

“A Girl Called Dusty With the Sound of Motown:”
Dusty Springfield, Mimesis, and the Genealogy of a Persona

by

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Abstract

Though British singer Dusty Springfield had a very prominent and successful career, she is often left out of the history books. Her North American legacy has been reduced to her album *Dusty in Memphis*, an inaccurate and incomplete representation of Dusty Springfield's career. Many aspects of her career are largely ignored, for scholars put her sexuality, her ability to "sound black," and the influence of black musicians at the forefront of Dusty Springfield scholarship. The purpose of this project is to highlight influential musicians, experiences, and talents which have been left out of Dusty Springfield studies. This thesis focuses on Dusty Springfield's performance experiences, her songwriting abilities, her audience/performer dichotomy, and various people and styles that have influenced her persona. By examining the artists and experiences that influenced her career, this thesis explores the ways in which persona is constructed and how it functions in the pop music industry.

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In October of 2011, while a student in Jacqueline Warwick's popular music analysis seminar, I had the opportunity to read a chapter from Annie J. Randall's *Dusty! Queen of the Postmods*. Though I had always known Dusty Springfield's music, reading Dusty Springfield scholarship sparked a new and exciting interest. I was immediately captivated by this work and was unexpectedly inspired to choose Dusty Springfield for my master's thesis topic. While researching and writing about Dusty, I expanded my knowledge of 1960s pop music and acquired many scholarly skills that will further my career as a musicologist. Without the assigned reading mentioned above, I would not have had this life-altering experience and, thus, Jacqueline Warwick is the first person I would like to acknowledge. She is an encouraging and supportive academic advisor from whom I gained a great amount of knowledge. My academic pursuits and accomplishments are the driving-force in my life, and there are many people from all areas of my life who I want to acknowledge.

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The path leading me to musicology began with my parents. I was lucky to grow up in a musical household with parents who exposed me to 1960s popular music at a very young age. Because of them, I was the only child in my grade school class who knew the music of Burt Bacharach, a trait that I have always valued. In addition, my twin sister Kathy's critical thinking skills and knowledge of popular music was consistently helpful. Our shared love for Ronnie Spector, Cousin Brucie, Carole King, and "What's New Pussycat?" makes her the "best twin ever."

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Chapter 1: Introduction

British pop singer Dusty Springfield captivated listeners throughout her forty-year career, creating a legacy that continues to be a resilient piece of pop culture since her death in 1999. Known for her dark eye makeup, bouffant hairdo, and glamorous evening gowns, she became the prototype for the postmodern drag queen and a model for contemporary female pop stars, notably Amy Winehouse and Adele. Growing up as Mary O'Brien, she morphed into Dusty Springfield during the early 1960s. Though her taken name was Dusty Springfield, she is usually referred to as Dusty, and I will follow this usage throughout this thesis, referring to her either as "Dusty Springfield" or simply as "Dusty." Her BBC television show *Dusty!* as well as many of her album titles including *A Girl Called Dusty*, *Ev'rything's Coming Up Dusty*, and *Dusty Definitely* highlight her first name, thus creating a strong association with her first name rather than her last. Scholars such as musicologist Annie J. Randall also reinforce this association by referring to her as "Dusty" rather than "Springfield."

As a pop singer who achieved the second US hit of the British Invasion, Dusty Springfield destabilizes the well-known narrative and strictly male rock discourse of popular music in the 1960s. Most rock and roll history books and documentaries ignore Dusty's role in the cultural cross pollination that was occurring at this time.¹ We recognize bands such as the Beatles, the Animals, Herman's Hermits, and Gerry and the Pacemakers as part of the British Invasion, largely ignoring the fact that pop singers such

¹ Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman, *American Popular Music: From Minstrelsy to MP3*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press). John Covach and Andrew Florey, *What's That Sound? An Introduction to Rock and Its History*, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012). Reebee Garofalo, *Rockin' Out: Popular Music in the U.S.A.* (London: Pearson PLC, 2005). Obie Benz, Bud Friedgen, Ted Haimes, and Andrew Solt, *The History of Rock & Roll* (New York: Time-Life Video, 2004).

as Petula Clark, Dusty Springfield, and Lulu all topped the American charts alongside their male counterparts. Thus, the longstanding image of working-class male rock bands that brought their own original music to the United States is challenged when we consider artists like Dusty Springfield.

Dusty also destabilizes the image of the typical pop singer, blurs the boundaries of the pop genre, and complicates the performance of race. She was able to control her studio sessions in her efforts to produce what she perceived as an ideal sound. In addition, she wrote several songs. Though she is not the only pop singer to record self-written songs, her compositions are not at the forefront of her catalog. Finally, the characteristic that is most prominent in her legacy is her talent for mimicry, primarily that of African American soul singers. These special attributes are all part of the development of her persona.

There are varying understandings of the term “persona,” but I use “persona” to refer to a constructed entity that is portrayed by a performer. The originator of the persona is separate from the performance persona itself, but the originator’s experiences and agency are what shape the persona. Scholar Philip Auslander claims that the performance of a persona is not restricted to recorded performances, but is also performed through album artwork, publicity materials, and media coverage.² I would add to this list the songs that a performer chooses to record and the arrangements of recorded/performed songs, for these elements are equally representative of a persona. This is especially true in performers such as Dusty Springfield who carefully chose her songs and arrangements. While there is scholarship about what persona means and how

² Philip Auslander, “Performance Analysis and Popular Music: A Manifesto,” *Contemporary Theatre Review* 14, no. 1 (2004): 9.

it functions, there is little about how a persona is developed. Dusty Springfield is a suitable figure for an analysis of the construction and development of a persona.

Because there is a stark contrast between her performance persona and the “real” person, there are varying opinions on whether Dusty Springfield and Mary O’Brien were two individual entities. The 1999 documentary *Definitely Dusty* sets out to uncover the truth about the “real” Dusty Springfield, informing the audience that Dusty and most of the people who knew her both professionally and personally believe Mary O’Brien and Dusty Springfield can be separated.³ This is a notion with which I agree. Within the discipline of performance studies, scholars argue that a performance consists of several layers. Two of these layers are the “real person” and the “performance persona.”⁴ In the case of Dusty Springfield, Mary O’Brien is the “real person” and Dusty Springfield is a “performance persona” that was constructed and embodied by Mary O’Brien.

It was through her upbringing and musical experiences that Mary O’Brien was able to invent and develop Dusty Springfield. Growing up as part of a middle-class family she had privileges that were helpful aids in making Dusty Springfield. Mary O’Brien’s Catholic school education provided an environment in which she was immersed in the ways of middle-class society, and thus instilled in her a middle-class standard of behavior that is employed by Dusty Springfield. This behavior is evident in recorded radio and television interviews as well as surviving footage of her television performances, *Ready Steady Go!* and her BBC television show *Dusty!* being two examples.

³ Serena Cross, *Definitely Dusty* (BBC2, December 26, 1999).

⁴ *Ibid*, 6.

Recordings of a teenage Mary O'Brien inform us that she had the means to obtain recording devices. These recordings also reveal her keen ear and musical instincts, both of which developed at a young age. Her brother Dion (otherwise known as Tom Springfield) was part of a folk duo with musician Tim Field, and in 1960 Mary O'Brien joined them as Dusty Springfield, thus forming the Springfields. The O'Brien family's middle-class background provided Tom Springfield with the means to learn several foreign languages, which is reflected in the Springfields' catalog. Dusty's experience with the Springfields, in this sense, carried over to her career when performing songs such as "La Bamba" and "Anna (El Negro Zumbon)," both of which are in Spanish.

Dusty's persona was influenced by a large and diverse number of musicians, and this study is an effort to trace who they were and how they shaped her career, thus demonstrating the complex levels that a pop singer can construct. By using the term "genealogy" I am setting out to trace the influences of Dusty Springfield. Examining her career by considering the musicians with whom she came in contact is the foundation on which my analysis lies. Auslander suggests that a musician's performance persona has somewhat of a relationship to their "off-stage personalities and values."⁵ Herein lies the importance of examining biography. Knowing that Dusty Springfield listened to black American music, as well as other musicians from other genres, provides a reference point for tracing her influences. The most important aspect of her music interests is knowing when she was exposed to different musicians from whom she borrowed characteristics. In addition, her performance experience is a major factor in the development of her persona; especially her performances with the Motown artists in 1964 and 1965.

⁵ Ibid, 8.

Throughout this thesis I trace specific artists, songs, and performance experiences from which Dusty Springfield constructed the persona that dominated her performances and media image during the 1960s. The first section examines Dusty in relation to the Motown sound. Drawing from scholarship on appropriation, mimesis, and the performance of race, this chapter traces the construction of her persona's racial elements. I provide a detailed analysis of Dusty's performance with the Motown Revue in September, 1964 at the Brooklyn Fox theater in New York City and I compare it to the *Ready Steady Go! Sound of Motown* special Dusty hosted.

The second section delves into the more technical side of Dusty's career and how it manifests itself in her persona. I begin by examining the influence other music had on her song arrangements; specifically "All Cried Out" and "Gonna Build a Mountain." I then turn to analyses of the four self-composed songs that she recorded in the mid-1960s. These aspects of her career demonstrate the control she had over her persona and music, which challenges the stereotypical perception of pop singers.

The third section is an analysis of her stage presence and the visual aspects of her persona. I frame these components within Auslander's performance manifesto and consider genre and audience expectations. I also compare Dusty to Jo Stafford, an unexamined but obvious influence and inspiration that clearly shaped Dusty's image during her transition period in 1962-1964. Throughout the chapter I use the word "camp" to refer to exaggerated behavior, excessive image, and, in some instances, comedic parody. My use of camp is consistent with Susan Sontag's idea that camp is "the spirit of extravagance."⁶ Though there is debate about the definition of "camp" and criticism for

⁶ Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp,'" in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Self—A Reader*, ed. Fabio Cleto (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), 59.

Sontag's essay "Notes on 'Camp,'" it is my understanding that some of her statements have held true. If, according to Sontag, "the essence of camp is its love of the unnatural; of artifice and exaggeration," then the construction of a pop singer's persona is complemented by this perspective on camp.⁷

⁷ Ibid, 53.

Chapter 2: “In All Modesty, I Am the Only Dusty Springfield:” Mimesis, Imitation, and Dusty’s Relationship with Motown Artists

In May of 1964, during the United States’ attempted work-visa ban on British pop and rock musicians, Dusty Springfield nearly met the same fate as some of her British contemporaries. When proceeding to fulfill her scheduled performances on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and *American Bandstand*, her visa request was almost rejected by the US Department of Labor on the grounds that Dusty was not unique. Her response to the matter was, “In all modesty, I am the only Dusty Springfield,” an intriguing statement from an artist who drew heavily and accurately from American performers.⁸ Though she was often mimicking American performers, the combination of all of her influences is what makes Dusty Springfield unique. This chapter examines specific performance experiences that contributed to her performance persona.

From the very beginning of Dusty Springfield’s solo career she tried to replicate the sounds she heard on African American soul records. Though her first professional performance experience was with a sister act called the Lana Sisters, followed by a stint as the token female in her brother Tom’s folk trio the Springfields, she was able to reinvent herself physically and sonically when she went solo in 1963.⁹ The African American soul influence on her records was a trademark during her early career, for she was a white British girl who sounded like an African American soul singer. She confused even Motown artist Martha Reeves who said, “When I heard her on the radio, I just assumed she was American and black. Motown signed up nearly all the best new talent at the time, and I remember being a little surprised to find she was with a different label –

⁸ Paul Howes, *The Complete Dusty Springfield*, 2nd ed. (London: Reynolds and Hern, 2007), 423.

⁹ In numerous interviews throughout her career, Dusty referred to her physical transformation from a tomboy to a glamorous pop singer.

and I was absolutely astounded when I finally saw her on TV.”¹⁰ Martha Reeves’s positive reaction to Dusty Springfield’s racially ambiguous recordings is intriguing, for she could have found it an unacceptable act of appropriation. During a time in which blackface minstrelsy had long been socially taboo and black identity was vital to the Civil Rights struggle, how was Dusty able to avoid negative reactions to the performance of race?

Appropriation

According to legal-historian Susan Scafidi, “Charges of cultural appropriation occur when an outsider enters the [cultural] circle (with or without permission), participates in its creative ferment, and then sets off to create proprietary works or to pursue profits elsewhere.”¹¹ Though Scafidi’s work focuses on the legal aspect of intellectual property, many of her theories and observations are relevant when analyzing the cultural appropriation of popular music and, indeed, the career of Dusty Springfield. Scafidi’s statement brings to mind the careers of pop singers such as Pat Boone who sanitized African American pop songs for white audiences. The case of white-washing rhythm and blues records for profit is consistent with Scafidi’s understanding of appropriation (and misappropriation), but for my purposes in this discussion, the crucial term in Scafidi’s definition is “elsewhere.” Because Dusty Springfield was, in some ways, adopted by a circle of African American pop musicians, she was largely able to avoid the charges of cultural appropriation that were associated with the likes of Pat Boone, but the relationship between Dusty Springfield and appropriation is much more

¹⁰ Lucy O'Brien, *Dusty: A Biography of Dusty Springfield*, 2nd ed. (London: Pan Books, 2000), 59.

