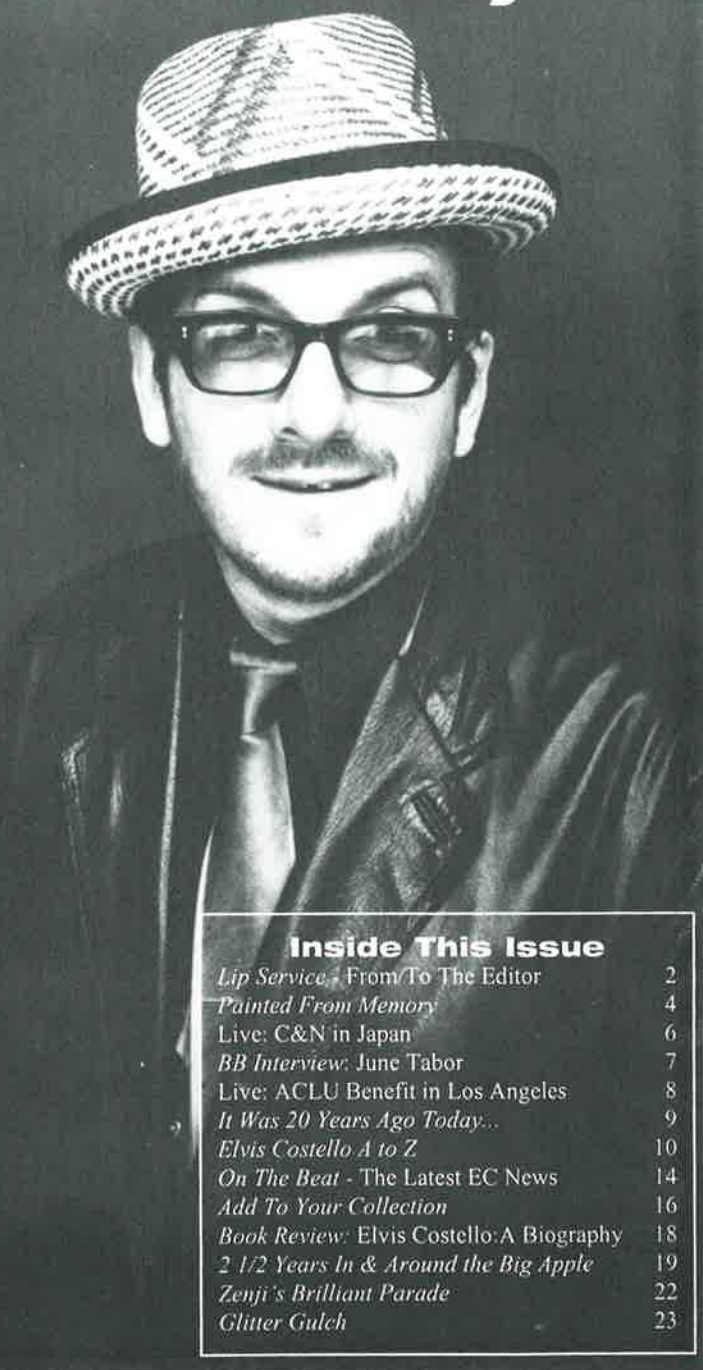


## **Elvis Costello with Burt Bacharach *Painted From Memory***



### **Inside This Issue**

<i>Lip Service</i> - From/To The Editor	2
<i>Painted From Memory</i>	4
Live: C&N in Japan	6
BB Interview: June Tabor	7
Live: ACLU Benefit in Los Angeles	8
<i>It Was 20 Years Ago Today...</i>	9
<i>Elvis Costello A to Z</i>	10
<i>On The Beat</i> - The Latest EC News	14
<i>Add To Your Collection</i>	16
<i>Book Review: Elvis Costello: A Biography</i>	18
<i>2 1/2 Years In &amp; Around the Big Apple</i>	19
<i>Zenji's Brilliant Parade</i>	22
<i>Glitter Gulch</i>	23



From The Editor

In 1973, I attended my first rock concert - Jethro Tull at Madison Square Garden in New York City. I was just a 16-year-old junior in high school and this adventure required that I pay the price of quitting the track team. Can you imagine the coach not excusing me from practice so that I could hear Ian Anderson sing "Aqualung" and play his flute while standing on one leg? In retrospect, this was simply a prelude to many other sacrifices I would later make in life for rock 'n roll!

