

NOW – March 27



### Music Feature

#### Dusting off Springfield

Country outsider Shelby Lynne uncovers soul of late UK songbird  
Bryan Borzykowski

**SHELBY LYNNE** at the Mod Club (722 College), Monday (March 31), 8 pm doors.  
\$20. 416-870-8000.

To many Canadians, the song *The Look Of Love* conjures up images of Diana Krall cooing softly in front of a piano. But to Virginia-born country artist Shelby Lynne, that tune – and most others by the late, legendary diva Dusty Springfield – hits close to home.

“I’ve had some comparisons to Dusty over the years,” Lynne says with a thick Southern drawl. “Barry Manilow called me to ask if I’d ever thought of doing a Dusty song.”

While she claims to dislike comparisons – she’s been mentioned in the same breath as Sheryl Crow and Bonnie Raitt – she doesn’t mind having her name uttered alongside Springfield’s.

In fact, the artist has embraced her inner Dusty so much that her latest disc, *Just A Little Lovin’*, is almost all Springfield covers.

“I’m not much into doing cover records,” she says over the phone as she drives from L.A. to Nashville with her dog in the back seat. “But Barry suggested it. I thought about it really hard and started thinking it wasn’t a bad idea.”

*The Look Of Love* is just one of the many classic Springfield hits on the record. While there’s no *Son Of A Preacher Man*, Lynne does tackle *Breakfast In Bed* and *You Don’t Have To Say You Love Me*, two of the singer’s best tracks.

Instead of imitating the hard-living chanteuse’s style, though, Lynne dials down the tunes considerably, turning them into sparse, hushed and haunting alt-country songs.

How she picked the songs was simple. “I chose my favourites,” says Lynne. “Not all of them were hits for her. I chose the ones I really love, the ones I was moved by when she sang them.”

Besides being hot for Springfield, Lynne’s motivation for recording her songs was partly a desire to share the music with her fans. “It’s a good opportunity for a whole new audience to be introduced to Dusty and to remind audience who already know her how much they love her.”

It’s unlikely any of this could have taken shape without her new label, Lost Highway. For the last 20 years, Lynne’s jumped from indies to majors and back again. She won a Grammy for best new artist in 2001 – despite releasing her first disc in 1989 – while on a major, but it’s her current home that’s given her the freedom to release a disc of someone else’s tunes.

“A record company should not be a bunch of accountants,” she says. “It feels good to be in place where people will fight for you and your music.”

It’s especially important to be on a trustworthy label if Lynne changes her mind and does another covers album. The group she’s most excited about these days?

“I’m looking forward to the new Gnarl Barkley right now,” she says. “No, I don’t think I’ll cover them.”

[music@nowtoronto.com](mailto:music@nowtoronto.com)