¹¹ Susan Scafidi, *Who Owns Culture? Appropriation and Authenticity in American Law* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, 2005), 94.

complex than that.¹² Scafidi defines “misappropriation” as the act of stealing characteristics from a foreign culture without advocating for them, recognizing their contributions, working with them, or getting permission to use their work.¹³

One of the main reasons Dusty was accepted by African American pop musicians has to do with the various ways in which she conducted appropriation, mainly what Scafidi refers to as “adoptive appropriation.” According to Scafidi:

Adoptive appropriation, in which the copyist internalizes the cultural product as her own, attempts to blur the distinction between the copy and the original. While this incentive to copy demonstrates high regard for the embodied product, it also threatens to erode the source group’s boundaries or to make its cultural products generic. The copyist who adopts rather than merely appropriates a cultural product may do so either by seeking to emulate or join the source community or by attempting to subsume the product into her own culture.¹⁴

Because of her dedication to African American soul music, Dusty was committed to effectively adopting its aesthetics. Another form of appropriation central to Dusty’s career is the establishment of intent and appreciation. As Scafidi describes, “When appropriation of cultural products is appreciative rather than merely economical or descriptive, there is a heightened relationship between the copyist and the source community.”¹⁵ Finally, and importantly, Dusty’s use of soul aesthetics resembles adoptive appropriation more than misappropriation because of her relationship with African American soul musicians. According to Scafidi, “[a] cultural apprenticeship may

¹² It is important to recognize how white-washed covers of black music helped advance the careers of many black musicians who, because of their lack of radio airplay and poor record distribution, were at a disadvantage. My main focus here is on style and the relationship to the appropriated source culture. See Kevin Phinney’s *Souled American: How Black Music Transformed White Culture* (New York: Billboard Books, 2005) for a deeper analysis of early rock and roll and cultural appropriation.

¹³ Scafidi, *Who Owns Culture?*, 104.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 98.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 96.

result in mere aesthetic appreciation, or it may prompt the copyist to become an advocate for the source community.”¹⁶

Dusty’s first two albums consist mostly of covers of African American soul songs on which she attempted to maintain the songs’ original soul characteristics. She had complete control during all of her recording sessions and stated on multiple occasions that her intentions were to sound as close to African American soul recordings as possible. According to manager Vicki Wickham, “She was constantly playing people bits of [American] records saying, ‘This is the sound I want. This is what we should do.’”¹⁷ By adopting the African American soul aesthetic, advocating for the careers of soul artists, and engaging in a cultural apprenticeship, Dusty Springfield was able to accomplish a positive means of appropriation.

Dusty, Appropriation, and Mimesis

One of the key aspects of Dusty Springfield’s persona is its development through imitation. As stated above, her talent for imitation initially convinced Martha Reeves that Dusty was African American. Sonically masquerading as a black American singer is an accomplished feat at such an early point in her career, a period prior to her cultural apprenticeship. The connection between the development of a skill and the ability to imitate is an important aspect of how Dusty worked within the framework of appropriation. Theories on imitation and mimicry complicate cultural appropriation, especially when we consider Plato’s definition of “mimesis.” Scholar Matthew Potolsky

¹⁶ Ibid, 97.

¹⁷ Serena Cross, *Definitely Dusty* (BBC2, December 26, 1999).

states that Plato “radically redefines art as essentially mimetic, as a representation of something else.”¹⁸ Potolsky further states that:

Both television sitcoms and popular music, for example, work within very restricted forms, and concern a limited number of familiar situations. Hip-hop songs even incorporate actual bits and pieces from earlier songs. Fashion, to take another example, nearly always alludes to past styles while also adding something new to its design. The originality of a sitcom, a pop song or a new fashion...is measured not by its absolute uniqueness but by its creative use of existing ideas and conventions.¹⁹

Understanding artistry as the employment of familiar entities, Potolsky provides a means of analysis that strengthens Dusty Springfield’s relationship with positive appropriation. Adoptive appropriation, for example, could be thought of as a result of combining mimetic practice (where the copyist necessarily takes on the model’s—or in this case, source community’s—characteristics) with cultural apprenticeship (where the copyist learns the mimetic behavior through immersion in the source community). If all art is mimetic, there must be a source from which the copyist is influenced; and if appropriation is the reproduction of a source’s characteristics, mimesis, in this context, is a form of appropriation. Modern Western society comprises longstanding multicultural influences that are woven into the fabric of popular culture, so by today’s standards it would be nearly impossible to evade the influence of other cultures. Therefore, I would argue that the theories outlined by Potolsky suggest that appropriation is unavoidable and might be considered as a fundamental component of art. By tracing the lineage of individual artistic influences, this becomes even more apparent.

¹⁸ Matthew Potolsky, *Mimesis* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 15.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 54.

Dusty Springfield's Motown Lineage

Dusty's cultural apprenticeship was a pivotal moment in her career. It was a time in which she could officially gain credibility from African American soul artists while absorbing characteristics that she internalized. This style of learning, according to rhetorician John Muckelbauer is important to "internalize[ing] the particular stylistic structure in a way that allows the student to reproduce that style without having to think about it."²⁰ Though Muckelbauer is referring to imitation framed within the development of writing skills, the relationship between the model and student create a learning experience similar to that of Dusty and Motown. The two instances when Dusty performed with Motown artists doubled as an intensive learning experience through which she was able to develop the means to internalize what she was absorbing.

In September 1964, the popular New York-based radio disc jockey Murray "The K" Kaufman coordinated one of his iconic live stage shows at Brooklyn's Fox Theater for a ten-day run. Throughout the run there were six shows every day; the first started at ten in the morning, the last started after midnight. To promote her new North American single—a cover of Dionne Warwick's "Wishin' and Hopin'"—Dusty performed in the shows and shared the billing with Marvin Gaye, the Ronettes, Millie, the Supremes, the Temptations, Little Anthony and the Imperials, the Contours, Jay and the Americans, the Newsbeats, the Shangri-Las, the Dovells, and Martha and the Vandellas.²¹ Here Dusty was introduced to Motown artists with whom she formed relationships that would further the influence that African American soul music had on her career.

²⁰ John Muckelbauer, "Imitation and Invention in Antiquity: An Historical-Theoretical Revision," *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* Vol. 21, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 71.

²¹ Annie J. Randall, *Dusty! Queen of the Postmods* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 52.

She used her time at the Brooklyn Fox not only as a way to promote her records, but as an opportunity to learn from the artists whom she admired. In a telephone interview from New York City, she told British journalist Ian Dove, “I just stay at the side of the stage all the time, thinking, ‘Oh I wish I could do that,’ or ‘That’s marvellous.’ Because it is –it’s all so fantastic!...I’m just standing there and watching and learning. Or rather letting it all seep in....”²² Biographer Lucy O’Brien describes her backstage experience in saying, “Dusty learned a lot from [being backstage at the Brooklyn Fox]. She began to experiment with her vocals, taking tips from the Shirelles’ lead singer, Shirley Alston, and singing back-up for the Vandellas while standing in the wings. She enthused about the latter as the most exciting group she had ever seen. ‘Dancing in the Street’ had a ‘backbeat like a sledgehammer,’ [Dusty said], while Martha Reeves’s voice ‘had a richness that some of the other groups didn’t have.’”²³

Though she dreaded having to perform at ten in the morning, Murray the K’s shows provided Dusty with the opportunity of a lifetime: to fill in for one of the absent girls from Motown girl group Martha and the Vandellas. In an interview decades later she said, “The best part of [starting the day at ten in the morning] is [that] the Vandellas, of Martha and the Vandellas did the backup for Marvin Gaye from the wings. And on the first show there was always one who’d overslept and wasn’t there, so I got to be the third Vandella, and that, to this day, is the biggest thrill of my life.”²⁴ In addition to Dusty providing backing vocals for Motown artists, Martha and the Vandellas sang backup for

²² Ian Dove, “Dusty Phones From America: I Can’t Keep Awake!” Reprinted in *Dusty Springfield Bulletin* issue no. 30, November 1996.

²³ O’Brien, *Dusty*, 56. The lineup of performers varies from source to source. Randall does not include the Shirelles in her list of performers, and they are not listed on the actual souvenir program from the show. Ronnie Spector of the Ronettes has claimed the Shirelles were there, as does Lucy O’Brien. It is likely they were added to the show after the programs were printed.

²⁴ *Dusty Springfield Full Circle*, VHS (Taragon, 1997).

her from offstage during “Wishin’ and Hopin’.”²⁵ It is important to note that, during this time, Murray the K ultimately hosted sixty shows during the ten days, thus Dusty had ample opportunities to work with and learn from the other performers. In other words, this was an extensive engagement where she was repeatedly immersed in highly influential circumstances.

In having the opportunity to apprentice unconventionally with the Motown artists, Dusty was able to experience the Motown sound in a way that she never had before. Learning to perform in a specific way is a hands-on experience. According to scholar Richard Schechner:

Training is the acquisition of particular skills. Training may either be informal or formal. In informal training, the novice acquires skills over time by absorbing what is going on. Mistakes are corrected as part of daily life. Such training can be very effective. This is the way infants learn to speak. This is how most people learn how to ‘fit in’ to their families and social groups.²⁶

In Dusty’s case, her training was informal and she did, indeed, absorb her surroundings during her learning experiences. In working with the Motown artists she was able to learn how to “fit in,” and part of that was strengthening her vocal skills to help achieve the sound she wanted to produce. According to Martha Reeves, “Dusty was always in the wings. I think she liked our music. And the reverse. I was always in the wings ‘cause I liked her music. And we’d sing backup on the microphone for her on ‘Wishin’ and Hopin’’. And I guess that’s what gave she and Vicki Wickham the idea to do a special and have her sing backup with her.”²⁷ Seven months after performing in Brooklyn as both Dusty Springfield and an honorary Vandella, Dusty hosted a special hour-long episode of the youth-oriented television show *Ready Steady Go!, The Sound of*

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (Routledge: New York, 2002), 193.

²⁷ Ibid.

Motown, dedicated to showcasing the Motown Revue.²⁸ Once again, Dusty joined Martha and the Vandellas, and, backed by Motown's Earl van Dyke Sextet, they delivered an internationally-collaborative performance of "Wishin' and Hopin'" to television audiences across the UK.²⁹

The performance of "Wishin' and Hopin'" on *The Sound of Motown* is very different from the 1963 studio recording in various ways. Before I begin the comparison I should highlight the fact that the Springfields' last performance was October 6, 1963 and Dusty recorded "Wishin' and Hopin'" on October 15, 1963, thus Dusty recorded the single before she had an opportunity to gain her autonomy. I would argue that she was still exhibiting habits she learned while in the Springfields, because during "Wishin' and Hopin'" Dusty's vibrato is restricted, and her rhythm is precise, in keeping with the aesthetics of a folk trio. In contrast, while performing "Wishin' and Hopin'" as a duet in 1965 with Martha Reeves (backed by the Vandellas), Dusty was able to blend her voice perfectly with Martha Reeves's by matching her timbre and vibrato.³⁰ Deepening the difference between the vocal performances, Dusty's phrasing is much more relaxed on *The Sound of Motown*, which helps her voice blend with Martha Reeves's voice. When

²⁸ Typically hosted by Keith Fordyce and Cathy McGowan, an episode of *Ready Steady Go!* would provide youth-targeted audiences with a weekly fix of the latest fashion trends, dance moves, and popular music. Each episode would highlight the newest hit singles by the numerous music guests who would lip sync to the song. Throughout the show's run (August 1964-December 1966 on ITV) there were several special episodes dedicated to showcasing one particular solo artist or band (The Rolling Stones, The Who, James Brown, Otis Redding).

²⁹ *The Sound of Motown* was very instrumental in the success of Motown's newly launched UK record label Tamla Motown. The Motown Revue went to the UK to promote the label but, due to the lack of transatlantic publicity for the Motown artists, the tour was a financial failure. *The Sound of Motown* was broadcast after the end of Motown's UK tour and the immense popularity of the show helped save Tamla Motown from failing.

³⁰ Dusty was known for her ability to blend her voice with almost anyone and sing in many different styles. Though both Dusty's cultural and biological heritage is different from Martha Reeves, she manages to produce a sound similar Reeves's vocal elements. For further reading, Roland Barthes's article "The Grain Of the Voice" provides details on various elements of the human voice. In *On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word*, edited by Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin, 293-300. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Dusty recorded the studio version of “Wishin’ and Hopin’” in October 1963, her most recent performance experience was with the Springfields and, thus, flavored her vocal performance. Because her performances after performing with Martha and the Vandellas share more qualities consistent with Motown, it is clear that immersing herself within a different genre influenced her vocal performances of the song thereafter. Thus, when I analyze the change in her vocal performance, I am framing the analysis within the characteristics of the appropriate genre.

The first comparison concerns interpolations and embellishments added to the song’s melody. During *The Sound of Motown* performance in 1965, both Dusty and Martha Reeves add interpolations that are not present in Dusty’s 1963 studio recording. The first interpolation is sung by Reeves (Figure 2.1), “You gotta” before the lines “wear your hair just for him.” Reeves’s phrasing is very loose, which is a result of her frequent use of vocal slurs, as demonstrated in Figure 2.1. In the second verse Dusty answers this with a very gritty and soulful, “You gotta do the things he likes to do,” (Figure 2.2).³¹

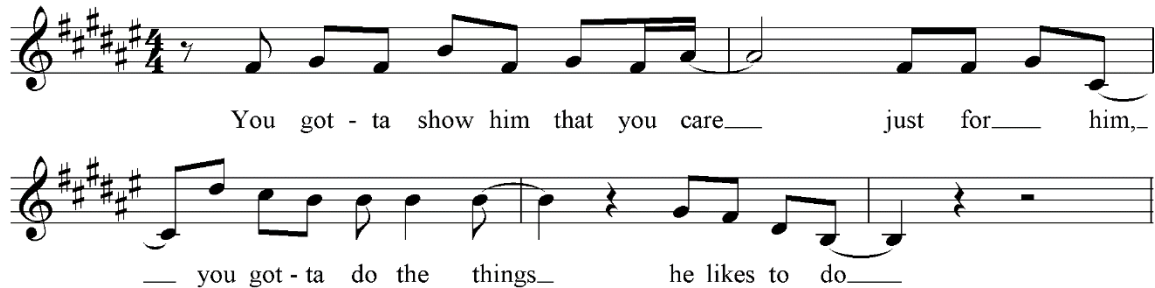
Figure 2.1: Martha Reeves’s “Wishin’ and Hopin’” interpolations as performed in *The Sound of Motown*³²



³¹ *Ready Steady Go! The Sound of Motown* (ITV, April 28, 1965).