Throughout my years living just 20 minutes outside of Manhattan, I would often take the subway train to the "Garden" to join 19,499 other fans for an "intimate" concert experience. Along with special events such as Elton John (with surprise guest John Lennon) in 1974 and Springsteen at "No Nukes" in 1980, I also saw run of the mill shows by the likes of The Moody Blues, Allman Bros., Rod Stewart and Peter Frampton. It seemed that it was easy for any reasonably popular band to sell out the largest venue in this populous city. For example, Squeeze sold out the venue at the high point of their career. Eventually, Elvis Costello would also get his chance.

After a busy 1989, the following year was a quiet one for Elvis Costello. His only live appearance was in October for Neil Young's

"Bridge Benefit" concert in California. It was a performance notable for the debut of both the "Beard" and two new songs. In the Spring of 1991, *Mighty Like a Rose* was released and it was followed by a world tour with a pared down Rude "now there were" 5 featuring Thomas, Ribot, Knechtel and Scheff.

In the middle of the tour, I ventured to three great shows in the Midwest that were heavy on promoting *MLAR* and an LP not yet released (*Kojak Variety*). I also could not resist the temptation of seeing the tour's final show on June 22, 1991 at Madison Square Garden and sharing in the splendor.

After a show in Massachusetts the night before the "Garden Party," I got to speak to Elvis and tried to engage him in my enthusiasm for the upcoming show. I asked if he had planned anything special, even suggesting that he close the tour with "Poor Napoleon" as he had done on Broadway in 1986. Although he was obviously thrilled that he had sold out the venue, he was prepared to humbly treat it just like any other show.

I should have remembered from my past Garden experiences. The show was full of casual concert-goers who go to see anyone and everyone who plays there! If this same show was playing at another venue in town, it wouldn't even hit their radar screen. And the addition of The Replacements to the bill certainly helped sell out the show.

Listening to the music was only a small part of why most of the crowd was in attendance this night. Talking with their friends and buying beer and hot dogs often took precedence over the music and was also distracting to those who cared. Of course they all knew and loved "Alison" and "Pump It

Up." (The only two songs shown on US television later this year from the Montreux Jazz Festival - a real slap in the face to the new LP.) Nonetheless, it was a thrill seeing Elvis play this renowned venue of my teen years. I felt very proud for him to have achieved this stature.

Oh yeah - what did I like about the show? - the reworked live versions of "Suit of

Lights" and "Temptation," and the great encore of "Sweet Pear." But my most vivid memory from MSG was during what would be The Replacements' penultimate concert together. They encored with "Hootenanny" and the band members all traded instruments!

*Hey - I've moved to the Nashville area! See my new address below.*



<http://come.to/beyond-belief>

### Mike Bodayle

115 McGavock Circle  
Franklin, Tennessee 37064-2938  
[mbodayle@txdirect.net](mailto:mbodayle@txdirect.net)

### Mark Perry

6 Hillside Grove  
Taunton, Somerset TA1 4LA England  
[mark@perrys.prestel.co.uk](mailto:mark@perrys.prestel.co.uk)

### Dave Pannell

13 Banool Cres. Bayonet Head  
Albany 6330 Australia  
[David.Pannell@uwa.edu.au](mailto:David.Pannell@uwa.edu.au)

### Subscriptions:

*Beyond Belief* is published 4 times a year with a double-issue in December. A one-year subscription is US\$20, UK£15 or AUS\$35. Please send cash, check or money order payable to the appropriate person above. In Japan, the cost is US\$25 payable through Mike. Let us know which issue to start with.

### Staff:

Mike Bodayle, Editor  
Mark Perry, European Editor  
Alfonso Cardenas, Dave Farr, Byron Wilson, Contributing Editors  
Christine Perry, Administration (UK)  
Dave Pannell, Administration (Aust.)  
Janet Wilson, Art Director  
Lang Zimmerman, Copy Editor  
Tony Sacchetti, Photography

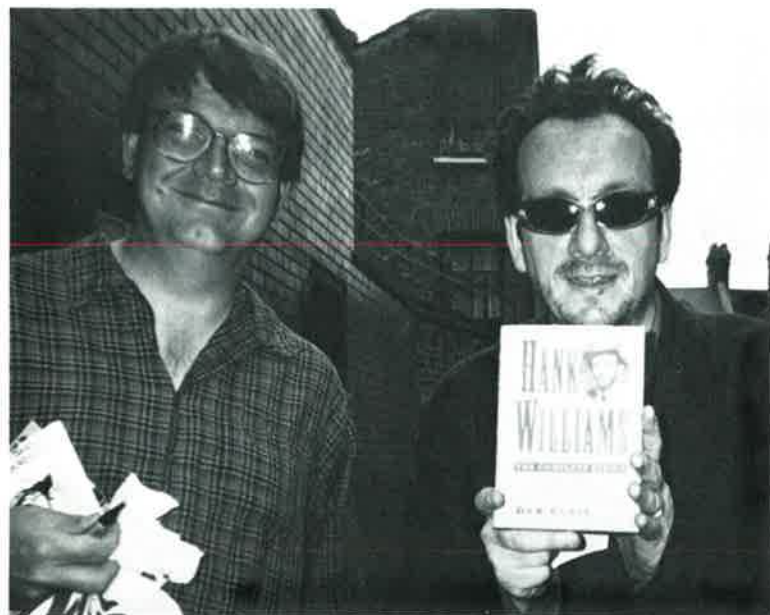
### Correspondents:

