Kingdom  
86 Posts

this album - Dusty was always one step ahead and I do believe she was proud of this album, it was a landmark recording. Just my view anyway. My favourite tracks would be "Donnez moi", "Don't call it love", "Gotta get used to you", "Losing you" & "Soft core" A great pity this album was never properly released over here and given publicity but as in many things our dear greatly loved lady wasn't always totally committed to promoting something if she felt it wouldn't take off, plus the record company decided to sell out and this gem was one of the casualties.

Henry



**Carole R.**

Where am I going?



Posted - 06/05/2009 : 21:18:59

My fave track on this album is 'Time and Time Again' in fact, When I bought the album this was the track that I continuously played.

Maybe it appeals to me because its a ballad..

I'm not mad on the techno-type sounds or the torch song, 'Soft Core'..

It wouldn't do for us all to like exactly the same things though would it..? 😊😄

Carole R xx



2242 Posts



**Hampson**

I've got a good thing



Posted - 06/05/2009 : 21:44:54

I wondered if Time and Time Again would get a mention, a story of forbidden love (I think), it seems to be a forgotten track, I think it is one of Dusty's finest, not just on this album, it's one of my all time favourites, but you hardly ever hear it mentioned, it's being neglected for some reason. I also love Donnez Moi, and quite like Soft Core, and I wondered what Blind Sheep was about too.

Wend

Edited by - Hampson on 06/05/2009 21:46:15



**PeterP**

I start counting

Posted - 06/05/2009 : 21:48:27

I think I've posted these before. But because someone mentioned the lyrics to Blind Sheep being indecipherable, here they are, or at least as best as someone somewhere on the net could make out. The song appears (to me) to be about abusive/controlling/indolent men (or women) in a relationship and their partners being desperate/daft enough to stay with them, or jump ot of the frying pan into the fire. Dusty however isn't going to do either.

Hey! just stop your domination  
You can't move on my personality  
Unconcerned, you use manipulation  
Shamelessly

Well, you know you've got an education  
It simply fails to satisfy my needs  
It's a fool's game  
Nobody's gonna rule me

Oh, those blind sheep  
Lead 'em to the slaughter  
Blind sheep  
Mothers, hide your daughters  
Love's cheap  
Look at the smile on their faces  
Oh, ho  
Blind, leadin' the blind, leading the blind



34 Posts

Hey, hey, hey  
 I'm tired of suffocation - (I think this should be "Supplication" (The word means to beg etc)  
 Oh, but for talk  
 You never follow through  
 What i want is some hot and hard persuasion  
 Endlessly

It's so sad, the sleazy innuendoes  
 They've brought so many victims to their knees  
 Chain reaction  
 Half-assed satisfaction

You've got me but a blind sheep  
 Lead 'em to the slaughter  
 Blind sheep  
 Mothers, hide your daughters  
 Love's cheap  
 Look at the smile on their faces  
 Ooh, ooh, ooh  
 Blind, leading the blind, leading the blind

Deprivation just don't work on me  
 Even affliction, it just don't do it  
 All i want is  
 What i need is  
 (blind sheep)

It's not fashion to you  
 You're just malicious  
 Don't keep trying  
 Simply not judicious

All i want is  
 What i need is  
 (blind sheep)

Such a city, something exotic  
 You autocrat  
 I'm simply not turned onto that

All i want is  
 What i need is  
 (blind sheep)

Inability  
 I'm not a service station



**Hampson**  
 I've got a good thing  
 ★★★★★

Posted - 06/05/2009 : 22:01:53 



She did well to interpret that song as well as she did then Peter. She did say she never listened to the lyrics didn't she.

Wend

Edited by - Hampson on 06/05/2009 22:02:52



United Kingdom  
 4703 Posts

**humboldt**  
 I'll try anything  
 ★★

Posted - 06/05/2009 : 22:14:58  



Thanks Peter, makes a bit more sense now.



Humboldt



United Kingdom  
 1704 Posts



**MissDustyFanatic**

Where am I going?

USA  
2606 Posts

Posted - 07/05/2009 : 00:07:56



quote:

*Originally posted by memphisinlondon*

'her strongest, most artistic statements' - what does this really mean in the Dusty canon? Maybe some of her singles are even greater.

The Jeff Barry album is a strong artistic statement - are you kidding me, Taylor? No, I see, you're not...

Memphis  
Ever since we met...

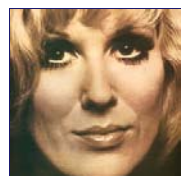
I'm certainly not kidding, Memphis. I'll see if I can find another thread (or maybe start one) to discuss my impressions of the Jeff Barry album.

As for 'White Heat' being amongst her greatest artistic recordings, I certainly think it is. It's something so different than the 'big ballady things' Miss Dusty was known for, and it's got an emotional punch to it that's lacking from any other album she put out - to me it's a very personal album, and filled with such strong emotions that DEMAND to be heard. I think Miss Dusty put a lot of her feelings at the time into the album and seemed to have a "damned if they don't like it, it's how I feel" attitude. I feel it must have been cathartic to make an edgy album, and to try new sounds and ideas, and not care about what may have been popular in the past. It was a brave step for her to make it, considering the personal turmoil in her life the last few years leading up to its recording and release.

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

**memphisinlondon**

Where am I going?