³² All music examples are transcribed by the author.

Figure 2.2: Dusty’s “Wishin’ and Hopin’” interpolation as performed in *The Sound of Motown*



It is possible that she adopted the timbre and vibrato from Martha Reeves during their time at the Brooklyn Fox six months prior. As stated earlier, Martha and the Vandellas provided backing vocals for Dusty when she sang “Wishin’ and Hopin’” at the Brooklyn Fox in September of 1964. Though there are no known recordings of the performances, we can still roughly trace the lineage of this influence back to Murray the K’s September 1964 shows. On November 12, 1964 Dusty performed “Wishin’ and Hopin’” on the BBC radio program *Top Gear* which can be heard on the CD *The Complete BBC Sessions*. Already at this point, Dusty exhibits a new Vandella-like vocal quality, and embellishes the melody of the phrase “true love is.” The same embellishments are also exhibited in the later *Sound of Motown* performance in 1965, thus the influence that Dusty’s Brooklyn Fox experience had on her sound is clearly evident in the *Top Gear* performance in November 1964.³³ While the influence of Dionne Warwick’s phrasing from her 1963 recording of “Wishin’ and Hopin’” is not evident in Dusty’s studio recording from later in 1963, Dusty does use similar

³³ Dusty Springfield, *The Complete BBC Sessions*, CD (Mercury 984 3562, 2007).

embellishments in November 1964 and 1965; perhaps Dusty’s performances with Martha and the Vandellas in the intervening years influenced her to adopt Warwick’s phrasing.

Figure 2.3: Dusty’s embellishment on “true love is” as performed in *The Sound of Motown*

Dusty and Martha

The Vandellas

So if you're think-in' of how great true love_____ is_____

oo oo ah_____

Detailed description: The image shows two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The top staff, labeled 'Dusty and Martha', shows a vocal line with notes and rests. The bottom staff, labeled 'The Vandellas', shows a vocal line with rests and then a series of notes and rests, including a long note with a slur and a fermata, and a final note with a slur. The lyrics 'So if you're think-in' of how great true love_____ is_____ are written below the top staff, and 'oo oo ah_____' are written below the bottom staff.

The influence that Dusty’s Motown performance experiences had is traceable through the aforementioned recordings of “Wishin’ and Hopin’.” The table below is a side-by-side comparison of these three recordings. Keeping in mind that the Brooklyn Fox performance took place two months prior to the *Top Gear* broadcast, it is likely that Dusty’s first experience with being backed by Martha and the Vandellas shaped her tone for the following two recorded performances, as shown here:

Figure 2.4: Changes between the studio recording, the *Top Gear* performance, and *The Sound of Motown*

	Studio Recording, October 15, 1963	<i>Top Gear</i> BBC radio, November 12, 1964	<i>The Sound of Motown</i>, Recorded March 18, 1965
Vocal Timbre and Vibrato	Restricted	Richer, looser, laid back	Same as <i>Top Gear</i> , matches Martha Reeves
Rhythmic Phrasing	Precise	Relaxed	Same as <i>Top Gear</i> , matches Martha Reeves
Ornaments	None	Both times during phrase “true love is”	<i>Top Gear</i> ornament on final “true love is”
Interpolations³⁴	None	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reeves adds “you gotta” before “wear your hair just for him.” • Dusty adds “you gotta” before “wear your hair just for him” and “do the things he likes to do.” • Reeves adds “you gotta wear your hair just for him” the second time.

As a product of Dusty Springfield’s cultural apprenticeship, “Wishin’ and Hopin’” exemplifies the positive outcomes of appropriation by highlighting the importance of the model/copyist relationship. Most importantly, it highlights Dusty’s mimetic abilities by

³⁴ As Randall discusses, interpolations derive from the gospel music tradition, thus Dusty’s use of them is another demonstration of the influence that American soul music had on her performances and recordings. Randall, *Dusty!*, 47.

demonstrating her well-developed ear and her ability to internalize what she learned during this period.

By working with the Motown artists in the UK and at the Brooklyn Fox, Dusty was able to adopt nuanced characteristics of the Motown sound that were clearly different from recordings prior to this cultural apprenticeship. The relationships she formed during this time worked in favor of her desire to replicate African American soul music and, thus, avoided misappropriation. Randall explains the positive reception of Dusty's methods of appropriation in saying:

Another reason the black press may have studiously ignored her is precisely because she was a “good thief” and had acquired credibility among soul performers, especially those associated with Motown. . . . She was perceived to have “glorified” rather than “minstrelized” soul music. Though Dusty escaped the charges of minstrelsy and appropriation that were leveled against other British acts of the 1960s, that is the most that can be said about her reception among the black press in that decade.³⁵

Randall's claims are consistent with Scafidi's theory of cultural apprenticeship, and that apprenticeship is perfectly captured in *The Sound of Motown* performances.

Dusty Springfield's Motown-Influenced Performance Practice

Dusty's experiences performing with the Motown artists are essential to the development of Dusty's physical performance persona, as demonstrated in *The Sound of Motown* special episode of *Ready Steady Go!* Throughout the show Dusty adjusts her stage persona in a stylized way mirroring the general characteristics of her Motown companions. The adopted Motown characteristics are evident in her posture, mannerisms, speaking voice, and singing voice. Unlike the Motown artists, Dusty did not work with a choreographer who would teach her to move on stage with the consistent

³⁵ Randall, *Dusty!*, 133.

poise demonstrated by the Temptations and the Supremes. Of course, her middle-class privileged upbringing is far different from the Motown artists and, thus, both Dusty's and the Motown artists' sophisticated behavioral traits were acquired under different circumstances. But immersion in middle-class society is far different from Motown's Artists Development Program, and the Artists Development Program was created to provide working-class urban artists with the advantages that middle-class artists learned from infancy. Dusty's refinement was taught at an early age while the Motown artists were all adults when they were pupils of Powell. Dusty was learning to present herself in everyday life while the Motown artists were learning to perform on stage and refine their public personae, thus her persona is a combination of her middle-class upbringing and what the Motown artists taught her about soul music. The different contexts in which they learned their performance practice is evident in the contrast between Dusty's "Sound of Motown" behavior versus her typical on-screen behavior.³⁶

Her work with American musicians at such an early stage in her solo career is one of the most significant influences that shaped Dusty Springfield's stage and studio personae. She observed the techniques of American backing musicians and had her band members do the same.³⁷ For the first year and a half of her solo career she worked with British session musicians whose playing techniques proved troublesome when Dusty wanted to emulate what she heard on American records. To achieve the sound for which she was striving, she paid for her band to see James Brown in concert so they could see exactly what she wanted and witness the technique of his band the Famous Flames.³⁸ In May of 1965 Dusty took her efforts one step further by adding gospel singers to her

³⁶ *Ready Steady Go! The Sound of Motown.*

³⁷ *Definitely Dusty.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

group of backing singers, thus bringing her closer to sounding like the soul artists with whom she worked closely several months earlier.³⁹

Motown's Construction of Race

Motown's construction of blackness adds a complicated layer to the formation of Dusty Springfield's persona. Berry Gordy, founder of Motown Records, famously strived for Motown to be synonymous with American youth culture. To achieve this goal, Gordy created Motown's Artist Development program where the Motown performers learned how to perform with dignity, but, simultaneously, it "limit[ed] their racial identity."⁴⁰ The mainstream audiences were white, and, in an effort to appeal to mainstream audiences, Gordy had to groom his performers accordingly. In his book *Whiting Up: Whiteface Minstrels and Stage Europeans in African American Performance*, Marvin McAllister analyzes the tradition of African American actors performing whiteness. McAllister establishes whiting up as an "extra-theatrical, social performance in which people of African descent appropriate white-identified gestures, vocabulary, dialects, dress, or social entitlements," performance characteristics that can be similarly attributed to the Motown style.⁴¹ He further defines "whiting up" in saying:

With each whiting up act, black artists engage in a subtle intercultural negotiation between three distinct identity streams: the black performer's sense of his or her own professional and cultural positions, which may be fluid or somewhat fixed; contemporaneous audience perceptions of whiteness and blackness, which can be historically grounded, stereotypic, mythic, and even archetypal; and finally, forward-projecting reconsiderations or reconstructions of what whiteness and

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Mark Ribowsky, *The Supremes: A Saga of Motown Dreams, Success, and Betrayal* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2009), 232.

⁴¹ Marvin McAllister, *Whiting Up: Whiteface Minstrels and Stage Europeans in African American Performance* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 1.

blackness, as well as other identity markers such as class and gender, can potentially signify for artist and audience.⁴²

Many of the Motown artists were raised in the projects of Detroit and—at the request of Motown’s directors—Maxine Powell made it her mission to refine their behavior, transforming them from what she feared could be perceived as unrefined to elegant, creating a dignified image that, in mid-century America, was reserved for its privileged white citizens.

As explained by Gerald Early, the image that Berry Gordy wanted for the Motown artists can be analyzed within the framework of W. E. B. Du Bois’s theory of “double-consciousness”—looking at oneself through the eyes of another—and concludes that Motown “neither blackened nor bleached” their music.⁴³ I, however, would argue that, if an identity is formed within the mindset of double-consciousness, it is impossible to escape a notion of blackening or bleaching.⁴⁴ Therefore, it is fair to say that Motown was unavoidably bleaching both the sonic and physical image of their performance. Potolsky cites Judith Butler’s theory of compulsory performance and analyzes it in relation to race:

One need only note how different it is for a man to dress as a woman or a white person to wear blackface than it is for a woman to disguise herself as a man or a black person to “pass” as white. In the first set of examples, the inherent privilege of masculinity and whiteness makes the performance of femininity or blackness at best parody and at worst sexist or racist. In the second set of examples, by contrast, the disguise secures privileges that would otherwise be denied.⁴⁵

⁴² McAllister, *Whiting Up*, 5.

⁴³ Gerald Early, *One Nation Under a Groove: Motown and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 48.

⁴⁴ The “Motown sound” is criticized as being “whitened” by Amiri Bakara in his 1968 book *Black Music (AkashiClassics: Renegade Reprint Edition)* (New York: AkashiClassics, 2010), 230.

⁴⁵ Potolsky, *Mimesis*, 129.

I would like to highlight the point of “securing privileges that would otherwise be denied.” The image of Motown is, in part, a product of the racial climate in 1960s’ America, coupled with Berry Gordy’s goal to capture the attention of mainstream “white” audiences. Thus, it was inevitable that Berry Gordy’s mission would construct a black identity that, in the 1960s, could easily be considered whitened or sanitized. I would not suggest this is either positive or negative, but instead emphasize how it successfully created a mainstream image of blackness, one through which African Americans progressively gained commercial exposure.

Understanding Motown’s image this way is important in relation to the artists whom they influenced. A consideration of Motown’s construction of blackness means an analysis of Dusty Springfield’s persona—especially during *The Sound of Motown*—could go as follows: Dusty Springfield was a white British woman who adopted traits from Motown artists who had constructed a whitened-up version of their own race. Though the intentions of Dusty and the Motown artists were respectful and not derogatory parodies, the way in which the layers of influence are positioned is akin to the development of the cakewalk.

A stylized dance that dates back to the 1800s, the cakewalk was originated by African American slaves who adopted and mockingly exaggerated the aristocratic dance style that they observed among whites.⁴⁶ Upon delightfully witnessing the slaves’ performances of the dance, white spectators incorporated it into their blackface minstrelsy acts. Disregarding the dance’s derogatory nature, the cakewalk relates to

⁴⁶ The intentions of the slaves are well documented, as demonstrated in Brooke Baldwin’s article “The Cakewalk: A Study in Stereotype and Reality”. Baldwin includes an archived interview in which a former slave declares that the slaves would observe the dancing that occurred during the master’s parties and, “then we’d do it, too, but we used to mock ‘em, every step.” Brooke Baldwin, “The Cakewalk: A Study in Stereotype and Reality,” *Journal of Social History* vol. 15, no. 2 (Winter, 1981): 208.

Dusty in the sense that the white minstrels performed a “black” dance whose origins actually lie within white aristocratic society. Although the racial origins are different, this process of appropriation essentially mirrors Dusty’s process of emulating characteristics of African Americans who were exhibiting aspects of white American performance practice.

Conclusion

Through her apprenticeship with Motown artists, Dusty Springfield was able to blur racial boundaries by adopting various characteristics of the Motown sound. Though she was a white British woman who had the ability to “sound black,” her close affiliation with Motown’s artists helped her avoid negative appropriation. By working with the artists who Dusty admired, she learned, through mimicry, how to incorporate their traits into her persona. It is true that she did not “sound black” in every performance and recording, but the hands-on learning experience helped her build her mimicry and imitation skills on which her persona relied.

