

= Stardust (Willie Nelson album) =

Stardust is a 1978 album by Willie Nelson that spans the genres of pop , jazz , and country music . Its ten songs consist entirely of pop standards that Nelson picked from among his favorites . Nelson asked Booker T. Jones , who was his neighbor in Malibu at the time , to arrange a version of " Moonlight in Vermont " . Impressed with Jones 's work , Nelson asked him to produce the entire album . Nelson 's decision to record such well @-@ known tracks was controversial among Columbia executives because he had distinguished himself in the outlaw country genre . Recording of the album took only ten days .

Released in April , Stardust was met with high sales and near @-@ universal positive reviews . It peaked at number one in Billboard 's Top Country Albums and number thirty in the Billboard 200 . Meanwhile , it charted at number one in Canadian RPM 's Country Albums and number twenty @-@ eight in RPM 's Top Albums . The singles " Blue Skies " and " All of Me " peaked respectively at numbers one and three in Billboard 's Hot Country Singles .

In 1979 , Nelson won a Grammy Award for Best Male Country Vocal Performance for the song " Georgia on My Mind " . Stardust was on the Billboard 's Country Album charts for ten years ? from its release until 1988 . The album also reached number one in New Zealand and number five in Australia in 1980 . In 2003 , the album was ranked number 257 on Rolling Stone magazine 's list of the 500 greatest albums of all time . It was originally certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America in December 1978 . In 1984 , when it was certified triple platinum , Nelson was the highest @-@ grossing concert act in the United States . In 2002 , the album was certified quintuple platinum , and it was later inducted in the Grammy Hall of Fame class of 2015 .

= = Background and recording = =

After the critical and commercial success of 1975 's Red Headed Stranger , Nelson became one of the most recognized artists in country music . He replicated this success in 1976 , releasing Wanted ! The Outlaws (featuring Waylon Jennings , Jessi Colter and Tompall Glaser) , which became the genre 's first certified platinum album .

By 1977 , Nelson had decided to record a collection of American pop standards . During that time , Nelson was living in the same neighborhood in Malibu as producer Booker T. Jones . The two became friends , and Nelson asked Jones to arrange " Moonlight in Vermont " . Pleased by the results , Nelson later asked Jones to produce an entire standards album for him . Nelson selected his ten favorite pop songs from his childhood , starting with " Stardust " . Nelson and his sister Bobbie had sheet music for the song that he had tried to perform with his guitar , but did not like that arrangement . Jones adapted the song for Nelson , who also picked for the album " Georgia on My Mind " , " Blue Skies " , " All of Me " , " Unchained Melody " , " September Song " , " On the Sunny Side of the Street " , " Moonlight in Vermont " , " Don 't Get Around Much Anymore " and " Someone to Watch Over Me " .

The executives of Columbia Records were not convinced that the album would sell well , because the project was a radical departure from his earlier success in the outlaw movement . The album included pop , jazz and folk music styles , in addition to country . It was recorded from December 3 ? 12 , 1977 .

= = Release and reception = =

The album was released in April 1978 . The album peaked at number one Billboard Top Country Albums , and number thirty on the Billboard 200 . Meanwhile , the songs " Blue Skies " and " All of Me " peaked at number one and three respectively on Hot Country Songs . Stardust was certified platinum on December 1978 and was named Top Country Album of the year for 1978 . The album charted at number one in Canadian RPM 's Country Albums , while charted at number 28 in RPM 's Top Albums .

Nelson became the highest @-@ grossing concert act in the United States . In 1979 , Nelson won a

Grammy Best Male Country Vocal Performance for " Georgia on My Mind " . In 1979 , " September Song " peaked at number fifteen in Billboard 's Hot Country Singles . Stardust spent two years on the Billboard 200 , and the album charted 540 weeks (ten years) on top country albums . In 1980 the album ranked at number one in New Zealand top albums , while it ranked at number 5 in Australian top albums .