United Kingdom  
3565 Posts

Posted - 07/05/2009 : 01:18:56



I was just saying that Dusty's 'strongest most artistic statements' can be found throughout her work on singles and on albums. Sometimes, a lot of times, she channelled her emotions in a very controlled way. That was a big part of her art apart from her technical vocal mastery. And because we've heard so many of her songs so many times we can lose the greatness of them and start taking them for granted. But most of her greatest tracks are art-works as far as I'm concerned. Dusty always demands to be heard but 'White Heat' is a bit over the top that way.

We might see her as a painter using different brush strokes and different palletes. Some subtle pastels, some bold oils, some experimentation with form. But on 'White Heat' I don't fully understand what she is doing and why. The album is a total aberration in the whole of Dusty's catalogue and that's what makes it marvellous.

I wish we had more information about the album's conception. It is still different to any album I own just as it was in 1982. It's electro, pop, it's rock, it's edgy lyrics, it's Dusty's degraded Voice. I'm not sure if that's enough to make it great.

Still thinking. Thanks, Taylor.

Memphis  
Ever since we met...

Edited by - memphisinlondon on 07/05/2009 01:22:26

**MissDustyFanatic**

Where am I going?



Posted - 07/05/2009 : 09:19:30



I certainly think that she had strong artistic statements on many (if not all) of her singles, and many of her albums. I'm just saying that as a whole, 'White Heat' and the others stand as cohesive artistic statements.

I think your thoughts are completely on spot, Memphis. 'White Heat' IS over the top, and that's what I think makes it an oddity as well as a

USA  
2606 Posts

strong statement to her artistic integrity. She was willing to commit to record a complete departure from anything she'd ever sounded like, and channeled her emotions with a little less control; consequently, I think it comes across as very honest and in some spots ('Soft Core', 'Donnez-Moi') as a little heartbreaking. It's as exposed and personal as she ever got on an album, save perhaps 'Longing'.

I also agree about taking her songs for granted. I've really been amazed lately at some of her biggest hits, thanks to Clive's excellent thread.

[http://www.dustyspringfield.info/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=4283](http://www.dustyspringfield.info/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=4283)

I burned 'Greatest Hits' to CD and have played it over and over the last week or two. I've been listening to them more closely and am finding myself amazed by songs I've heard probably hundreds of times before. Sometimes you have to stop and listen to them closely to appreciate them. And sometimes they just astound you all over again. I could listen to 'I Only Want to be with You' (I always listen to the stereo version) a hundred times more and still not get tired of it.

But back to 'White Heat'. I think you hit the nail on the head when you said:

quote:

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*Originally posted by memphisinlondon*

But on 'White Heat' I don't fully understand what she is doing and why.

Memphis  
Ever since we met...

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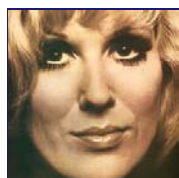
'White Heat' is making a strong artistic statement precisely *because* you don't exactly understand what she's doing or why. You're forced to peel away the layers of synthesizers and production tricks altering her voice to listen to the emotions fueling the songs. It seems to me to be a lot of pent-up anger and frustration finally pouring out of her in a way she could so impeccably create something with. I may not understand the reasons she made 'White Heat' but it's an album I can listen to over and over and find new meaning in. It may not have the glossy production and exquisite vocals of DIM, or the uniform smoothness and laid-back soul of the album she did with Jeff Barry, but it's highly thought provoking and emotional in a way that only 'Longing' ever really approached (unfinished though that album was).

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



**memphisinlondon**

Where am I going?



United Kingdom  
3565 Posts

Posted - 07/05/2009 : 22:18:36

You know, I've agreed with you too Taylor..over the years.. with probably everything you say. I love the bravery of this album. I love that Dusty was doing what she wanted to at last and had control. But it was the wrong time. The integrity I love so much is still intact but at this time it's polluted.

To me 'White Heat' is Dusty's adventure in electro-rock bouncing off Nona Hendrix and Rough Trade but not getting it quite right. Hardly any 1982 dance beats and the velvet soul is cruelly stripped out of her voice on purpose. It's like she's forgotten why she is so great. But no wonder after the 1979 debacle of disappointment. She might as well use that drug fuelled anger for something new.

Overall the album doesn't work for me. It's not coherent unless you gather certain tracks together - I mean there's the kernels of 3 good albums here. But it's a great slab of biography. It's manic, dangerous and then you (I) get Dusty pretending to be the Dusty I love but she's not there. I don't think she means anything on her ballad things here. She's lost and out of connection with herself. She gets an Elvis Costello song- that was worth money! And she sings it exactly like Elvis! She didn't even have the wherewithal to Dustify it, probably because she no longer knew what that meant. The Pet Shop Boys had

to remind her later on.

I'm not sure Dusty even understood the meaning of 'Soft Core' because of the almost tongue in cheek way she delivers it. And that jaunty pub piano. It could be like Bertolt Brecht but she misses that beat. She should have listened to Marlene Dietrich before she sang this.

As PeterP says this album could have had some Club hits but I would bet these would have been limited to drug fuelled (male) gay clubs. But if the hits were big enough she could have been in the mainstream chart but that's a big 'if'.

I have to be truthful and say again that I couldn't be bothered with this at the time of release (and that was an objective judgement at the time).

I only listen to it now because it's Dusty. Saying all that I would still rate this as one of Dusty's greatest albums because, through a biographical lens, it's the fascinating real Dusty at this time. It's a documentary to me. And the pop rock rush of 'Gotta Get Used To You' still knocks my socks off.

Memphis  
Ever since we met...

Edited by - memphisinlondon on 07/05/2009 22:19:28



Topic

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