Chapter 3: “Something Special:” Dusty Springfield as a Songwriter and Arranger

During the early 1960s North American radio waves and record charts were largely dominated by songwriters who worked in New York City’s Brill Building and Aldon music. Working in this setting were many notable songwriting teams such as Burt Bacharach and Hal David (“Walk on By”), Ellie Greenwich and Jeff Barry (“Be My Baby”), Carole King and Gerry Goffin (“Will You Love Me Tomorrow?”), and Cynthia Weil and Barry Mann (“Walking in the Rain”), and their songs were brought to life by groups such as the Crystals, the Shirelles, and the Ronettes, all of whom Dusty admired. Thus, the sound that Dusty was striving for was often conveyed by songs which the singers did not compose. If we narrowly frame Dusty within the characteristics of young American pop singers her catalog of self-composed B-sides would make her an oddity among this genre, but as a songwriter Dusty was in good company as a British solo singer. Petula Clark, Sandie Shaw, and Doris Troy (an American soul singer who permanently moved her recording career to the UK) all recorded a number of their own compositions throughout their careers, separating British pop singers from their transatlantic counterparts.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, there are not many self-composed songs by solo pop singers, thus making Dusty’s (and Clark’s, Shaw’s, and Troy’s) compositions notable. The role Dusty played in the studio is also notable, and has been closely examined and frequently referred to, but little attention has been paid to her choices in song arrangements or the origins of their influences.

Dusty’s songwriting, production values, and control over her arrangements reveal aspects of her musicality that are just as informative as her performance style. The

⁴⁷ Writing a B-side or an album cut is financially rewarding because the single’s A-side is usually what motivates audiences to buy the record. Though all of Dusty’s A-sides were written by professional songwriters, the royalties for her four self-composed B-sides went directly to her as the songwriter.

connection between composition and persona can be framed within musicologist Stan Hawkins's writings on composition, stating that "...in understanding musical structure, the emphasis also falls on the qualities of human imagination that language cannot possibly fully expose."⁴⁸ Hawkins also emphasizes the importance of biography and location, both of which are essential to the study of persona. Dusty's biography is especially important because during interviews she would often talk about the influence of her favorite performers and she has said:

I was swiping things left, right and centre to record. It was pretty phenomenal to get that sound because the guys I had to work with – they were all sweethearts – but they were all playing standard basses. I was actually the first person to ask them to play a Fender bass. I really was a stickler for just getting there, just as close as I could, and that's where my reputation came from because I kept saying 'no, that's not it' and so on.⁴⁹

Her determination to sound as close as possible like the sources of her inspiration also informed her decisions concerning production techniques, arrangements, and original compositions.

By examining her maturation between 1963 and 1966, we see how her influences shifted throughout that time. Her first single "I Only Want to Be With You" as well as its B-side "Once Upon a Time" appropriately share similar production value and vocal quality with one another. This record is consistent with the music by which she was influenced at the time. When describing Dusty's influences at this time in her career, author Paul Howes says, "Dusty was heavily influenced by the records produced by Phil Spector in the States and she attempted to reproduce his trademark 'wall of sound' in a

⁴⁸ Stan Hawkins, *Settling the Pop Score: Pop Texts and Identity Politics* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2002), 9.

⁴⁹ Sharon Davis, *A Girl Called Dusty: An Intimate Portrait of Dusty Springfield* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2008), 77.

London recording studio with a surprising degree of success.”⁵⁰ Though this comment is about “I Only Want to Be With You,” I would argue that, because Dusty had control over the production during her recording sessions, Howes’s statement applies to her first two singles and their two B-side compositions. After releasing her first single, Dusty would defend her work against negative reviews by stating that no UK producers had been able to replicate Phil Spector’s wall of sound but in a phone conversation with Spector he had told her he thought the record would do well.⁵¹ After the success of her first album *A Girl Called Dusty*, Dusty’s attempts at capturing the wall of sound faded and both her production value and original compositions rose in quality. This chapter will examine how, through her strong musical instincts, she applied outside influences to her song arrangements and songwriting.

Arrangements

Throughout her career Dusty performed and recorded songs from a wide range of genres. Many of Dusty’s recordings used the same or similar arrangements as the recordings she wanted to replicate. Thus, Dusty was not simply drawn to the composition of a song or the timbre of a voice; the orchestration and arrangements, in other words, the way in which a song is brought to life, were something that appealed to her. For her 1965 album *Ev’rything’s Coming Up Dusty*, for example, she recorded American soul singer Baby Washington’s song “Doodlin’” and used the source’s arrangement almost note-for-note. In order to achieve a replicated sound she had her session musicians listen to the source recordings so they could learn exactly what she wanted. Sharon Davis describes the process in saying:

⁵⁰ Howes, *The Complete Dusty Springfield*, 133.

⁵¹ Davis, *A Girl Called Dusty*, 37.

For her first solo recordings Dusty intended to re-create the sounds that haunted her while keeping a commercial slant to convince record buyers she was a saleable commodity. Striving to achieve the American style, she became frustrated by the inability of studio musicians to reproduce the sound she wanted. Black musicians had the ability to feel and ‘emotionalize’ their music, while the British tended to rely on a slap-on effect that was razor-edged rather than rounded, or a harsh sound instead of a lingering smoothness.⁵²

A song’s arrangement would not only inspire her to record the song herself, but she took characteristics from one song and used them in an arrangement of a different song. Using Dusty’s arrangements of “All Cried Out” and “Gonna Build a Mountain” as examples, the following section will examine Dusty’s choices in song arrangement. I begin with the influence that the 1963 Jaynetts’ song “Sally Go ‘Round the Roses” had on Dusty’s arrangement of “All Cried Out.” I then turn to an analysis of Dusty’s arrangement of the show tune “Gonna Build a Mountain” and its relationship with Marvin Gaye’s hit “Ain’t That Peculiar.”

“All Cried Out” and “Sally Go ‘Round the Roses”

At the beginning of her solo career Dusty expressed admiration for the song “Sally Go ‘Round the Roses” by the Jaynetts. There are several pieces of evidence that indicate how this song influenced Dusty’s career and, thus, should be examined. When Dusty was preparing for her first recording session as a solo singer, the Jaynetts were climbing the pop charts with their one-and-only hit, “Sally Go ‘Round the Roses.” The October 4, 1963 episode of *Ready Steady Go!* featured the song during a dance segment. Vicki Wickham, producer of the show, has stated that Dusty often had influence over the songs and musicians who appeared on *Ready Steady Go!*, thus, it is likely that “Sally Go ‘Round the Roses” was played as one of Dusty’s suggestions. This particular episode

⁵² Ibid, 35.

was hosted by Dusty who interviewed the performers, one of whom was the show's dance expert Theresa Confrey. In one particular episode Confrey stated that she enjoyed American rhythm and blues groups. Dusty asked her "What particular records have you been listening to recently that you liked?...How about 'Sally Go 'Round the Roses?' We're playing it later in the show and it's a marvelous record."⁵³

Another connection between Dusty and "Sally Go 'Round the Roses" is that Dusty's upper vocal register carries a similar timbre to the Jaynetts' highest vocal pitches heard during the phrase, "no the roses they can't hurt you" in "Sally Go 'Round the Roses."⁵⁴ At such an early and impressionable time in her solo career, it is clear that this recording played a small but important role in developing her vocal persona as a solo artist. It should come as no surprise, then, that the song—particularly its groove—would influence Dusty's musical arrangement of "All Cried Out."

"All Cried Out," written by Buddy Kaye and Phil Springer and first recorded by Darlene Paul, was released in June of 1964; several weeks later Dusty began to record her version. While Dusty's arrangement is similar to Darlene Paul's, the groove on Dusty's recording is much heavier and slightly different, closely resembling the groove in "Sally Go 'Round the Roses" (Figure 3.1). The groove of Darlene Paul's arrangement is produced mostly by a set of two eighth notes that are repeated on the second and fourth beats of the pattern. The groove in Dusty's arrangement, however, is a bossa-nova

⁵³ *Ready Steady Go!* (ITV, October 4, 1963).

⁵⁴ "Sally Go 'Round the Roses" is an intriguing choice for Dusty because there are times when the Jaynetts' diction is coded as "white." During phrases where many black pop singers would drop a "t" or other hard consonants, the Jaynetts accentuate them. The call and response section, for example, is dictated like this: "Roses they can't hurt you." This accentuation is strangely inconsistent, however, because when the higher voice responds to the call she drops the "t" in both "can't" and "hurt." The group also drops the "d" in the word "round," thus making it sound like "Sally go 'roun' the roses."

influenced rock beat that is common in pop songs from that period.⁵⁵

Figure 3.1: “All Cried Out” and “Sally Go ‘Round the Roses” comparison

Darlene Paul’s “All Cried Out” groove

Dusty’s “All Cried Out” groove

“Sally Go Round the Roses” groove

In addition to re-using grooves from one song to another, Dusty borrows material in other ways as well. In October of 1965 both Marvin Gaye and Dusty were featured on the same episode of *Hullabaloo*. Dusty performed her song “Some of Your Lovin’” right

⁵⁵ Dusty likely heard this groove in songs such as Dionne Warwick’s “Walk on By” which was released several weeks before the “All Cried Out” recording sessions. It is also prominent in Little Anthony and the Imperials’ “Goin’ Out of My Head” which was released in 1964 but charted in 1965.

after Marvin Gaye performed “Ain’t That Peculiar,” which has a very distinct call-and-response interlude. On May 8, 1966 Dusty performed the show tune “Gonna Build a Mountain” on the television show *Sunday Night at the Prince of Wales Theatre*, and, in her arrangement of the song, Dusty uses the call-and-response interlude from Marvin Gaye’s “Ain’t That Peculiar.” Because she was on the *Hullabaloo* set when Marvin Gaye performed “Ain’t That Peculiar,” it is clear that Dusty borrowed that section from Marvin Gaye and used it in her arrangement of “Gonna Build a Mountain,” an arrangement that hardly resembles Anthony Newley and Lesley Bricusse’s intended arrangement. Beyond the television footage, there are two surviving recordings of her performing this song, and she consistently uses the same arrangement every time.

“All Cried Out” and “Gonna Build a Mountain” are clear products of Dusty’s well-developed ear for musical arrangement. She was able to hear something from a song and, instead of covering the song in question, she took parts of it and added them to her own arrangements. Because there is evidence that she heard “Sally Go ‘Round the Roses” and “Ain’t That Peculiar” herself, the control that she had over her musical arrangements is obvious, and, indeed, informs us of her level of musicianship.

Songwriting

During the 1960s, Dusty Springfield wrote four songs. The first two, “Something Special” and “Once Upon a Time” were written solely by herself in 1963, and the second two songs, “Go Ahead On” and “I’m Gonna Leave You,” were collaborations with her backing singers in 1966. A major advantage of recording self-composed songs is that the financial outcome is greater because the recording artist will collect royalties. Dusty

even stated this in an interview in saying, “The only reason I write is for the money.”⁵⁶ It appears as though the other British female pop singers had the same idea. Sandie Shaw’s second album *Me* (1965) included her self-penned “Till the Night Begins to Die.” Petula Clark recorded many of her own co-written songs such as “You’re the One” (most famously recorded by and brought to the top of the pop charts in the United States by the American band The Vogues).⁵⁷

But songwriting did not capture Dusty’s attention enough for her to have a substantial number of compositions. Dusty’s work ethic is described by biographer Sharon Davis in saying:

Lack of concentration was the reason she gave for not pursuing songwriting; she would start a song from a melody that bugged her or from a phrase she liked, by plucking away on her guitar which, she said, was a rather haphazard way of working but was the only method she knew. “It just doesn’t flow that easily though. I just wish I was one of those people who got inspirations in the back of a car, or travelling on a train. But I’m not.”⁵⁸

Even though songwriting was not a prominent aspect of Dusty’s career, an analysis of the four songs that she wrote and recorded deepens the understanding of how other musicians had influence on her career, as well as highlighting the control she had over the music she produced.

“Once Upon a Time”

One of Dusty’s compositions, “Once Upon a Time,” gives us insight into how her ear and musical instincts produced complex harmonies and melodies. To highlight the

⁵⁶ Howes, *The Complete Dusty Springfield*, 104.

⁵⁷ The influence Petula Clark had on The Vogues’ early sound is evident in “Five O’Clock World,” their follow-up single to “You’re the One.” “Five O’Clock World” is consistent with the musical language of Petula Clark’s “I Know a Place,” which was released several months prior to The Vogues’ “Five O’Clock World.” Though she did not write “I Know a Place,” the similarities suggest that The Vogues were well aware of Petula Clark’s hit material.

⁵⁸ Davis, *A Girl Called Dusty*, 37.

song’s complexities, I will first compare it to its A-side “I Only Want to Be With You,” both of which were recorded in October of 1963. Written by Ivor Raymonde and Mike Hawker, “I Only Want to Be With You” is an upbeat pop song with verses consisting of the chords I, vi, V, and IV, typical for a 1960s pop song. The hook of “I Only Want to Be With You” cadences on the chords D7 to G, a strong chord progression that pop music listeners would expect. In addition, the melody of the hook provides a satisfying resolution with its descending line that lands on the tonic, and the upbeat musical language is consistent with the song’s lyrics.