Olivier Ridolphi, France  
John Foyle, Ireland  
Giovanni Pompili, Italy  
Masanori Saito, Japan  
Sverre Ronny Saetrum, Scandinavia  
Xavier Escutia, Spain

### Special Thanks:

Zenji Nagahata, Rob Tangle at Mercury  
and Pat Dull at Break-Up! Records.

All contents are copyright © 1998 Beyond Belief.



*EC shows off his 1994 gift from Peter Gale of Berkshire, England which they later discussed in the February 1998 issue of Q magazine.*



## To The Editor

### NOTE FROM BILL

Continued thanks for including me on your *Beyond Belief* mailing list of subscribers. I do enjoy the 'zine and look forward to every issue. All the best.

Bill Lloyd, Nashville, TN, USA

*Be sure to check out Bill's great 1994 LP Set to Pop on the East Side Digital label. Bill was formerly part of Foster and Lloyd.*

### NOTE FROM POLAND

Thanks a lot for the latest issue of BB. You've heard it plenty of times by now, but I must say you have been doing a great job. For someone who lives in a country where EC is practically a nobody, and who hasn't got a regular access to Internet, *Beyond Belief* is an invaluable source of information. Keep up the superb work!

Jacek Ratajczak, Kalisz, POLAND

### STARTS LIKE FASCINATION

I'm 35. I first heard Elvis when I switched on "Street Heat" on Radio Luxembourg and caught the last bit of "Pump It Up". I went out and bought the single the next day. 20-ish years, 18-ish LP's, 7-ish live gigs, a couple of T-shirts and a book later, I wish I'd switched the radio on a couple of minutes later.

Johnny Glover, ENGLAND

### WHEN HARRY MET ELVIS & WENDY

Thanks very much for issue 15 of *Beyond Belief*. I was very impressed. I thought the feature about Mike Bodayle's trip to London should have been longer. It would have been nice to hear more about him studying tour dates and I would have liked more information on his lovely wife and less about rare Elvis Costello promos. Two questions though: has he become a plumber yet and how's Colin?

You will be ever so *slightly* interested to learn that Elvis and *his* lovely wife crossed my path recently at the Tate Gallery where I sometimes work. He made a very short trip to see the Bonnard exhibition which finished in May. I didn't get to talk to him myself but my friend Carmel got his autograph. He was very friendly and told her she had an Irish face [*smooth talking bastard - Ed.*]. When she told him that her mother was Irish he seemed very impressed and asked lots of questions about where exactly she was from and so on. As well as his autograph he drew her a little self portrait which, no doubt, will one day be worth a fortune. Astonishingly, who should

arrive ten minutes later but young(ish) Wendy James. I had spoken to Elvis at the Tate about a year and a half ago when he came to the Cezanne show with his mother. What a nice bloke! Wendy, on the other hand, came across as a bit of a stropo cow. No free copy of *Frank* for her.

Harry Pye, *Frank* magazine,  
London, ENGLAND.

*Curious readers (the more curious the better) can check out the latest online edition of Mr Pye's vital organ at [www.geocities.com/SoHo/Coffeehouse/4219](http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Coffeehouse/4219). Issue 17 covers an encounter with David Bowie, plus interviews with the great Chris Morris and some weirdo from Beyond Belief.*

### WHAT SHALL WE DO, WHAT SHALL WE DO ... ?

What a funny old place Croydon is. Martin Newsagents in Church Street are selling what looks like a truck load of *All This Useless Beauty* CDs for 50 pence each. They are a bit bashed up, but even so ...

