

Pop and rock

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|Obituary|

Eydie Gorme obituary

Popular TV and nightclub singer who also performed in a double act with her husband Steve Lawrence



📷 Eydie Gorme and Steve Lawrence were masters of the classic American popular song. Photograph: AP

Adam Sweeting

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With her husband Steve Lawrence, Eydie Gorme, who has died aged 84, was one of the last survivors of an American show-business tradition that dated back to the big-band era and the golden age of lounge entertainment. Their stock-in-trade was their mastery of the classic American popular song, coupled with a comic act they had been developing since they first met in the early 1950s.

Outside the duo Steve and Eydie, they both enjoyed successful solo careers. Gorme reached No 10 in Britain in 1962 with [Yes, My Darling Daughter](#), and had a US top 10 hit the following year with [Blame It on the](#)

Bossa Nova. The latter earned her a Grammy nomination for best female vocal performance and became something of a trademark song.

She was born Edith Gormezano in the Bronx, New York City. Her mother was Turkish, her father, a tailor, was Sicilian, and both were Sephardic Jews. The youngest of three children, brought up speaking English and Spanish, Gorme worked as a Spanish interpreter with the UN after graduating from William Howard Taft high school in 1946.

But having sung in a band at school, she was determined to make a career in the entertainment business. By 1950 she was singing with Tommy Tucker's band, then moved on to Tex Beneke's ensemble before striking out on a solo career in 1952.

The following year, Gorme was given a regular television slot on The Tonight Show, then hosted by Steve Allen. There she met Lawrence, already a singer on the show, and by 1954, when NBC had begun networking the New York programme nationally, they had released Make Yourself Comfortable, their first single as co-headliners.

Eydie Gorme & Trio Los Panchos



They married in Las Vegas in December 1957, by which time Gorme had built up her solo reputation with hits including Mama, Teach Me to Dance (1956) and Love Me Forever (1957), as well as a couple of top 20 LPs. For

the next few years, she continued registering solo hits, most notably [You Need Hands](#) in 1958. Meanwhile, her joint appearances with her husband grew steadily in popularity, greatly boosted by their appearances on television; and they briefly had their own show, *The Steve Lawrence-Eydie Gorme Show*.

The pair's momentum slowed when Lawrence was called up for military service and Gorme turned her attention to motherhood. But by 1960 they were back making club appearances, and the title track of their first duo album, *We Got Us*, won a Grammy award.

When Beatlemania struck the US, Gorme cannily took a step sideways and recorded an album in Spanish, *Amor* (1964), with the Trio Los Panchos, and it lodged in the charts for several months. In 1965 came a follow-up, *More Amor*, and in 1966 her Spanish-language album, *Navidad Means Christmas*, was a hit. She also won a best female vocal performance Grammy in 1966 for her hit version of *If He Walked Into My Life*, from the musical *Mame*.

She reunited with her husband for the album *Together on Broadway* (1967), after which they co-starred in a Broadway musical, *Golden Rainbow* (1968), which ran for a year. But pop and rock were making life harder for artists like Gorme and Lawrence and they made their final singles chart appearance with [We Can Make It Together](#) (1972), featuring the Osmonds.

They established a series of award-winning TV tributes to composers such as George Gershwin (*Our Love Is Here to Stay*, 1975), Cole Porter (*From This Moment On*, 1977) and Irving Berlin (*Steve and Eydie Celebrate Irving Berlin*, 1978). The last of these collected seven Emmys. Gorme revisited the fertile pastures of the Latin market with the albums *La Gorme* (1976) and *Muy Amigos/Close Friends* (1977).



📷 Eydie Gorme and Steve Lawrence perform at the Sahara hotel, Las Vegas, in 1961.
Photograph: AP

Henceforth Gorme and Lawrence recorded infrequently, though in 1990 they released the album *Alone Together* on their own label, GL Music, which also began reissuing their back catalogue on CD. They were embraced by another generation when they covered *Black Hole Sun*, by

the rock band [Soundgarden](#), for the compilation album Lounge-A-Palooza (1997).

The couple maintained a steady stream of engagements in [Las Vegas](#), and continued to pack halls from coast to coast. In 1990 they guested on the Frank Sinatra Diamond Jubilee Tour, marking his 75th birthday. "Eydie and I have always been conscious of the fact that our audience likes the music we do, and we've never disappointed them," Lawrence commented.

Gorme is survived by her husband; her son, David, a composer of movie soundtracks; and a granddaughter. Another son, Michael, predeceased her.

Eydie Gorme (Edith Gormezano), singer, born 16 August 1928; died 10 August 2013

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