The musical language of “Once Upon a Time,” however, contrasts that of its A-side counterpart. Though it is in a major key (D major), the song lacks the dominant aesthetic that “I Only Want to Be With You” exhibits. This is due, in part, to the absence of a strong resolution. The chord progression prior to the hook is a sequence of ascending fifths: G major-D major- A major.⁵⁹ This strong sequence is dismantled by the hook which ends on an unstable F#m chord. Further weakening the phrase, the hook’s melody ends with an F#, the third scale degree (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: “Once Upon a Time” hook

D
D E A
D
F#m

The world was oh so fine
once up - o - on a time

The unusual characteristics of “Once Upon a Time” could indicate an influence of Burt Bacharach’s songwriting. Though “Once Upon a Time” does not resemble a

⁵⁹ Because its rhythmic value is much shorter than its surrounding chords, the E major chord in measure 9 can be considered part of a passing tone. I will note, however, that E is the dominant chord of A, the chord that follows E in this sequence.

Bacharach song, his statements on songwriting would explain the appeal of atypical melodies and chord progressions:

Unlike [Aldon Music songwriters] I never got into writing the kind of songs you would call teen pop. I don't know if it was my classical training or because I had fallen in love with jazz as a kid but the kind of music Bill Haley and His Comets were making also never did much for me. A lot of those songs consisted of just three chords, C to F to G. If they had thrown in a C major seventh that would have been a lot more interesting, but the plain C major chord just seemed so vanilla to me.⁶⁰

When assessing Dusty's discography, her admiration for Aldon songwriting teams Carole King and Gerry Goffin, Cynthia Weil and Barry Mann, Ellie Greenwich and Jeff Barry is obvious, but "Once Upon a Time" lacks the predictability that many of their songs offer. If she decided to take the route of predictability, the hook might end with something that looks like this (Figure 3.3):

Figure 3.3: "Once Upon a Time" hypothetical resolution

The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The melody is written in 7/8 time. Above the staff, the chords are indicated as D, D E A, D, and [A7 D]. The lyrics are: "The world was oh so fine once up-o-on a time". The melody consists of quarter notes and eighth notes, with a final note on a whole rest.

The song ends with a fade-out of Dusty repeating the lyrics "once upon a time." Similar to "I Only Want to Be With You," the musical language in "Once Upon a Time" is very fitting with the song's text. "Once Upon a Time" is a song of disappointment, loss, and reflection on an unstable experience. The only surviving video footage of Dusty performing "Once Upon a Time" mirrors the message of the musical language perfectly. On January 13, 1964 she mimed to both "Once Upon a Time" and its A-side, "I Only

⁶⁰ Burt Bacharach, *Anyone Who Had a Heart: My Life and Music* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013), 455-46.

Want to Be With You,” on the Dutch television program *Ontmoetingen met Russ*, and during the tag at the end of “Once Upon a Time” she slowly walks out of the spotlight and into the shadows of the dark stage.⁶¹

Knowing that she composed while playing guitar is important because, on guitar, certain chords are more accessible than others. Instead of using these chords in traditional ways, however, she used her musical intuition to employ them in a more colorful way. Because the chord progression is so complex, “Once Upon a Time” informs us that she was able to use the harmonic progression both unpredictably and effectively.

“Something Special”

Turning to her other 1963 composition, “Something Special” was the first song that Dusty wrote, but it appeared as the B-side to her second single “All Cried Out.” Paul Howes explains her influence in his annotation for “Something Special” in saying, “It’s an engaging girl group-influenced song, simple maybe, but it contains elements of what Dusty was striving to achieve at that time.”⁶² Through the use of deep and prominent drums, shimmering glockenspiel, and backing vocals modeled after the girl group sound emphasized by an echo that, in some ways, overpowers Dusty’s vocals, it is clear that her primary influences in 1963 were the girl groups produced by Phil Spector. Unlike “Once Upon a Time” the majority of the song’s chord progression and melody are more of what Burt Bacharach would describe as “vanilla,” but there are moments of unpredictability.

Similarly to “Once Upon a Time,” the chords are easily accessible but used in a complex and attention-grabbing way. In the key of G major, the song largely consists of

⁶¹ David Peck, *Once Upon a Time* DVD (San Diego, CA: 2009).

⁶² Howes, *The Complete Dusty Springfield*, 223.

the chords I-vi-I-vi-IV; a simple pop song progression (very similar to the progression in “I Only Want to Be With You”) accompanied by a melody that is representative of the period in which it was written. The A-section, however, ends with a Bb major chord that interrupts what we expect to hear, which would be either a C major chord or a D major chord (Figure 3.4, measure 12). The bridge of the song unexpectedly ends with modal mixture, moving from the key of G major to the key of G minor. The melody notes F, D, and C, and the Bb major chord are all borrowed from G minor. This progression ends with a D major chord that eases us back into the A-section, thus the modal mixture is very effective (Figure 3.4, measures 27-28). After measure 28, the song returns to the A-section and ends. “Something Special” reinforces what we learned from “Once Upon a Time”: that Dusty had a talent for using harmonic progression in a complex way that creates unpredictability for the listener.

Figure 3.4: "Something Special" chord progression

The first time we met it was so plain to see. I _____ did-n't care for you, you

5 did-n't seem to care for _____ me. The next time we met I thought

9 "he's kind-a nice," The look that you gave me simp-ly start-ed to melt the ice.

13 And then when you smiled that smile, _____ And then when we kissed you said

17 "wait a - while," I got a feel-in' _____ that you are some-thin' spe-cial.

21 Now we're to - geth-er and the world just pass-es us by, _____

25 Yeah ev' ry lit-tle thing you do _____ makes me sigh with joy, That boy is mine.

“I’m Gonna Leave You”

The ways in which guitar playing shaped Dusty’s songwriting methods is even clearer in “I’m Gonna Leave You.” In 1966 Dusty and her two backing singers Madeline Bell and Lesley Duncan wrote “I’m Gonna Leave You” as a B-side to the single “Goin’ Back.” Dusty composed the chord progression and the melody while her backing singers wrote the lyrics.⁶³ “I’m Gonna Leave You” demonstrates her composition method which is highlighted in the song’s demo recording on which Dusty provides guitar accompaniment. The demo begins with Dusty fingerpicking a chord progression that starts with a C major chord. Using her first finger as an anchor on the B string’s first fret, she lifts and/or moves either one or two fingers for each chord change, creating a melody that is supported by rich major and minor 7 harmonies (Figure 3.5).⁶⁴

Figure 3.5: “I’m Gonna Leave You” introduction guitar chord changes and notated transcription

As displayed by the guitar tablature in Figure 3.6, the chord progression for the intro suggests Dusty’s method of composition. It is clear that she started with a C major chord and, while maintaining common tones, moved from one chord to the next by

⁶³ Howes, *The Complete Dusty Springfield*, 149.

⁶⁴ Cmaj7 and D7sus4 are both very brief and are produced by the melody.

suspending pitches and changing one or two notes at a time. Playing around with minimal movement, she produced rich harmonies and a lyrical melody. While that may sound simple, the harmonies she produced and the dissonance that is created are more colorful than what is heard in her first two compositions. In “I’m Gonna Leave You” we hear Dusty’s ability to recognize dissonant harmonies and use them in an effective and aurally satisfying way. Consistent with what the song’s title suggests, the lyrics of “I’m Gonna Leave You” express a painful decision to end a relationship, and the dissonance of the Dm7b5 and G#Maj7b5 chords accompany the lyrics’ sentiment. Though she was not a virtuosic guitar player, Dusty’s sophisticated musical intuition is the foundation on which her compositions are developed.

“Go Ahead On”

While Dusty’s first three compositions demonstrate her ear in the context of her guitar methods, “Go Ahead On” highlights the influence that the Motown sound had on her songwriting style. In the summer of 1966 Dusty Springfield and her backing singer Madeline Bell co-wrote “Go Ahead On” as a B-side to “All I See Is You.” “Go Ahead On” is notable because unlike “Once Upon a Time,” “Something Special,” and “I’m Gonna Leave You,” “Go Ahead On” draws heavily from the Motown sound that Dusty admired dearly. The other three compositions lack the call-and-response between the lead and backing vocals, the Funk Brothers-inspired riffs, and the rhythmic motifs on which the Motown sound relies.

It is noted by both Randall and Howes that, early in 1965, the sound of Dusty’s recordings changed drastically after altering the lineup of her backing singers. By adding African American gospel singers Madeline Bell and Doris Troy, as well as British singer

Lesley Duncan to her group of backing singers, Dusty's recordings started to sound more soulful, as demonstrated in their inaugural recording collaboration, "In the Middle of Nowhere."⁶⁵ Though this was not Dusty's first recording exhibiting call-and-response between lead and backing singers, the addition of African American gospel singers made a monumental difference. Prior to "In the Middle of Nowhere," Dusty's recordings featured the British session singers, the Breakaways, who did not blend well with Dusty's sound and did not produce the sound for which she was striving. In contrast, Madeline Bell, Doris Troy, and Lesley Duncan provided the rich and soulful textures needed to accomplish the sound that the Breakaways could not deliver.

After working together for more than a year, Dusty and Madeline Bell co-wrote their Motown flavored B-side, "Go Ahead On," which they recorded on August 26, 1966. By this time, Dusty had performed with the Motown Revue twice, provided backing vocals for Madeline Bell on three recordings,⁶⁶ and was working with new backing singers to achieve the sound for which she was striving, all of which contribute to the gospel influence in "Go Ahead On."

"Go Ahead On" in the context of the Motown sound

In his article "Motown Crossover Hits 1963-1966 and the Creative Process," music theorist Jon Fitzgerald highlights the characteristics that make the Motown sound, many of which are present in "Go Ahead On." The ways in which Dusty and Madeline

⁶⁵ "In the Middle of Nowhere" was recorded on May 27, 1965. This was the first time Dusty worked with this group of singers and there is an obvious difference in the sound. Bell, Duncan, and Troy provide a gospel sound that is absent in her earlier recordings.

⁶⁶ Throughout her career, Dusty, under the alias of Gladys Thong, provided backing vocals for some of her friends including her own backing singers Madeline Bell and Lesley Duncan. Paul Howes quotes a 1966 article by Penny Valentine in which Dusty explains how it all began when she was making demos for African American soul singer Doris Troy. In 1965 she recorded backing vocals on three tracks for Madeline Bell: "What the World Needs Now is Love," "I Can't Wait to See My Baby's Face," and "You Lost the Sweetest Boy."

Bell present the hook, the use of syncopated rhythms attached to chord changes (as opposed to chord changes occurring on the beat), the call-and-response between lead and backing vocals, and the use of pentatonic melodies are all common characteristics found in many early Motown songs.⁶⁷ Though neither Dusty nor Madeline Bell worked on a Motown recording session, and the method they used to notate and orchestrate the song is completely different from Motown songwriters, they effectively managed to capture the essence of the Motown sound.

The songwriting process as described by Randall reveals the technical elements of Motown songwriting team Holland-Dozer-Holland (H-D-H)'s direct influence as being mostly auditory as opposed to experiential, a comprehensible notion when considering that Dusty's experience was with the Motown performers and not the Motown songwriters. According to Randall:

Dusty and Madeline's songwriting collaborations solidified their influence on each other and demonstrated gospel and Britpop's evolving entwinement. Their method of creating "Go Ahead On" was improvisatory: Dusty worked out chords on the guitar while both she and Madeline tried out melodic ideas for lead and backing vocals by singing them to each other. One's lyric fragment or musical hook would generate additional fragments and music phrases from the other until, gradually, via constant mutual refinement and critique of their ideas, the principal components—hook (which was also the title), text repetitions, and form (AABA→middle eight→A→coda/fade)—were in place. Through this additive, closely interactive process, the collaborators produced a finished draft that they then sang for John Franz in Franz's London office overlooking Hyde Park. As neither Dusty nor Madeline could write down their song's music, Franz employed arrangers to notate it for them....Based on Dusty and Madeline's ideas for instrumentation, the arrangers then orchestrated the song.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ John Fitzgerald, "Motown Crossover Hits 1963-1966 and the Creative Process," *Popular Music* 14, no. 1 (Jan., 1995): 5.

⁶⁸ Randall, *Dusty!*, 48.

Vicki Wickham has stated that Dusty worked closely with the arrangers in order to get the exact sound she wanted.⁶⁹ The control she had in the arranging process differs from the methods of the Motown songwriters and session musicians. The songwriting team Holland, Dozier, and Holland, for example, would present the Funk Brothers with a lead sheet and the Funk Brothers would assume the task of arranging it.⁷⁰ This means that the grooves, riffs, and syncopated chordal motifs are, essentially, signatures of the Funk Brothers and not of the songwriters, thus Dusty was not influenced solely by the songwriters, but by the Motown sound as a whole. Dusty, who was well acquainted with the Motown sound by this time, knew exactly how she wanted the record to sound.⁷¹

One major component that served as a foundation for the Motown sound is the songwriters' backgrounds in the gospel tradition.⁷² Motown's use of plagal cadences and call-and-response is directly related to gospel music. Similarly, Madeline Bell's gospel background undoubtedly played a monumental role in helping recreate the Motown sound in "Go Ahead On." Though Dusty did not have a background in gospel music, her experience with the Motown artists is just as important to contributing to the song's Motown flair. When comparing "Go Ahead On" with her earlier solo compositions, it is clear how her experience of actually performing the Motown sound with Motown artists,

⁶⁹ Wickham was Dusty's manager during the late 1980s and early 1990s. She was one of the producers for *Ready Steady Go!* and she knew Dusty in the 1960s.

⁷⁰ Funk Brother Earl Van Dyke said, "[H-D-H] would come in with about five chords and a feel" George, *Where Did Our Love Go?*, 115.

