



Rosanne Cash “**Somewhere In The Stars**” / “**Rhythm & Romance**” Raven Records

“**Somewhere In The Stars**” [1982] and “**Rhythm & Romance**” [1985] may have sounded revolutionary when they were first released, consisting, as they did, of a blend of the musical locations Messrs. Ronstadt and Harris had recently visited, leavened with razor sharp country licks. These days they sound par for the course. Cash made her, then, long overdue commercial breakthrough with three straight # 1 Country Singles taken from her 1981 release “**Seven Year Ache**.” “**Somewhere In The Stars**” produced, like her previous CBS releases, by her then husband, Rodney Crowell, was an *as expected* mix of covers plus Crowell and Cash originals. As far as “**Rhythm & Romance**” was concerned, Crowell [in association with David Thoener] co-produced the opening cut “Hold On,” plus “Never Be You” and John Hiatt’s “Pink Bedroom,” while the remainder of the collection was helmed by David Malloy. Why was the Rodster absent ? He was working on his *masterpiece* “**Diamonds & Dirt**” [1983], a release that spawned five # 1 Country Singles. “**Interiors**” which proved, *for all time*, that Rosanne was capable of penning powerful lyrics was still some years off.

It’s worth comparing the cover artwork of the two discs. On “**Somewhere In The Stars**” Rosanne is conventionally kitted out in a black jump suit with gold scroll lines on the shoulders and a gold belt around her waist, and her full head of hair was seriously black. Three years later her red spiked coiffure hinted at a new self-asserted assurance – rebellion even, while the white jacket and sequined dress she wore seemed to reek of convention and appeared oddly out of place.

It’s a moot point as to whether “**Somewhere In The Stars**” was a *rushed* project. Her German only solo debut had appeared in 1978, “**Right Or Wrong**” followed by late ’79 and the breakthrough “**Seven Year Ache**” arrived in 1981. Maybe it was a case of too many too soon, which, when added to the significant success of that 1981 release, made for one road weary lady. Historically “**Somewhere In The Stars**” only yielded a # 4 hit single in May 1982 [“Ain’t No Money”], a # 8 that October [“I Wonder”] and a mere # 14 the following March [“It Hasn’t Happened Yet”]. Undertaking a successful detox and allowing for the passage of three years, “**Rhythm & Romance**” saw Cash’s solo career once more gain impetus with a pair of # 1 hit singles [“I Don’t Know Why You Don’t Want Me” and “Never Be You”] and a pair of # 5 hit singles [“Hold On” and “Second To No One”]. What’s more, “I Don’t Know Why You Don’t Want Me,” finally, brought Cash some industry recognition and the Grammy for “Best Female Country Vocal Performance.” Nashville has remained uniformly silent, in the latter regard, throughout her career.

Numerically, Rosanne contributed one original song, the title album cut, plus the Crowell co-write “Lookin’ For A Corner” to “**Somewhere In The Stars**.” “**Rhythm & Romance**,” however, displayed a new found confidence with her pen and half a dozen songs were credited to R. Cash [including “Hold On” and “Second To No One”], plus one co-write each with Rodney [the # 1, “I Don’t Know Why You Don’t Want Me”] and Vince Gill. It proved to be her best effort before the aforementioned tumultuous “**Interiors**.” Tom Petty and his keyboard wizard Benmont Tench wrote “Never Be You.” Topping off this merger of two ten song sets is Raven’s reissue *de rigueur*, the bonus track. In this instance it’s, “Feelin’ Blue,” a John Fogerty composition, that was included on Cash’s 1978 German Ariola self-titled solo debut.

A couple of years back, and still available worldwide, Raven issued another *2 for 1* Rosanne Cash collection that teamed “**Right Or Wrong**” [1980] with “**Seven Year Ache**” [1981]. The bonus track on

that set was "Ballad Of A Teenage Queen," a cut that featured the voices of her father and The Everly Brothers.

Folkwax Rating 7 out of 10

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