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Song by Bruce Springsteen Not to be confused with I'm on Fire. "Fire" Single by Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band from the album *Live/1975-85* B-side "Incident on 57th Street" (live) Release January 1, 1987 Recorded December 16, 1978 Venue Winterland, San Francisco, California Genre Rock Length 2:58 Label Columbia Songwriter(s) Bruce Springsteen Producer(s) Bruce Springsteen Jon Landau Chuck Plotkin Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band singles chronology "War" (1986) "Fire" (1987) "Brilliant Disguise" (1987) "Fire" is a song written by Bruce Springsteen in 1977 which had its highest profile as a 1978 single release by the Pointer Sisters. Bruce Springsteen versions Bruce Springsteen envisioned "Fire" as a song which could be recorded by his idol Elvis Presley. It was written after Springsteen saw Presley perform at a May 28, 1977 concert at the Spectrum in Philadelphia. Springsteen said, "I sent [Elvis] a demo of it but he died before it arrived." [1] Springsteen completed a studio recording of "Fire" on June 17, 1977, [2] which was one of 52 tracks at least partially recorded which did not make the cut for his 1978 album *Darkness on the Edge of Town* as they were considered inconsistent with his thematic vision for the album. Springsteen's manager Jon Landau speculated Springsteen had a special concern that, if included on *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, "Fire" would be Columbia Records' single of choice despite not being representative of the album as a whole. [3] Despite his disinterest in releasing his own version of "Fire" Springsteen was reportedly upset when the Pointer Sisters version of the song reached #2 in February 1979. At that point Springsteen's most successful single remained "Born to Run" which had reached #23 in 1975. The Pointer Sisters were actually the second act to score a smash hit with a Springsteen cover, with Manfred Mann's Earth Band having taken "Blinded by the Light" to #1 in 1977. Additionally, "Because the Night" had been a #13 hit for Patti Smith in 1978, having begun as an unfinished Springsteen song he originally meant to record himself. Springsteen finally scored his own inaugural top 10 hit in 1980 with "Hungry Heart" which was his first single release subsequent to the Pointer Sisters' success with "Fire" (Springsteen had in fact written "Hungry Heart" for the Ramones but was persuaded by his manager/producer Jon Landau that the song was the ideal vehicle to break Springsteen as a major singles artist). [4] [5] Its omission from the *Darkness on the Edge of Town* album notwithstanding, "Fire" was included in the set list of the *Darkness Tour* and has been a Springsteen concert staple since then. On the 1986 Springsteen concert album *Live/1975-85* "Fire" is represented by a December 16, 1978 performance at Winterland in San Francisco. Issued as a single, this version of "Fire" reached no. 46 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 and also charted in Ireland (no. 18), the UK (no. 54), and Australia (no. 82). The music video to promote the single was an acoustic performance of the song by Springsteen at a Bridge School Benefit concert in 1986. The studio version of "Fire" was first released on *The Promise* box set (but the lead vocal was re-recorded in 2010, and overdubbed, replacing the original) [6] and a video version appeared on the associated *The Promise: The Darkness On The Edge Of Town Story* as part of the Thrill Hill Vault Houston '78 Bootleg: House Cut DVD. Robert Gordon version The first released recording of "Fire" was by neo-rockabilly singer Robert Gordon who had met Springsteen through E Street Band bass player Garry Tallent. They remained on friendly terms before Springsteen gave Gordon the song "Fire" after seeing a live gig by Gordon and Link Wray. According to Gordon, "it was a choice between 'Fire' and another new song but [Springsteen] decided to keep the other one for himself." [7] Springsteen played piano on Gordon's recording of "Fire" which was released on Gordon's 1978 album *Fresh Fish Special*, recorded in December 1977 at Plaza Sound Studios in Manhattan with veteran rock 'n' roll producer Richard Gottehrer co-producing with Gordon. Gordon's version received airplay on album-oriented rock radio stations and his version of "Fire" spent 14 weeks in the *Record World* 101-150 Singles chart rising as high as no. 106 in September 1978. [8] The Pointer Sisters version "Fire" US single picture sleeve Single by The Pointer Sisters from the album *Energy* B-side "Love Is Like a Rolling Stone" Released October 2, 1978 (1978-10-02) (US) March 9, 1979 (UK) Recorded 1978 Genre Rock R&B Length 3:28 Label Planet Songwriter(s) Bruce Springsteen Producer(s) Richard Perry The Pointer Sisters US singles chronology "I Need a Man" (1978) "Fire" (1978) "Happiness" (1979) The Pointer Sisters UK singles chronology "Everybody Is a Star" (1979) "Fire" (1979) "Happiness" (1979) The