⁷¹ It is interesting to speculate whether or not Dusty knew the process of Motown studio recording sessions. Because the Motown singers spent most of their time at the Motown studio, they undoubtedly witnessed the entire process. Because Dusty was so interested in capturing the American sound in the studio I would assume she took the opportunity to get the details from some of the Motown artists with whom she performed several times. So, did Dusty know that H-D-H did not write the iconic riffs of the Motown songs? Even with that knowledge, Dusty would have written the Funk Brother-isms herself in order to insure she would achieve the sound she was looking for.

⁷² Fitzgerald, "Motown Crossover," 3.

and her collaboration with gospel singer Madeline Bell influenced the gospel sound that was absent from the previous songs.⁷³

Most of the elements that make up “Go Ahead On” are iconic characteristics borrowed from the Motown sound. According to Fitzgerald:

The Motown songs normally incorporate a heavy emphasis on beats two and four (backbeat). A large number of instruments (e.g., snare, tambourine, handclaps or finger snaps, brass, and guitars) combine to provide the backbeat emphasis, with guitar parts often displaying a distinctive heavy staccato downpick and a metallic tone.⁷⁴

All of these elements are prominent in “Go Ahead On.” Fitzgerald describes Motown’s characteristics even further by statistically conveying the frequency with which each element is used. When looking at Fitzgerald’s analysis it is easy to pick apart the song in the context of the Motown sound.⁷⁵ The nature of the lyrics to “Go Ahead On” is similar to H-D-H songs, for 50% of their songs are about negative relationships, and 38% are about relationships ending. 79% of H-D-H songs directly address someone, as does “Go Ahead On.” The tempo of “Go Ahead On” is 120 beats per minute, and 50% of H-D-H songs are between 120 and 139 beats per minute. The most prominent Motown characteristic in “Go Ahead On” is the rhythmic-chordal riff which is found in 47% of H-D-H songs. Its prominence is caused by both its placement and its function. The riff functions as the song’s hook, which occurs during the introduction to the song. After the introduction the riff is accompanied by the lyrics “Go Ahead On,” thus in typical H-D-H

⁷³ It should be noted that “Go Ahead On” is Dusty and Madeline’s second composition for, along with Lesley Duncan, they wrote “I’m Gonna Leave You” as a B-Side to “Goin’ Back.” An analysis of that song, however, is out of the scope of this study.

⁷⁴ Jon Fitzgerald, “Black Pop Songwriting 1963-1966: An Analysis of U.S. Top Forty Hits by Cooke, Mayfield, Stevenson, Robinson, and Holland-Dozier-Holland,” *Black Music Research Journal* 27, no. 2 (Fall, 2007): 113.

⁷⁵ The noted statistics are all taken from Fitzgerald’s “Black Pop Songwriting 1963-1966” between pages 108 and 127.

fashion, the song title is the hook. All of these elements demonstrate how “Go Ahead On” fits into the mold that was cast by H-D-H.

“Go Ahead On” and “You’ve Really Got a Hold On Me”

Though “Go Ahead On” is characterized largely by H-D-H, the introduction is reminiscent of Smokey Robinson’s 1962 composition, “You’ve Really Got a Hold On Me.” The introduction to “Go Ahead On” features a pentatonic melody played on a solo instrument. The combination of these two elements are also present in the introduction to Smokey Robinson’s “You’ve Really Got a Hold On Me.” If the two songs were in the same key and had the same time signature, the intros would be almost identical.

Figure 3.6: “Go Ahead On” introduction played on solo electric bass



Figure 3.7:⁷⁶ “You’ve Really Got a Hold On Me” introduction played on solo piano, harmony omitted



Though this is a seemingly small similarity it is actually critical to the entire song, for the vocal line of the A-section is a slight variation on the pentatonic figure borrowed from the intro. With the exception of the omitted F, which can be considered an ornament or passing tone, the melody is the same and is used sequentially as the structure of the A-

⁷⁶ For the purpose of properly demonstrating the relationship between the two melodies, I chose to transpose “You’ve Really Got a Hold On Me” from its original key of C major to the same key as “Go Ahead On,” Eb major.

section. The first two phrases begin on the intro’s starting note, Bb, but the second two phrases begin a perfect-fourth higher, as demonstrated in Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.8: The A-section’s vocal line in “Go Ahead On”

Although the pentatonic figure analyzed above is crucial to “Go Ahead On,” the song’s resemblance to typical Smokey Robinson compositions ends here. “Go Ahead On” borrows mostly from H-D-H songs, and most of the song’s Motown flavors come from its groove, riffs, lyrics, and hook rather than its pentatonic figures.

“Go Ahead On” and “Come See About Me”

The similarities between “Go Ahead On” and Motown are best exemplified in the H-D-H composition, “Come See About Me,” which was a hit for the Supremes in 1964.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ It is important to note that, written in 1966, “Go Ahead On” sounds different from the Motown hits of the same year. In 1966 the Temptations charted with “Get Ready” and “Ain’t Too Proud to Beg,” and the Supremes with “My World is Empty Without You” and “You Keep Me Hanging On.” Motown’s records had a more mature sound during this time, which could be a reflection on what was going on in society and

The hook of the song, for example, ends with a syncopated chord change that is typical for H-D-H songs. According to Fitzgerald, the chord change in “Come See About Me” is a plagal cadence when it is actually I-ii-I. Though it is not a plagal cadence, the ii chord shares two notes with the IV chord, thus its function produces the same effect, an effect found in numerous H-D-H songs.⁷⁸ Among them is “You Lost the Sweetest Boy,” which Dusty sang on *The Sound of Motown* television special, a regular episode of *Ready Steady Go!* and once on her television show *Dusty*, all of which occurred before she wrote “Go Ahead On,” adding to the evidence of the correlation between Dusty’s Motown experiences and the influence they had on “Go Ahead On.”⁷⁹

Figure 3.9: Full introduction to “Go Ahead On”

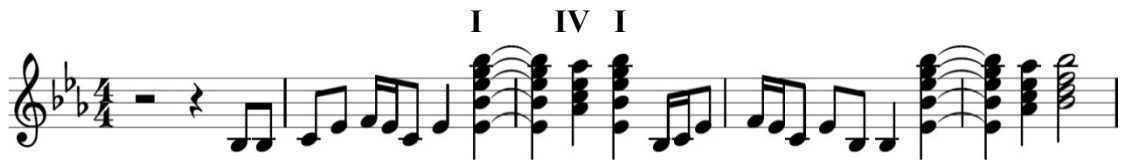


Figure 3.10:⁸⁰ Introduction to “Come See About Me”



Also adopted from the Motown sound, “Go Ahead On” has short repeated refrains that are found in “Come See About Me” and at least four of the Motown songs that Dusty

at Motown Records. For details on the changes Motown faced during the late 1960s see Nelson George’s *Where Did Our Love Go?*

⁷⁸ Fitzgerald, “Motown Crossover,” 7.

⁷⁹ The recording date of the *Dusty* episode is June 28, 1966, about two months before “Go Ahead On” was recorded, thus it is possible that she was preparing for the performance of “You Lost the Sweetest Boy” during the writing process of “Go Ahead On.”

⁸⁰ Once again, I changed the song from the original key to Eb.

recorded or performed throughout her career, exemplifying her preference for that particular Motown characteristic.

As analyzed in detail by Randall, the call-and-response is a very prominent element of “Go Ahead On.” Like “Come See About Me,” the lead vocals and backing vocals take over each other’s parts midway through a phrase, but the most important similarity is the backing vocals taking over during the IV-I cadence, for they emphasize the cadence that highlights the gospel characteristics of both songs. Below is a comparison of the relationships between the lead and backing vocals for “Go Ahead On” and “Come See About Me.” The lyrics in bold type font are sung by the backing singers.⁸¹

“Go Ahead On”

If you’re gonna break my heart, **go ‘head on**
Guess you think you’re kinda smart, **go ‘head on**
Heard you got another girl and you’re havin’ fun
Got her head in a whirl see what you’ve done
Go ‘head on, **go ‘head on**

“Come See About Me”

I’ve been crying, **ooo-ooo**
‘Cause I’m lonely **for you**
Smiles have all turned **to tears**
But tears won’t wash away **the fears**

With its plagal cadence riff and the use of call-and-response, “Come See About Me” is a prime example of the gospel influence on the Motown songwriters and the perfect model for songwriters looking to capture gospel flare.

Conclusion

The influence on Dusty’s musical arrangements, songwriting, and record production are important when examining her persona. Because she had ample control

⁸¹ This method of differentiating the backing singers from the lead vocals by using bold type font is borrowed from Randall’s discussion of “Go Ahead On” on page 31 of *Dusty! Queen of the Postmods*.

over these aspects of her career, these elements are central to her persona. Her guitar abilities and how they shape her compositions inform intrinsic aspects of her musicianship. The arrangements from which she picks and chooses—along with how she uses them—are just as important as a consideration of the cover songs she chose to record. The transition from Phil Spector-inspired production and sound to the Motown sound heard in “Go Ahead On” digs deeper into her affinity with black American musicians. Combining all of these aspects provides a more holistic view of her persona and of how involved pop singers can be in shaping their recordings, thus challenging the typical idea of pop singers being puppets rather than musicians.

Chapter 4: “Quiet Please, There’s a Lady On Stage:” The Glamor, Camp, and Dominance of the Diva Persona and Image

In the context of the mid-1960s pop trends, Dusty Springfield is often analyzed as “sounding black” or uniquely “looking like a drag queen,” but there are many underexamined factors that problematize these analyses. While her ability to imitate black soul singers is at the forefront of her recording career, her ability to imitate many other styles dominates her performance career as well. Her work with the Springfields may have been a training ground for the development of these talents. With the Springfields she learned how to perform songs in their appropriate style. In their version of “Say I Won’t Be There,” the trio sings with a generic American southern drawl. The Springfields also sang in foreign languages with their corresponding accent, as in the Latin-American song “Eso Es El Amor” sung in Spanish on their 1962 EP *Kinda Folksy No. 3*, thus demonstrating Dusty’s background with an ability to adjust her performance in accordance with a genre or style.

Dusty’s image and diverse choice in songs were influenced by singers such as Jo Stafford (1917-2008)—a white American female adult singer who, at the age of 44, was not influenced by the girl group personae that dominated popular music of the early 1960s. Essentially, then, Stafford’s image stands in stark contrast to the commonly held scholarly perception of Dusty Springfield as emblematic of the girl group sound, yet Dusty explicitly stated that Stafford was one of her favorite singers. Because Dusty Springfield discourse has strengthened the association between Dusty Springfield and 1960s girl pop singers, it is important to highlight the fact that Jo Stafford was 30 years older than Dusty. In addition to age, genre is another important factor because a

comparison to genres outside the realm of pop inform her performance style, a performance style that is worthy of detailed analysis.

This chapter examines Dusty's performance practice, musical identity, and physical identity. It is clear that Dusty does not look like her British pop contemporaries—Cilla Black, Petula Clark, Lulu, and Sandie Shaw—most of whom dressed in the popular Mod style. She is widely known as being a Mod icon, but she typically wore evening gowns that were not consistent with the Mod aesthetic. Dusty's elegant appearance is more akin to performers in the jazz/pop genre. Comparing her with Shirley Bassey (b. 1937) exposes Dusty's affiliation with mid-century female jazz/pop singers. An analysis of her non-pop interests—particularly Jo Stafford—sheds light on some of the choices in her physical image. I analyze her performance style within the framework of Philip Auslander's theories on genre/audience/performer dynamic. Using scholarship about Dusty Springfield, I will expand on well-established theories and examine her from a performance studies perspective.

Dusty Springfield's Performance Practice

When comparing Dusty Springfield's performance style to those of other 1960s musicians, an important component of her persona is exposed. Though she had an iconic performance style to which she was dedicated, she did not have routine acts. Shirley Bassey, for example, is equally as dedicated to her performance style, but during her five-decade career her act has not changed much. Bassey's 1967 song "Big Spender" is a prime example. Her orchestral arrangement accentuates the burlesque nature of the song with its strategically-placed rhythmic pulses, providing Bassey with an accompaniment

rich in musical cues, around which she developed her routine.⁸² Though she tweaked and refined it over time—mostly in the first three years of performing it live—she has stayed true to her “Big Spender” routine since its beginning.⁸³

According to Erving Goffman:

The pre-established pattern of action which is unfolded during a performance and which may be presented or played through on other occasions may be called a “part” or a “routine.” These situational terms can easily be related to conventional structural ones. When an individual or performer plays the same part to the same audience on different occasions, a social relationship is likely to arise. Defining social role as the enactment of rights and duties attached to a given status, we can say that a social role will involve one or more parts and that each of these different parts may be presented by the performer on a series of occasions to the same kinds of audiences or to an audience of the same persons.⁸⁴

Goffman’s definition of performance is helpful when analyzing routine and persona, but it is exceptionally useful when searching for the performer’s origin of the routine. In order to analyze the development of Dusty Springfield’s persona, I find it important to compare her to other artists and their careers. Because Shirley Bassey has such a bold persona and consistent routines, I begin this section with a continuation of my Shirley Bassey analysis as a contrast to Dusty Springfield’s performance style.

Shirley Bassey’s routines are largely executed for dramatic effect and, while they are consistent with the less-trendy British light entertainment, they are a character trait of many mid-century female singers. One of these routines involves a long robe which she uses to conceal and then dramatically expose an ultra-glamorous gown. This occurs during several performances of her 1964 hit “Goldfinger” usually coinciding with the last

⁸² “Big Spender” is a song from the 1966 Broadway musical *Sweet Charity*.

