

Six-time Oscar Nominee, Director Jim Sheridan unveils Dusty Springfield Biopic

Billed as the story of a "Soul Singing Sensation.....Magnificent 60s Icon.....Trailblazer Social Activist"



London, United Kingdom Sep 3, 2023 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Dusty Springfield – her music and extraordinary life, is finally getting its first motion picture outing with support from Screen Ireland, inspired by the star’s largely unknown Irish heritage.

Six-time Oscar nominee Jim Sheridan has been signed up to direct the untold and moving story of Dusty Springfield, the 1960s soul-singer, and aims to bring her life and music to a new generation. The iconic singing sensation, born Mary O’Brien from Irish immigrant stock in London, came out as gay in 1972, was kicked out of South Africa in 1965 for refusing to sing in front of a segregated audience, and fought for dozens of other causes while embracing the ‘Swinging 60s’ and struggling with her own demons.

The acclaimed star who spent most of her adult life in the UK and the US, died in 1999 and had her ashes cast off the dramatic Cliffs of Moher, on the West Coast of Ireland.

Titled ‘Dusty’, the film tracks the journey taken by the young Mary O’Brien – from her shy and timid persona with a hauntingly unique singing voice - into her triumphant alter ego, Dusty Springfield. Secretly gay, Mary, lived her life trapped in agonising silence before overcoming her convent school, and Irish Catholic background, to transform herself into a daring alter ego - Dusty Springfield. Her silky, and sensual voice went on to define the sound of the sixties, with songs such as ‘I Only Want to Be with You’.... ‘Son of A Preacher Man’.... ‘You Don’t Have to Say You Love Me.

Jim Sheridan tracks the highlights and low-lights of her life and interweaves her fight for sexual equality and social justice with the loves and struggles of her own existence - from her love affair with Motown music - to her first meaningful relationship with a black female backing singer in New York.

Sheridan is excited about getting inside the remarkable transition from the shy, shamed Mary O’Brien, into the dazzling gay icon that ‘Dusty’ became. He said: ‘Suffering for her challenges, fighting other people’s causes, she endured mental agony before finally reconciling herself and her sexuality in harmony with her music and her audience. In the end, Dusty reconnects with the real Mary O’Brien and is happy to do so and that is the essence of the story we are keen to capture.

It is familiar territory for Sheridan who directed the 2005 cult favourite ‘Get Rich or Die Tryin’ (Paramount) with ‘Curtis ’50 Cent’ Jackson based loosely on his 2002 album of the same name.

‘I am tremendously excited to be part of the project and to take on the challenge of telling the story and revelling in the music of an extraordinary woman and singing sensation. She wore every cause on her sleeves and fought against racism, promoting gender equality and gay pride at great cost to her personal and professional life. Her life and her music are built for a biopic of this type and her Irish background and life among the Irish diaspora of London really appeal to me and it is a world that I know very well. She was a remarkable woman, decades ahead of her time.

Sheridan is sharing the writing credit with young British writer, Sameera Steward who had been working on an adaptation of the acclaimed biography of the star by Karen Bartlett; Dusty Springfield ‘An Intimate Portrait of a Music Legend’ for UK producers, Bob Blagden and Tony Virgo (Little by Little). The project has been supported with early development funding from Screen Ireland through Irish producers, Dare Films Ireland. The picture is expected to go into full production in early 2025. Sheridan is currently in discussions with several actors for the coveted role of Dusty.

As well as announcing ‘DUSTY’, Sheridan is at the Venice Film Festival promoting ‘Re-Creation’ – an innovative re-imagining of the documentary and film form through the prism of true crime recreations

and actors. Sheridan is utilising his five-part investigation 'Murder at the Cottage' (SKY 2021) as the backdrop to this project and intends to deliver an update on the acclaimed documentary series in a daring elevation of the story and concept. 'Murder at the cottage' was the channel's highest-rating original documentary.

Sheridan is also platforming another project at Venice in collaboration with Dare Films, centred on the so-called 'The Devil's Advocate' – Italian legal eagle - Giovanni Di Stefano. The colourful Italian was a former lawyer to some of the world's most notorious criminals, dictators, and despots including Saddam Hussein. Giovanni Di Stefano was just recently released from prison in the UK after serving 10 years for operating as a lawyer without the necessary qualifications or licence. Sheridan's crew in collaboration with Dare Films Ireland has been filming with Di Stefano in Italy since his release and hopes to bring the feature documentary to air in 2025. Sheridan has also been in discussions about a film script about the colourful ex-lawyer's life.

'DUSTY' - A Jim Sheridan Film

Director: Jim Sheridan

Writers: Sameera Steward & Jim Sheridan

Produced by Bob Blagden /Donal MacIntyre / Tony Virgo

A DARE FILMS IRELAND / Little by Little Production with Screen Ireland

www.dusty-themovie.com

WATCH THE TRAILER HERE:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MmYU5SfB2M>



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