In 1984 , the album was certified triple platinum , earning US \$ 2 @. @ 1 million . Later it was also certified quadruple platinum in 1990 , and quintuple platinum in 2002 . It was ranked by Rolling Stone at # 257 in The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time . In honor of the 35th anniversary of the release , it was announced that Nelson would perform the entire album live , with the accompaniment of an orchestra directed by David Campbell during two shows on August 9 ? 10 , 2013 at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles , California . In December 2014 the induction of Stardust to the Grammy Hall of Fame was announced , the record was included among the 2015 class .

= = = Initial reviews (1978 ? 1979) = = =

Stardust received positive reviews from most publications , both on its original release and for its various reissues . Rolling Stone praised the album : " For all the sleek sophistication of the material , Stardust is as down @-@ home as the Legion dance . Heard coast to coast in lounges and on elevator soundtracks , these tunes have become part of the folk music of exurban America . And that 's the way Nelson plays them ? spare and simple , with a jump band 's verve and a storyteller 's love of a good tale . By offering these songs , he 's displaying the tools of a journeyman musician 's trade ? worn smooth and polished by constant use ? and when he lays them out this way , they kind of look like works of art . Willie Nelson may be acknowledging both his own and country music 's debt to Broadway and Tin Pan Alley , but he 's also showing these hallowed musical institutions how the country makes their music its own " .

Billboard delivered a favorable review : " Unusual pairing of artist and producer here as Booker T. Jones was the prime mover in Booker T & the MGs a few years back . But the combination works well [...] (Nelson) puts his distinctive , soft vocal style to good use interpreting a number of standards as well as country @-@ flavored tunes . All of the material seems well suited to his easygoing style as Nelson backs himself with guitar and gets help with guitar , drums , keyboards , bass and harmonica " . Texas Monthly also favored the album , but noted the difference with previous Nelson recordings : " Stardust blends the stark economy of Red Headed Stranger with an underlying current of church spiritualism . More often than not it works . Though the selections are all at least twenty years old , the songs withstand the test of time . Occasionally Willie 's voice seems to crack , I do miss the more familiar hard @-@ bitten whine that accompanies his usual fare like " Whiskey River " . But nonetheless this is a sterling effort " .

New Times wrote : " In Texas , some folks swear that Willie could sing " The Star Spangled Banner " and make it sound soulful . This collection of hoary old standards is the next best thing to testing that proposition directly . " Orange Coast praised Nelson 's performance of the standards : " Willie Nelson is perhaps the finest male singer in country music [...] his phrasing and sense of understated drama have caused him to be compared with the best jazz singers . Now he 's released an album of old pop standards , Stardust (Columbia) , and you can almost hear the stirrings of an outlaw uprising between the grooves [...] although is definitively no step forward in Nelson 's career , it 's still a pleasurable showcase of his considerable artistry as a vocalist . Plus even though he 's dealing with the sophisticated likes of Irving Berlin , George Gershwin , and Kurt Weill , he remains essentially country " .

= = = Other reviews = = =

Robert Christgau of The Village Voice gave the album an A- letter grade , stating , " I 'm real happy this record exists , not just because Nelson can be a great interpretive singer ? his " Moonlight in Vermont " is a revelation ? but because he 's provided me with ten great popular songs that I 've never had much emotional access to . " Stephen Thomas Erlewine of Allmusic gave the record five

stars out of five , and said : " (Stardust) showcases Nelson 's skills as a musician and his entire aesthetic ? where there is nothing separating classic American musical forms , it can all be played together ? perhaps better than any other album , which is why it was a sensation upon its release and grows stronger with each passing year . "