⁸³ Some of the routine is physically challenging. While singing “I can show you a good time, let me show you a good time” she slowly lowers herself into a crouching position that can only be accomplished through flexibility of her knees and hips and by engaging well-developed muscles (primarily abdominal and quadriceps). This is impressive, especially at age 72 (available on YouTube as of April 2013).

⁸⁴ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959), 15-16.

and most dramatic phrase of the song: “He loves gold.” To accentuate her belting the word “gold” she enthusiastically opens the robe that appropriately has a shiny gold lining. The finales of her concerts are also routine; after she leaves the stage at the end of the concert she returns for an encore. Upon finishing her final song, she approaches the edge of the stage where she receives flowers from multiple audience members, demonstrating the dedication and expectation of her audience. Shirley Bassey and her audience are equally prepared for the rituals of her concerts. Shirley Bassey’s dramatic routines create an audience-performer dynamic that is the foundation of her performance style, a style that many British pop female performers were encouraged to emulate. While many of Dusty’s characteristics are consistent with this style of performance, she did not wholeheartedly embrace this style but rather borrowed from it to help create her new persona.

Dusty Springfield’s decision to break away from the Springfields was an escape from her former self and an invention of her new self; this left her with the responsibility to develop her persona. As I have demonstrated throughout this study, Dusty Springfield constructed her persona through experience, influence, and the opportunity to advocate for and associate with African American soul musicians (primarily Motown artists). Though Dusty did not have specific routines on which her audience could rely, I would argue that her persona is her routine. Revisiting Goffman’s definition of performance, his relation of the words “part” and “routine” strengthen the connection between persona and routine. The absence of deliberate routines does not mean she was not a routine performer. According to Goffman, “...the incapacity of the ordinary individual to formulate in advance the movements of his eyes and body does not mean that he will not

express himself through these devices in a way that is dramatized and pre-formed in his repertoire of actions. In short, we act better than we know how.”⁸⁵ I would argue that Goffman is describing unconsciously-inserted personal traits as part of the construction of performance practice. Dusty’s tendencies and mannerisms—some of which were acquired through experience and observations—influence the gestures that consistently convey her persona to the audience

Dusty as Camp

Dusty Springfield’s performance practice is widely recognized and analyzed in the context of queer studies and camp sensibilities. While these established arguments are essential to Dusty scholarship, there are some important aspects of performance theory that need to be taken into account. According to Auslander, analysis of popular music performance should be conducted within several frames: “The social cultural-norms and conventions against which performed musical behavior must be assessed” and “the more immediate framing context of musical genre conventions that govern the expectations of audience and performer and the ways they communicate with one another.”⁸⁶ Once these frames are established, we can then begin to analyze performance personae. Though both Randall and cultural theorist Patricia Juliana Smith consider Dusty within these frames, their analyses are largely presented through the lens of queer theory.⁸⁷ According to Smith:

...Dusty Springfield paradoxically expressed and disguised her own unspeakable queerness through an elaborate camp masquerade that metaphorically and

⁸⁵ Ibid, 73-74.

⁸⁶ Philip Auslander, “Performance Analysis and Popular Music: A Manifesto,” *Contemporary Theatre Review* 14, no. 1 (2004): 10.

⁸⁷ I will note that Randall’s reading of Dusty’s persona is not limited to gender and physical presentation, but she equally embraces the ideas of queer theory.

artistically transformed a nice white girl into a black woman and a femme gay man, often simultaneously.⁸⁸

Thus, Smith is focusing on Dusty Springfield's sexual, racial, and gender identities. But it is also important to consider genre, audience, and various external expectations of any given musician. In a performance studies perspective, a reading of Dusty Springfield's persona would have a different quality than in a queer studies perspective, which I will analyze in the following sections. In his compelling manifesto, Auslander states, "There are several sets of constraints on the construction of musical performance personae, the most immediate of which are genre constraints," and he explains that rock musicians, jazz musicians, and classical musicians are all expected to have a certain physique and appearance.⁸⁹ He continues by stating:

The ease with which these facts can be stated belies their importance within musical cultures: musical genres and subcultures define the most basic and important sets of conventions and expectations within which musicians and their audiences function...[genres] are crucially important to performers in constructing their performance personae and to audiences interpreting and responding to them.⁹⁰

Auslander's theories on the expectations imposed on a persona carry as much weight as queer theory. Performance in every genre is stylized and codified, and it is tailored to fit the expectations of the audience and the performer's demographic. While the notion that "Dusty produced herself as camp" is worth considering, that action is not unique, for many of her contemporaries (Judy Garland, Barbra Streisand, Shirley Bassey) were known for their melodramatic performance styles that attracted gay male audiences.

Thus, the genre is inherently camp because of its rules, so anyone who adopts its look and

⁸⁸ Patricia Juliana Smith, "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me: The Camp Masquerades of Dusty Springfield" in *The Queer Sixties* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 106.

⁸⁹ Auslander, "Performance Analysis and Popular Music," 9.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 10.

style will automatically be recognized as camp.⁹¹ Camp is adopted by those who choose to fit into the glamorous jazz/pop singer mold. Randall suggests that a reading of Dusty's performance as complicit would be "simple," and I read Dusty's layers of performance as including both complicity and conformity to her larger genre. Dusty Springfield did not construct her very own unique genre; she fit into the mainstream image that she shared with her contemporaries in a tradition that contributes to the aesthetic of the genre. Though Dusty crossed over into different genres and is analyzed within the frames of pop music, her persona is much more consistent with that of mid-century female jazz singers, many of whom are recognized as camp. To limit her persona to a hyperfeminine masquerade imposes a feminist camp view that narrows the analytical parameters in which a broader reading could effectively take place.⁹² My perspective creates an alternative reading of Dusty Springfield's persona and makes room for certain aspects that deserve more consideration.

Camp and Audience

Recognizing the physique and behavior of the typical mid-century female singer within the ideals of camp complicates claims of Dusty's allegedly reactionary heterosexual masquerade. Along with genre, audience demographic must be considered

⁹¹ It is important to note that singers such as Garland, Streisand, and Bassey were all part of a genre more akin to "light entertainment" rather than "pop" music. Though "light entertainment" is often looked down upon as sanitized family entertainment, that is not the aspect with which I am aligning Dusty's performance. The connection is the stage presence and image, both of which, during her career in the '60s, were similar to those of the aforementioned women. This glamor was present during her pop performances and performances of songs borrowed from other genres. While I would not argue for or against the quality of "light entertainment," the fact is that this aesthetic and performance style attracts a specific kind of audience and is consistent with Dusty's glamorous image. I recognize that Shirley Bassey and Dusty Springfield are from different genres, but it is the song choice, appearance, and diva attitude that connect the two performers.

⁹² "Hyperfeminine" is used by both Randall and Smith when referring to behavior or image that excessively accentuates feminine traits.

when analyzing a performance persona. Dusty's former backing singer Simon Bell recognizes her gay fanbase in saying:

She was a great dramatic singer. You know- so she fitted into the mold drawn by Judy Garland. And later when she wasn't at her peak vocally there was always that element: was she gonna make it or not. Which was again drawing on the same source as Judy. So it was easy to see why she was gonna be a gay icon. And she made wonderful heart-wrenching songs that a certain kind of gay man and woman loved to sit and listen to.⁹³

From Simon Bell's perspective, the type of audience that Dusty attracted is similar to other jazz/pop singers as opposed to teenage audiences. Thus the excessively feminine stage diva performs in front of an audience with whom she shares mutual camp and flamboyancy, and, in turn, the audience influences the performance just as much as the performer does. If the construction of a persona relies as much on audience reception as it does on personal agency, then the performance persona of a traditional jazz/pop diva is partially a reflection and embracement of flamboyant camp sensibilities.

The audience/performer dichotomy is constructed through a recognition and embodiment of behavioral expectations. In this respect, Dusty Springfield's performance persona does exhibit a certain dimension of what we understand as camp and drag, but that does not necessarily mean that it was a reaction to Mary O'Brien's identity. Dusty Springfield's persona is just as much of a "masquerade" as Judy Garland, Barbra Streisand, Ethel Merman, Carol Channing, Shirley Bassey, and many other women with whom Dusty shares the image of professional elegance. The larger-than-life and excessive on-stage behavior is essential to owning the audience and establishing dominance over the entire room (or television audience), two traits that make a captivating performance. When explaining Dusty's on-stage persona, former backing

⁹³ Serena Cross, *Definitely Dusty* (BBC2, December 26, 1999).

singer Madeline Bell says, “She had to go on stage and be this big strong stroppy woman who had so much power and captivate thousands of people.”⁹⁴

Madeline Bell’s statement applies both to Dusty and many of her contemporaries; their glamorous physique is often accompanied by a necessary dominant attitude, as demonstrated in a 1968 performance by Sandie Shaw.⁹⁵ On an Austrian television performance, Sandie Shaw performs her hit song “Long Live Love” in front of a television studio audience. Wearing a sequin-covered gown of which a drag queen might approve, she approaches one male audience member who stands up and kisses her hand. She reacts with an overtly flirtatious, “Fabulous” then strongly tells him to sit down. Leaning in closely she asks him “are you romantic?” He seemingly does not understand her so she boldly restates, “ro.man.tic. Listen. You’ll understand” and sings a verse in Spanish while exhibiting aggressively flirtatious body language. She walks over to another man and coyly asks, “Are you nervous? Sprechen Sie Deutsch? Ah, ich haben a song for you.” Pointing to his lap she asks, “Can I have that?” then sits down, leans in closely, and sings a verse in German while, once again, exhibiting aggressively flirtatious body language. In the end, she stands up, puts her bare foot on his knee, and gestures for him to kiss his hand and touch her foot.⁹⁶ Her performance is much campier than live performances in which she does not directly interact with audience members. Demonstrating her ability to communicate and sing in several languages aids her in asserting a strong presence among the Austrian audience. Shaw’s performer/audience

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ “The Divine Sandie Shaw.” Youtube. Flash video file. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkWfnesoiFo> (accessed June 7, 2013).

⁹⁶ Performing barefoot is a trademark of Sandie Shaw’s performance persona and, in the 1960s, was rarely seen wearing shoes during professional engagements.

dynamic during this performance informs us that hyperfemininity is a useful tool for female performers to grab hold –sometimes literally – of the audience.⁹⁷

I would argue that this same audience/performer dichotomy is responsible for the increasing development of Dusty's camp performance described by Smith: "Dusty continued to push her drag queen image to even greater extremes, donning ever more extravagant gowns and appearing in complex combinations of wigs, chignons, falls, and other hair-pieces."⁹⁸ But according to Auslander, a persona can change in relation to various issues:

...a musical artist's performance persona is not necessarily static: it may evolve over time to adapt to changing fashions and cultural trends...When and how quickly a performer's persona may evolve, if at all, and in what directions, are subject to delicate negotiations with the audience. Miscalculation can result in anything from temporary setback to the end of a performing career...⁹⁹

With regard to Dusty's fanbase, Elton John has stated that the appealing aspect that forms a connection between Dusty and her gay fans is that they were "a bit tortured," and, in turn, the audience and performer could relate to one another.¹⁰⁰ It would be likely that, as Dusty's gay male fanbase grew, some of the camp elements of her persona increased. Thus, it is more feasible to assume that Dusty's camp performance grew out of the audience's expectations framed within the genre rather than an attempt to put a mask over her sexuality. In other words, while she did consciously choose to perform as camp, it was not because of her sexuality, but because she was consistent with her genre.

⁹⁷ She exhibits a similar attitude during the February 28, 1969 episode of *This is Tom Jones*. When Tom Jones introduces her to the audience, she walks over to him (wearing the same dress as in the Austrian performance) says, "Could you do something for me?" then picks up her shoes and asks, "Could you look after these for me please? Thanks very much." Before he can answer, she confidently and presumptuously hands them to him and walks away to proceed with her scheduled performance.

⁹⁸ Smith, "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me," 114.

⁹⁹ Auslander, "Performance Analysis and Popular Music," 9.

¹⁰⁰ *Definitely Dusty*.

In a 1979 interview, Dusty stated, “[Gay people] identify with me. They know I’m emotional, they know I cry a lot, they were there to cry with me....Why do gay people like me? I think it’s for the same reason they like Shirley Bassey. We are both sad, emotional women.”¹⁰¹ In Randall’s response to this statement, she chose to apply it to Judy Garland because, “the reaction of crowds to [Dusty’s] 1979 London concerts was closer to that elicited by Judy Garland’s performances.”¹⁰² Randall’s inclusion of Garland in the comparison demonstrates a recognition of Dusty’s similarities to the female diva, but I would like to expand on the implications of Dusty referring to Shirley Bassey. One of the most melodramatic songs in Bassey’s performance history is, undoubtedly, her 1972 song “The Greatest Performance of My Life.” It seemingly tells a story to which many divas can relate, and is the very ethos of the typical diva persona framed within performance studies. Consistently documented in concert footage that spans several decades, Bassey begins by belting out the lyrics, “Tonight I gave the greatest performance of my life/I never lost control, I played the part so well/that not a single soul could tell that I was lying.”¹⁰³ While basking in the glow of the spotlight, she performs the song with an almost ferocious pathos that ebbs and flows in accordance with the lyrics and the audience’s reaction.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Randall, *Dusty!*, 126.

¹⁰² Randall, *Dusty!*, 126.