first single by the Pointer Sisters as the trio of Anita, June and Ruth Pointer, "Fire" was recorded for the group's November 1978 album release *Energy* with Anita Pointer on lead. Record producer Richard Perry had introduced the song to the Pointers by playing them a tape of Bruce Springsteen singing it, [9] causing Anita Pointer to say: "It's too low for me; I guess you want Ruthie to sing it" to which Perry replied: "No - I want you to sing it." [10] Knight Ridder music critic Christine Arnold cited "Fire" as "Energy's [main] highlight.... Springsteen has created a song that might well have been done by the Ronettes in the '60s, and the Pointers inherit and develop the legacy nicely. Lyrically it's a simple song, but one that captures the indecision of a woman who wants and does not want a man all at the same time. And when the Pointers sing [the lyric] fire it's enough to sear your turntable." [11] Rising to No. 2 on the Hot 100 in *Billboard* magazine in February 1979 (behind Rod Stewart's "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy?"), "Fire" was eventually tied with "Slow Hand" (1981) as the Pointer Sisters' highest-charting single. A hit on *Billboard*'s Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs and Adult Contemporary charts at respectively No. 14 and No. 22, "Fire" also afforded the Pointer Sisters an international chart hit, reaching No. 1 in Belgium, the Netherlands, South Africa and New Zealand, and charting in Australia (No. 7), Austria (No. 10), Canada (No. 3), Germany (No. 35) and the UK (No. 34). Anita Pointer recalled, "['Fire'] became [the Pointer Sisters'] first gold single: we had had gold albums before but I didn't realize what a difference a gold single made 'cause...that one song [is played] over and over all over the world. ['Fire'] really became a major hit for us and made a total difference in our career." [10] *Billboard* named the song No. 48 on their list of 100 Greatest Girl Group Songs of All Time. [12] Personnel • Anita Pointer - lead & backing vocals • Rick Jaeger - drums • Davey Johnstone - guitar • Ruth Pointer - backing vocals • Lenny Castro - tambourine • David Paich - organ, high piano • June Pointer - backing vocals • Gerald Johnson - bass • Jan Winding - acoustic piano Chart performance Chart (1978-79) Peak position Austrian Top 40 10 Australia (Kent Music Report) [13] 7 Canadian RPM Top Singles debuted 23/12/1978 3 Canada RPM Adult Contemporary [14] 1 Flemish Belgium VRT Top 30 1 German Top 100 35 New Zealand RIANZ Singles 1 Netherlands (Dutch Top 40) [15] 1 Netherlands (Single Top 100) [16] 1 South African Singles 1 UK Singles Chart 34 US *Billboard* Hot 100 debuted 11/11/1978 2 US *Billboard* R&B Singles [17] 14 US *Billboard* Adult Contemporary [18] 21 Chart (1979) Rank Australia [19] 43 Canada [20] 50 Flemish Belgium [21] 6 Netherlands [22] 8 New Zealand [23] 20 South Africa [24] 6 US *Billboard* Hot 100 [25] 15 Other versions Shakin' Stevens had a January 1979 UK single release with "Fire" serving as B-Side to his remake of "Endless Sleep". In the Netherlands, the single was issued with "Fire" as the A-side and formatted with a picture sleeve, this Dutch pressing being valued at £200+ in 1987. [26] Robin Williams imitated Elmer Fudd singing "Fire" for his 1983 comedy album *Throbbing Python of Love*. For this abbreviated version of the song (officially titled "Elmer Fudd sings Bruce Springsteen"), Williams imitated Springsteen's vocal stylings, even though Springsteen's first recorded performance of "Fire" was not released until 1986. Williams said he had seen Springsteen perform the song live in concert in 1978. [27] Link Wray, rockabilly guitarist who played on the Robert Gordon version, released his own version on his 1997 live album *Walkin' Down A Street Called Love*. In 2001, contemporary jazz guitarist Chuck Loeb covered the song on his release *In a Heartbeat*. [28] [29] The Rock-afire Explosion covered the song in 1983, with the character Mitzi Mozzarella performing it. In 1998, Des'ree recorded a duet version with Babyface, which appeared on the *Hav Plenty* soundtrack. References ^ Clinton Heylin. *E-Street Shuffle: The Glory Days of Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band*. Viking Penguin (NYC), 1st US ed., 2013, unpaged. ^ Heylin, Clinton (2012). *Song By Song*. London: Penguin. Retrieved 22 August 2019. ^ Carlin, Peter Ames, Bruce, 2013 ^ Marc Dolan. *Bruce Springsteen and the promise of rock 'n' roll*. W. W. Norton & Co (NYC), 1st ed 2012. ISBN 978-0-393-08135-0 p.167. ^ Beviglia, Jim (2014). *Counting Down Bruce Springsteen: his 100 finest songs*. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, p. 144. ISBN 978-1442230651. ^ "The Promise - Modern Elements". *Brucabase*. Brucabase. Retrieved 22 August 2019. ^ Lakeland Ledger, June 12, 1978, p. 15. ^ Whitburn, Joel (2015). *The Comparison Book*. Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin: Record Research Inc., p. 213. 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