Wolfram Roddewig, Croydon, ENGLAND

### STAND BY ME

I extremely enjoy your publication, it's full of informative material. With reference to the *20 Years Ago* feature in *BB16*, I can supply more information on the show at Nijmegen on June 26, 1978. I was there with my wife. It was the first of a whole series of Costello shows I have attended. The support act was Suicide, who hardly got a chance to play a few songs before they were spitted at (legacy of the Sex Pistols) and booed off the stage. Before Costello took the stage it was announced that there would be NO ENCORES. They announced this beforehand!!! The show was magic to my ears. To play the amount of songs that Elvis did, every other act would need twice the time. What a tempo - no room to applaud one number before the next one was half finished. Boy, I loved it. One rare treat on this evening was the performance of "Stand By Me", the only occasion to my knowledge where Elvis has played this Ben E. King song. Despite the fact that the performance is not listed in any reference source (Richard Groothuizen's book mistakenly lists "Imagine" as the song played) I am 100% sure he played it - no doubt about it - as I am a huge John Lennon fan (Lennon released his version only a few years before). I swear Elvis played it there and then. Ask him if you get a chance.

Huib Beulen, Montfort, NETHERLANDS

*OK, Huib, OK. We believe you. No, really, we do.*

### NO EC AT LIPA

I'm sad to report that I have just graduated from the Liverpool Institute of the Performing Arts after 3 years there, with no EC appearance there the whole time. I kept hearing rumors every now and then, and I believe he was originally supposed to come when he was in Liverpool for the *ATUB* tour in July of 1996, but that apparently fell through! Knowing my luck, he'll come next year, when my access to the building is terminated! Sorry I wasn't able to get you a report!

Connor Ratliff, Jefferson City, MO, USA



### BB-Binders

**STILL AVAILABLE:** Designed exclusively for *Beyond Belief* by the Jesse Jones Box Corporation, this attractive slip-case binder is embossed with the BB-logo and will hold up to 7-years worth of your favorite Costello fanzine. Please send your payment as per the subscription instructions on page 2. Kindly allow for surface delivery to Europe and the Far East.

	Cost	Postage
USA	US\$15	\$3
Canada	US\$15	\$4
UK/Europe	£10	£3
Australia	AUS\$20	AUS\$7
Japan	US\$15	\$5

### Back Issues

**SPECIAL** Issues 1 to 16 are all available although some quantities are getting limited. For now through the next issue, all back issues can be purchased at the regular issue price: USA and Canada \$4, UK/Europe £3, Australia AUS \$7 and Japan US \$5.

**HOLIDAY IDEA** Why not send that special friend a gift subscription for the holidays? We will send a special gift card out in time for the holidays. Binders and back issues also make wonderful gifts.

**Thanks for your help:** Orrin Anderson, Mike Hernandez, Andrew Neumeyer, Andrew Sandoval, Robert Sabat, Tim Windsor, Chris Carson, Bill Brown, Lee Courtney, Chris Wright and Francois Drouin.

*Sorry that we are a bit late with this issue. Between waiting for info on the new LP and moving to Tennessee, we did the best we could. Watch for a double-BB in December!*

# PAINTED FROM MEMORY

## Costello's Second Masterpiece

**A**lmost two and a half years on from the commercial debacle of *All This Useless Beauty*, his final collection of new material for Warners, Elvis has returned to the public eye this month with *Painted From Memory*, the eighteenth album (excluding compilations) of his 22-year professional career and the first under a wide-ranging new deal with PolyGram. Subtitled *The New Songs of Bacharach & Costello*, the record's worldwide release by Mercury Records on 28<sup>th</sup> September (29<sup>th</sup> September in the USA) marked the culmination of a joint writing and recording project with Burt Bacharach dating back to 1995 when noted musical supervisor Karyn Rachtman first persuaded the pair to work together (or via the oft-mentioned answering and fax machines!) on a song for the Allison Anders film *Grace of My Heart*.

**Writing:** So fruitful were their labours on the Grammy-nominated "God Give Me Strength" that EC approached Burt regarding a full album collaboration and, in early 1997, they held the first in a series of writing sessions which took place in Santa Monica and New York. "Our songwriting sessions usually lasted for about five days," Elvis noted in *Details* magazine, "either at Burt's music room by the Pacific or around a rented piano in a New York hotel suite. The way we worked was different for each song. Sometimes I would sketch out the entire opening melody; other times I would simply be lyricist to a complete Bacharach composition." The intensity of their work together seems to have come as something of a surprise even to EC himself: "Burt redefines the word obsessive," he confessed to UK newspaper *The Guardian*, "I thought I was bad, but I've met my match here. Mind you, he's been at it a lot longer than me."