Pitchfork Media rated the album with 9 @.@ 3 points out of 10 , and wrote : " Thirty years ago , Willie Nelson took a typically left turn and followed up a string of successful albums with a cover album of songs made famous by decidedly non @-@ country musicians like Dean Martin , Frank Sinatra and Louis Armstrong [...] What makes the record so thrilling and very often beautiful ? and what separates him from today 's ham @-@ handed vocalists ? is Nelson 's facility as an interpreter [...] With his tender , textured voice and intuitively around @-@ the @-@ beat phrasing , Nelson gives these songs fresh readings , with just the touch of sentimentality and nostalgia they demand . The cliché ' makes them his own ' certainly applies here : He sings them as they 've never been sung before or since , which is quite a feat considering their age and popularity . Hardened from endless touring into a tough , tight roadhouse revue , Nelson 's band gives a surprisingly supple performance on each song , which reinforces the album 's sweetly ruminative mood . Producer Booker T. Jones , of Stax fame , facilitates every aspect of the band 's sound , showcasing the performers ' range while ensuring the arrangements play to the lyrics and vocals without overwhelming them [...] Stardust set both the template for Nelson 's career and the standard . Few artists have treat the American Songbook so affectionately and so cavalierly . "

Zagat Survey rated Stardust five stars out of five : " On this legendary departure from the traditional Willie , America 's pop troubadour puts his one @-@ of @-@ a @-@ kind touch on old pop standards , finding common ground between outlaw country and mellow [...] Sweet and simple , more bow tie than bandana , each song is turned and twisted until it 's his own and , paired with the production talents of Booker T. Jones , sets a romantic mood that appeals to a whole new audience .

= = Track listing = =

Side one :

Side two :

= = Personnel = =

Willie Nelson ? vocals , guitar

Bobbie Nelson ? piano

Paul English ? drums

Rex Ludwick ? drums

Jody Payne ? guitar

Bee Spears ? bass

Chris Ethridge ? bass

Mickey Raphael ? harmonica

Booker T. Jones ? organ , piano

= = Chart Performance = =

Albums

Singles

= = Reissues = =

= = = Columbia Records 1999 reissue bonus tracks = = =

" Scarlet Ribbons " (Evelyn Danzig , Jack Segal) ? 4 : 30

" I Can See Clearly Now " (Johnny Nash) ? 4 : 18

= = = Sony Records ' 30th Anniversary Legacy Edition bonus tracks = = =

In 2008 , Columbia Records issued a version of Stardust subtitled 30th Anniversary Legacy Edition . The album contained a 16 track bonus disc of standards from Nelson 's other albums . None of the bonus tracks date to the original Stardust sessions .

" What a Wonderful World " (George David Weiss , Bob Thiele)

" Basin Street Blues " (Spencer Williams)

" I 'm Confessin ' (That I Love You) " (D. Dougherty , E. Reynolds , A. Neiburg)

" I 'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter " (Fred E. Ahlert , Joe Young)

" The Gypsy " (Billy Reid)

" Mona Lisa " (Jay Livingston , Ray Evans)

" Ac @-@ Cent @-@ Tchu @-@ Ate the Positive " (Johnny Mercer , Harold Arlen)

" Ole Buttermilk Sky " (Hoagy Carmichael , J. Brooks)

" That Lucky Old Sun " (Haven Gillespie , Beasley Smith)

" Little Things Mean a Lot " (E. Calisch , C. Stutz)

" Cry " (Churchill Kohlman)

" You 'll Never Know " (Mack Gordon , Harry Warren)

" Tenderly " (Jack Lawrence , Walter Lloyd Gross)

" Stormy Weather " (Harold Arlen , Ted Koehler)

" One for My Baby (and One More for the Road) " (Johnny Mercer , Harold Arlen)

" Angel Eyes " (Earl Brent , Matt Dennis)

Tracks 1 , 7 , 8 from the album What a Wonderful World

Track 2 from the album The Promiseland

Tracks 3 , 4 , 6 from the album Somewhere Over the Rainbow

Tracks 5 , 16 from the album Angel Eyes

Track 9 from the album The Sound in Your Mind

Track 10 from the album Born for Trouble

Track 11 from the album City of New Orleans

Track 12 from the album Without a Song

Tracks 13 ? 15 from the album One For the Road