

Mark Knopfler's "Brothers in Arms" Phenomenon - 20 Years On

By Susan Dagostino Is it nostalgia, or something more? This weekend, Radio Veronica in Holland announced that Dire Straits' Brothers in Arms from 1985 was voted by its listeners as the #2 album of all time, being edged out by another mega-CD from the 80s, U2's The Joshua Tree. In February, at the 48th annual Grammy Awards, Mark Knopfler was awarded (along with Chuck Ainlay and Bob Ludwig) for 2005's "Best Surround Sound Album" for the 5.1 surround sound re-mix and mastering of the CD Brothers In Arms – 20th Anniversary Edition. Rolling Stone listed it as one of the 500 greatest albums of all time back in 2003, when it hadn't yet racked up its current sales figures of 29 million copies worldwide. Q Magazine called it the 51st Greatest British Album of all time. (And why not? It was the best selling album of the decade in the UK in the 80s.) Why the fascination with these nine songs? It could be due to the fact that it was one of the first albums ever to be recorded in an all-digital format and released on compact disc back in May 1985, and the first CD to break a million sales worldwide. It's safe to say that more people owned a copy of Brothers in Arms than owned CD players at the time. Some have gone so far as to say that the sales success of the album prompted more people to purchase CD stereo equipment, thus driving prices downward, and inspired other artists to get on board with digital recording and releasing more quickly. It could also be said that the groundbreaking single "Money for Nothing" – with its MTV references, state-of-the-art computer animation graphics, and intensely catchy guitar riffs – could have been the sole reason the CD made its way to the top spot on the Billboard charts in 1985. Just one song of what Rolling Stone's Debby Bull referred to as "winsomely rocking tunes," the album went on to produce two more hit singles with "Walk of Life" and "So Far Away." Since the 80s, the title track has also been used to set the mood as background music for films and television programs (such as The West Wing and Spy Game). A series of more than 200 Dire Straits concerts, over the course of an entire year, followed the release of the album. Philips, maker of the compact disc and owner of Dire Straits' record label PolyGram, sponsored the tour and sold more copies in the process. Regardless of why the album sold so well, Mark Knopfler's music didn't simply touch a nerve with the buying public. Brothers in Arms also carved out a spot in collections and bookcases around the world as the preferred and permanent soundtrack of our lives back in the mid-1980s. Times may have changed, and the headbands may have long since been put away, but the lyrics and guitar work on this amazing album – along with its crystal clear recording – will live on.

About the Author

Mark Knopfler is a singer, songwriter and guitar player touring in 2006 with Emmylou Harris to promote their new album "All the Roadrunning". For Mark Knopfler news, biography, photographs, and tour information visit the site: <http://www.knopfler.info> Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Susan_Dagostino

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