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JUICE NEWTON — ANGEL OF THE MORNING



Juice Newton

"I don't think the success of the current single, 'Angel Of The Morning', will be hard to deal with. If this success had presented itself to someone who'd only made one record, then they are limited to *that* record. I've recorded something like sixty songs over the past five year. I have a reservoir to draw from".

So said Juice Newton, who is currently enjoying some long overdue success with her new album and single. The album, entitled 'Juice', is her sixth, so she is no newcomer to the scene.

Juice, by the way, is a family nickname, and she was born 29 years ago in Lakehurst, New Jersey. When she was one year old Juice's parents moved to Virginia Beach, Virginia.

By 1972, Juice had met Otha Young, who is now her husband, music on a semi-professional basis in coffee bars and clubs in and around Virginia Beach.

In the early '70s Juice moved to Los Gatos, California, to attend college but musical performances got in the way of her studies and Juice only completed a few more years of her education.

By 1972, Juice had met Otha Young, who is now her husband, and they began performing as a duo, later expanding to a trio when a guitar player called John Summers joined them. The trio soon broke up, however, and Juice and Otha formed an electric country band called Dixie Peach. The band featured a lot of original songs written by Otha and a great deal of material that is now termed Rockabilly but the group soon expired due to a lack of bookings.

At the latter end of 1972, Juice and Otha met Tom Kealey in the 'Grog And Sirlain' pub in Los Gatos, and they started to perform as Juice Newton and Silver Spur. One year later they moved their base to Los Angeles in search of a recording contract. Within six months Juice Newton and Silver Spur were signed to RCA but came under control of the company's 'pop music' division, which later proved detrimental.

The group's first album, produced by Bones Howe, was recorded during 1974 and released the next year. It was simply called 'Juice Newton and Silver Spur' and a single taken from it entered the country charts and peaked at 75. Tracks which still remain fresh and vital to this day are 'Just Remember Who Your Friends Are' and 'Catwillow River'.

By the time Juice's second album had appeared the band had

by Arthur Wood

made several national tours with acts like Loggins & Messina and Hot Tuna. At this stage Ed Leffler had become the band's manager and he is probably best-known for his management of rock acts like Sammy Hager and Sweet.

Within a few months of being released from their RCA contract Juice Newton and Silver Spur signed with Capitol, with Elliot Mazer as their producer. Mazer had previously worked with Linda Ronstadt and was known as one of the new breed of record company 'whizz-kids'.

With the release of a third album, the emphasis of the material seemed to change from a country to a rock base, but they were still using original material written by the band members. Sadly, her albums were still not selling and, while the band was a fairly stable unit, it was felt that they were not progressing and Silver Spur split up.

For her second Capitol LP — her first as a solo performer — Juice and Otha co-produced with John Palladino and the 'rock' emphasis is extremely prominent. Juice has stated that this was her manager's insistence and the belief that pressure to make such an album came from the label's top management; a fact which she later discovered to be untrue.

The result was an album entitled 'Well Kept Secret' (Another sly taunt at the lack of promotion by Capitol), which was probably her weakest to date. Otha remained the major contributor of original material but two cover versions of older material were included, one being the Bruce Channel hit, 'Hey Baby' and the other an old Ike and Tina Turner song, 'A Love Like Yours'.

After the release of this album Juice and Ed Leffler parted company and she has not worked with a personal manager since that time.

After Juice's fourth Capitol album was released Rupert Perry, head of Capitol's A&R Department, approached Juice to record a single version of Bonnie Tyler's British hit, 'It's A Heartache'. Where her version of the song charted in Mexico and Latin America, and she has a Gold Record to show for her efforts.

Because she was no longer tied to a band, Juice also began to

undertake session work and she has said that session work broadened her horizons and made her aware of other songwriters and their material, as well as other musicians and the expertise they possessed. This is certainly apparent on her fifth album, 'Take Heart'.

The title of the LP was probably indicative of Juice's high spirits at that time, since a song which she had co-written with Otha titled 'Sweet, Sweet Smile', had been a major chart success.

At last Juice and Otha were no longer leading a hand-to-mouth existence, and she recorded an album that was very much in the country-rock vein!

After a few years spent in the wilderness, she was back doing what she did best. For some reason Capitol, in their infinite wisdom, did not release 'Take Heart' in Britain, although they had released the two previous albums, something which even RCA had not seen fit to do.

There was no doubt at that time that 'Take Heart' was her best album to date! In the States no less than five singles were taken from it — and they all made the Top-40 charts!

There was a gap of nearly eighteen months before the new album, 'Juice' was released and in that time Juice and Otha put a new road band together retaining the old Silver Spur name and toured with artists such as Hank Williams Jr., Bobby Bare and Tom T. Hall.

For the sixth album, Richard Landis was chosen as the producer and Juice and Otha have already indicated that they would like to retain him for future albums.

And what of the new album, which will be released in Britain this month? Well, if there are any discerning country-rock afficianados reading this, do yourselves a favour, don't even think twice, because it even surpasses 'Take Heart', so buy it! 'Juice' is one complete country song from start to finish. 'Angel Of The Morning' opens the album, and for a song that has been around for so long, it doesn't seem to have aged, and Juice has really done the song justice. Written by Chip Taylor, it earned Merilee Rush a Gold Record Stateside back in 1968 and was covered in Britain by P. P. Arnold.

Now we are up to date and the only thing missing is that Juice has never performed in Britain, so come on, give the lady a listen; but the single, buy the album. You won't regret it! ●