¹⁰³ “Shirley Bassey- The Greatest Performance of My Life.” Youtube. Flash video file. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwHCLi33nYk> (accessed June 6, 2013).

¹⁰⁴ Her need for the audience to emotionally participate while she performs this song is demonstrated by her excessively long bombastic delivery of the song’s first word, and the audience (as she fully expects) reacts enthusiastically every time. In her 1973 performance at Royal Albert Hall she takes a flower from a fan and, just before she approaches the microphone, sticks the flower in her cleavage. By displaying an audience member’s gift in such an explicit way, Bassey is furthering the audience/performer connection. She is communicating that she recognizes the audience’s presence and gratitude, which breaks down the wall between performer and audience. Though, in this song, she is arguably portraying a “character” (in Auslander’s terms), thus reconstructing the wall without the audience knowing.

This melodramatic form of camp is an important component to the performance of a diva. The consistency with which this type of song is performed informs us that the audience is equally as consistent in their expectations. I would argue that, in the eyes of this type of audience, a diva's job is to pour her heart out and dramatically soak up the audience's reaction and admiration until she is so saturated that she has no other choice but to leave the stage. Thus Dusty's performance style, much like Bassey's, reflected the rules of the genre just as much, if not more than, any reflection of her own orientation or gender issues.

Dusty's Physical Presentation

The ways in which Dusty Springfield presented herself during the 1960s (through physique, album covers, song choice) exhibit the broad spectrum of influences and demonstrate her ability to incorporate them into her persona. Though the performer/audience dichotomy is insightful, it is important to consider the visual aids that were available to her during the early points in her career as well as the under-examined nuanced ways she utilized specific facets of popular culture. During interviews and episodes of her television program, Dusty often referred to artists who she admired. In a 1966 episode of *Dusty!* she sang "Poor Wayfaring Stranger" and cited American singer Jo Stafford as someone "who was and still is one of my own favorite singers."¹⁰⁵ The influence that Stafford had on Dusty is both obvious and relevant. It is feasible that Dusty's first encounter with Jo Stafford's work was in 1953 when "You Belong to Me" reached the number one spot on the UK radio charts, making Jo Stafford the first female

¹⁰⁵ *Dusty!* (BBC TV, September 1, 1966).

singer to have a number one hit in the UK.¹⁰⁶ But the most influential aspect of Jo Stafford's career, I would argue, is her UK television show *The Jo Stafford Show* that ran for eight weeks during the fall of 1961. The period in which it ran in the UK coincides with the time when Dusty started her makeover. Visual evidence suggests that Jo Stafford's 1961 image had an impact on Dusty during her period of transformation. The comparison is visible in videos of the Springfields from 1962 and 1963.¹⁰⁷ The images used on the Springfields' sheet music and record sleeves provide evidence of this influence. The sheet music for their song "Dear John" has an image of the group and Dusty has short red hair. "Dear John" was released on April 28, 1961. But for the picture sleeve of "Silver Threads and Golden Needles" from April 19, 1962, Dusty's hair is blonde and, though she is not wearing a wig, it is clear that she was attempting to emulate the style worn by Stafford several months prior.

Dusty's choices concerning her makeover have been recognized and analyzed, and adding Jo Stafford into the equation adds an extra dimension to this matter. Dusty's natural hair color is red, so in consideration of her need to have a total transformation, it makes sense that she chose to model herself after blondes. Her choice of hairstyle matches that of Jo Stafford's voluminous mid-cheek length bouffant. Not only did she choose to model herself after blondes—most importantly Jo Stafford and Peggy Lee—but the blondes she chose were considerably older than she was. Jo Stafford topped the UK music charts at age 35 and assumed her place on UK television at age 44. Similarly, Peggy Lee was in her early 40s when Dusty began her transformation. For someone who

¹⁰⁶ Adam Boulton, "The Best No. 1 Singles: Jo Stafford- You Belong to Me," *The Guardian*, May 31, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2012/may/31/jo-stafford-you-belong-me> (accessed June 6, 2013).

¹⁰⁷ "Dusty Springfield/The Springfields," Youtube, Flash video file, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFZBFw-b9Vw> (accessed June 6, 2013).

is well-known for her girl group sound, she does exhibit many characteristics of seasoned jazz/pop singers; thus Dusty Springfield borrowed characteristics from various age groups as part of the construction of her persona.

Throughout her essay Smith provides analyses of the cover art for Dusty's LPs and relates them to the presentation of Dusty's persona. According to Smith, the cover photograph of *A Girl Called Dusty* "shows the 'new' Dusty smiling boldly into the camera and outfitted casually in denim jeans and a man's blue chambray work shirt. If Springfield appeared thoroughly butch from the shoulders down, she is virtually a parodic femme from the neck up."¹⁰⁸ While this reading is useful, there is an important influence that is not considered, and, to my knowledge, has not been accounted for until now: the photo resembles the cover of Jo Stafford's 1960 album *Jo + Jazz*. The image on the cover is of Stafford smiling at the camera while wearing a blue turtleneck sweater that does not lend itself to feminine sex appeal. Released one year prior to *The Jo Stafford Show*, her hair is the similar style described above. This similarity between the two women's photos could be a coincidence, but there is no doubt that Stafford had an influence on at least some of Dusty's first album. In 1955 Jo Stafford released an album titled *A Gal Named Jo*. Could this be the inspiration for the title *A Girl Called Dusty*? "Jo Stafford" is not a stage name, thus she was "named Jo" while Dusty Springfield was a stage name and, thus, was "called Dusty." The androgyny of the names is worth noting, as well. There are several stories as to how the name "Dusty Springfield" was invented and, though she never refers to Stafford in relation to Dusty's stage name, the androgyny of "Jo" could have given Dusty the idea for her album's title.

¹⁰⁸ Smith, "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me," 107.

Smith analyzes another one of Dusty's LP sleeves. In regard to the 1967 album

Where Am I Going? Smith suggests:

Packaged to evoke a Carnaby Street Mod trendiness that was, by 1967, giving way to hippy [sic] sensibilities, the cover displays a thoroughly campy photo of the artist, standing knock-kneed in a minidress and wearing a flower-bedecked straw hat. The title, issuing forth from her mouth in a cartoon-style balloon, is rendered in orange and magenta psychedelic lettering—despite the absence of anything in the repertoire even remotely resembling the then-nouveau acid rock.¹⁰⁹

While Smith reads Dusty's appearance in the picture as an identity crisis, she fails to recognize that the album's title is a song from the Broadway musical *Sweet Charity*.

Where Am I Going? was released two weeks after *Sweet Charity* opened at the Prince of Wales Theatre in London. The image used for the program book, promotional posters, and the soundtrack's cover art has the same color scheme as the album cover; the show's title is displayed in an equally trendy font and is contained within a bright pink heart; and *Charity*'s stance similarly displays a sense of carefree confusion. I would argue that this consistent style demonstrates an affinity with the UK's generally recognized aesthetic of *Sweet Charity* and, thus, would be a potentially successful marketing scheme.

It is important to note that Dusty performed "If My Friends Could See Me Now" on her television series on September 12, 1967 and verbally expressed an admiration for the musical. In addition, Shirley Bassey's choice to record "Big Spender" in 1967 suggests that *Sweet Charity* had a place in UK popular culture during this time and among artists in Dusty's genre.¹¹⁰ This album also destabilizes the genre of Dusty's discography. The first series of Dusty's BBC television show, *Dusty!*, aired in the UK in

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 114.

¹¹⁰ It should be noted that in 1966 Peggy Lee also recorded "Big Spender" and, because Dusty was a dedicated fan, it is likely that this recording had some level of influence on the choice to record "Where Am I Going?".

1966, and her fans who watched it were aware of Dusty's tendencies to perform songs from genres other than what was recognized as "pop." Those who were not able to watch the television show—Americans included—may have been surprised by the album's content. This confusion might explain Smith's reading of the album's content and what it means to the development of Dusty's career:

The product inside the package is equally confused. While soul selections predominated on previous album releases, here they are not only bogged down by over-orchestration but also outnumbered by Broadway musical songs and syrupy, lugubrious ballads, including the Jacques Brel-Rod McKuen tearjerker, 'If You Go Away,' replete with an interpolated passage spoken in carefully articulated French.¹¹¹

Smith's article was written well before the BBC released the footage from Dusty's 1966 and 1967 series, thus it is understandable that the seemingly unexplainable album content could be read as being indicative of an identity crisis. Prior to the 2008 release of the BBC series, Americans would not have had a reason to think Dusty Springfield was anything but a pop singer. I, myself, was surprised when I first watched *Dusty Springfield: Live at the BBC*, to find that this collection includes performances of jazz standards and other styles outside the pop music genre. In light of this and other performances in which Dusty consistently blends multiple genres of music and of aesthetic appearance, *Where Am I Going?* can be viewed as an expression of Dusty's unique constructed persona as opposed to a search for Mary O'Brien's personal identity.

Conclusion

An analysis of Dusty that omits considerations of genre and generation can lead to incomplete readings of her persona. Her performance practice, framed within the jazz/pop singer aesthetic, is consistent with others in that genre. As an example, she

¹¹¹ Smith, "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me," 114.

performs “The Mood I’m In” on the September 1, 1966 episode of *Dusty!* With a limited use of vibrato, she borrows from Peggy Lee’s vocal stylings; and her lowered larynx and nasal resonance create a brassy sound that is reminiscent of Ethel Merman. This is not a sound that is typically produced by the young American pop singers who Dusty admired, which is why it is important to analyze the influence that white adult female singers had on her persona. If we think of Dusty as a contemporary of the American girl groups, her age complicates that comparison. If her image is an effort to cover up any signs of lesbian identity, the image of comparable heterosexual singers destabilizes this idea, for the heterosexual singers were not hiding their sexual preference. Finally, if we pigeonhole her musical identity as a “girl” pop singer who tried to sound black, her white-influenced performance style; the characteristics borrowed from adult singers; and her song choice would have to be ignored.¹¹²

¹¹² Randall has examined her in broader contexts that include the performance of songs on the *Dusty!* series, but from a different perspective.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

While discourse about Dusty Springfield highlights her camp sensibilities, lesbianism, substance abuse, and the mythic status of her 1969 album *Dusty in Memphis*, I focus, by contrast, on her underexamined influences by engaging with her biography, arguing that this is the foundation for her resilient persona.¹¹³ Even today, decades after the release of her recordings, first-time listeners hear her vocal performances and follow Martha Reeves in assuming she was black and American. On March 25, 2012 her most successful American hit “You Don’t Have to Say You Love Me” was used in the closing scene of the season 5 premiere of AMC’s television series *Mad Men*. The song provided the soundtrack to the climactic result of the fictional ad agency Sterling Cooper Draper Pryce claiming to be an equal opportunity employer. When agency partner Lane Pryce enters the lobby and sees dozens of African Americans holding resumes, the audience hears Dusty Springfield’s voice accompanying the scene. Although the episode takes place during a time in which the song was climbing the charts, I believe Dusty Springfield’s relationship with and performance of African American soul music is what truly resonates. The use of Dusty’s voice in this scene advocates for racial integration and makes a statement about the legacy of Dusty Springfield’s association with African American music, thus perpetuating this association as the most prominent aspect of her legacy.

While the importance of Dusty’s relationship to African American music cannot be denied, and certainly qualifies her as an important figure within the discourse of

¹¹³ Patricia Juliana Smith’s scholarship about Dusty focuses on sexuality and camp iconography; *Dusty in Memphis* is on most lists of important or influential albums; *Dusty in Memphis* is also her most sought after album for record collectors; Out of all of her US hits, “Son of a Preacher Man” (from *Dusty in Memphis*) is played the most on oldies radio stations; These are only a few examples.

performance studies, it is only one aspect of her complex persona. By analyzing other influences we can see the ways in which age and genre are manifested in her persona. Dusty Springfield's persona was constructed by drawing from models and genres other than the soul and pop genres with which she is traditionally associated. The clear influence that Jo Stafford, for example, had on Dusty's image in the early stages of her solo career challenges the fact that Dusty is typically considered a soul-influenced girl pop singer. Stafford was not a soul singer and she was also considerably older than the women who are prominent within discourse about 1960s pop music. Therefore examining Dusty's persona brings to light the ways in which a performer can blend, blur, and even collapse societal constructions of gender, race, class, sexuality, genre, and age.

Moreover, by relating persona to career aspects such as songwriting, we see how influence holistically affects the construction of a persona. As a pop singer, Dusty Springfield is an unusual figure in the music industry because she was a woman who had control over her recording sessions and she wrote music. The professional experiences she had are heavily reflected in this aspect of her career, both in her arrangements and in songwriting, thus the effects of persona are not limited to performance, but are apparent throughout all aspects of a performer's career.

In the context of the British Invasion, an understanding of Dusty Springfield and the construction of her persona is valuable to the study of popular culture. It is true that the Mersey Beat bands were influenced by African American girl groups, and that fact is very apparent in their recordings, but the personal connections that Dusty made with the Motown artists adds a different dimension to her influenced style. Hearing how Dusty was able to mimic the sounds of other styles of music and knowing the first-hand

experiences she had with some of the artists she admired demonstrates the importance of the cultural exchanges that were occurring during this period. It also highlights the value of tracing the development of a persona, for it exposes the underexamined interconnectivity and global scale of popular culture. Because of the meticulous work and documentation of longtime Dusty Springfield fans, it is possible to pinpoint where and when Dusty acquired certain musical knowledge. This is not an advantage that accompanies the study of most cultural figures, which makes Dusty Springfield a perfect model for this type of research.

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