
Dion – From “A Teenager in Love” to “The Wanderer”



Dion (left) and the Belmonts

Although he originally emerged as a swaggering, Doo Wop-singing teen idol in the late 1950s, streetwise New Yorker Dion DiMucci (better known simply as Dion) quickly showed himself to be a sublimely soulful vocalist as well as an artist of depth and versatility. His musical sensibility was shaped by the Blues, R&B and Country records he heard while growing up in the Bronx in the pre-Rock and Roll 1950s. After an unsuccessful 1957 solo single, he recruited harmonizing neighborhood pals Carlo Mastrangelo, Fred Milano, and Angelo D'Aleo to form the Belmonts. With Dion singing lead, the foursome scored a series of hits — "I Wonder Why," "No One Knows," "A Teenager in Love," "Where or When" — whose adolescent orientation couldn't disguise DiMucci's fluid, deeply expressive singing.

Dion went solo in 1960, and scored even greater success with such smashes as "Runaround Sue," "Lovers Who Wander" and the anthemic "The Wanderer" – adopting a more macho persona as credible as the youthful longing expressed in "A Teenager in Love." After signing with Columbia Records in 1962, he began to emerge as a distinctive songwriter, while experimenting with a grittier Blues-Folk-Rock style that showed him to be in tune with the changing musical times. Little of that material was released at the time, and that which was released didn't sell well. A 1966 reunion album with the Belmonts was better received, and in 1968 Dion experienced a life-changing religious conversion and conquered a longstanding heroin addiction. Later that year, he scored a major comeback hit with "Abraham, Martin and John," a gentle tribute to assassination victims Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr., and John F. Kennedy. It solidified his new image as a thoughtful troubadour and set the stage for the introspective, mostly self-penned albums that he would release through the 1970s.

Dion Lyric Comparison

“A Teenager in Love”

Artist: Dion and the Belmonts
Released: 1959, Laurie Records
Written by: Doc Pomus & Mort Shuman

*Each time we have a quarrel
It almost breaks my heart
'Cause I'm so afraid
That we will have to part*

*Each night I ask the stars up above
Why must I be a teenager in love?*

*One day I feel so happy
Next day I feel so sad
I guess I'll learn
To take the good with the bad*

*'Cause each night
I ask the stars up above
Why must I be a teenager in love?*

“The Wanderer”

Artist: Dion
Released: 1961, Laurie Records
Written by: Ernie Maresca

*Oh well, I'm the type of guy who will never settle down
Where pretty girls are, well, you know that I'm around
I kiss 'em and I love 'em 'cause to me they're all the same
I hug 'em and I squeeze 'em they don't even know my name*

*They call me the wanderer
Yeah, the wanderer
I roam around, around, around*

*Oh well, there's Flo on my left and there's Mary on my right
And Janie is the girl with that I'll be with tonight
And when she asks me, which one I love the best?
I tear open my shirt I got Rosie on my chest*

*'Cause I'm the wanderer
Yeah, the wanderer
I roam around, around, around*

Key Themes or Phrases

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