

LA JOLLA LIGHT

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La Jollan's love song recorded after 62 years

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By Nicole Reino (nicole@lajollalight.com)

In the same studio where Patty LaBelle, Joan Osborne, Midnight Oil and countless others have recorded songs, Paul Sutton stood there listening intently and keeping the beat with his hand.

Every time he heard a word being sung even a fraction of a note off, the 86-year-old retired physicist first apologized - he didn't want to be difficult - then politely asked the vocalist to sing it again.

After all, who would know how the song goes better than Paul? He wrote it...62 years ago.

Last week, the La Jolla resident finally had it professionally recorded. He played "producer" at Studio West in Rancho Bernardo as vocalist Anthony Bollotta belted out "Just a Dream Away," the love song Paul wrote back in 1946 about his now-wife Doris Sutton.

Paul's daughter, Valerie Sutton, gave him the recording session complete with a vocalist and arranger/pianist, as an early birthday gift. Valerie and Doris attended the session.

"He's the greatest father in the world - he's always giving to us, but he wouldn't give this to himself," said Valerie, who learned of the song and the story behind it a few years ago.

While in the Navy in 1946, Paul was stationed at the site of the Bikini Bomb Tests in the Bikini Islands. He wrote the song about Doris, who was in New York waiting on his return, on the piano in the wardroom of the U.S.S. Wharton in between the historic fourth and fifth atom bomb tests.

The song's refrain:

*Wherever I meet you
Whenever the day
I will wait and love you
Just a dream away...*

When Paul returned to New York later that year, he proposed to Doris atop the Empire State Building and they wed shortly after.

Paul attended graduate school at Columbia University, did glass research at Corning Glass Works and went on to perform optics and laser-related research at Ford Aerospace in Newport Beach. The Suttons moved to La Jolla in the mid-1990s.



Doris Sutton sat beside her husband, Paul Sutton, as he looked through the sheet music for his song, "Just a Dream Away."
Photo by: Nicole Reino



Pianist Marti Amado ran through Paul's song a few times before the vocalist arrived. Doris helped him direct Marti on the tempo.



Valerie Sutton (left) purchased the recording session as a birthday present for her father, Paul. Marti and vocalist Anthony Bollotta (right) did a quick run through of "Just a Dream Away" as Doris listened.

Through all that, the song was stuck in a drawer.

Some of Paul's friends attempted to record a version of the song in 2006, but Doris and Paul felt it sounded too mournful. The song was meant to be hopeful and romantic.

That version is what Valerie wanted to give to her father as an early birthday present (he turns 87 on Dec. 3).

She learned of Studio West online. Through the studio, she found composer, arranger and pianist Marti Amado and vocalist Anthony Bollotta.



Anthony sang "Just a Dream Away" in the vocal booth.

Last week, the duo brought life to the song that had been tucked away for 62 years.

"It was a lot more than I ever thought would happen with the song," Paul said. "It was great."

Listen to the song and see additional photos from the recording session:

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