**Recording:** Having given fans a sneak preview of one new song, "This House Is Empty Now," during the *One Amazing Night* TV tribute to Burt in April, the pair retreated

into Los Angeles' Ocean Way Studios during a swelteringly hot summer for what *ICE* magazine described as "two arduous sessions," emerging with 11 tracks deemed worthy of inclusion alongside "GGMS" on the finished album. "Although we discussed almost every detail in advance," wrote EC in *Details*, "there's nothing quite like hearing the full picture emerge for the first time. In two weeks we put together the final pieces of each recording. There were two days with a twenty-four-piece string orchestra; sessions for background voices, brass, and woodwinds; and a day to add all kinds of tuned percussion instruments . . . Much of the singing was done live at the rhythm section sessions, me taking cues from Burt as he conducted the band from the piano."

**Promotion:** As we went to press, the aggressive campaign promised by Mercury in support of their new charge's first release was in full swing. "A record like this comes around every 10 years," Mercury Records Group senior VP of marketing Michael Krumper told *Billboard*. "The collaboration of two people whom so many hold so closely to their hearts makes the album an event." Elvis did some press and TV work in September, including a trip to Europe early in the month, and a "satellite media tour" was scheduled to take place around the album release date. Other promotional plans included a TV special on the making of the album to be screened by the year-end, a "Words & Music" CD which Mercury had hoped to have available free to US purchasers on release date (but which wasn't quite ready in time) and in-store appearances at Virgin Megastores in New York and Los Angeles. PolyGram were also readying a companion album featuring jazz reworkings of *Painted From Memory* songs by Bill Frisell for release on the Verve label in the first quarter of 1999. Other media activity included US TV appearances on CBS's *Late Show with David Letterman* (28<sup>th</sup> Sept) and ABC's *Regis & Kathy Lee* (29<sup>th</sup> Sept.) while Elvis and Burt were due at the Sony Studios in New York on 18<sup>th</sup> October to

film for PBS's *Sessions at West 54<sup>th</sup>*. EC & Steve Nieve were also lined up to appear at radio station WBMX Boston's MIXFest on 10<sup>th</sup> October.

**Tour:** With the 70-year-old Bacharach reportedly not keen to undertake extensive touring, an exclusive series of concerts was scheduled for the USA in October featuring Elvis & Burt with an orchestra and a backing band including former Attraction Steve Nieve. "Burt and I will probably begin the show together, playing songs from the record," Costello told *Allstar* magazine. "Then one or the other of us will leave the stage for a short period so we can play songs from our respective catalogues." As we went to press, an appearance at London's Royal Festival Hall was added to the brief EC/BB itinerary and it appeared likely that Costello & Nieve would tour more extensively behind the album later on. (The usual comprehensive *BB* coverage of concerts and other promotional activities will appear in our next issue.)

### Elvis Costello & Burt Bacharach: Together In Concert Tour October 1998

- 13<sup>th</sup>: Radio City Music Hall  
New York, NY
- 15<sup>th</sup>: Constitution Hall,  
Washington, DC
- 16<sup>th</sup>: Chicago Theater  
Chicago, IL
- 20<sup>th</sup>: Universal Amphitheater  
Universal City, CA
- 29<sup>th</sup>: Royal Festival Hall  
London, ENGLAND

**Reaction:** Early media reaction to *Painted From Memory* has been mostly positive, but the album clearly represents something of a challenge for Mercury's marketing department and seems certain to divide opinion between both critics and Costello fans. Final word on the subject goes to the man himself, speaking to *The Guardian*: "When I do something like this - outside the normal parameters of rock and roll - it's usually on my own terms, within my capabilities. I'm not frustrated with the limitations of rock and roll, or anything like that. It's just that there are different strengths to this music. It's not better than rock or soul or whatever; it just isn't those things. I'm not asking everybody to come along for the ride, but it would be nice if they listened with an open mind."



## The Album:

### By Dave Farr

The new album, the fruit of EC's collaboration with Burt Bacharach, has been awaited with a mixture of great excitement and trepidation. The reviews have been mixed (although more positive than negative), even among Costello admirers. So much of one's initial reactions, at least, can be traced to his or her preconceptions: not only of what Burt Bacharach's music is like (and therefore must continue to be like), but also of what Costello's music is like (or ought to be like, and therefore "should be" again). Once the preconceptions are put aside, however, and one can acknowledge that Bacharach is no mere "schmaltz-meister," and that Elvis' brilliance lies in his ability (and desire) to go down diverse musical paths (as he did with such great results on *The Juliet Letters*), one can begin to appreciate this wonderful record. Less like a collection of new Bacharach-David songs than a "saloon singer" record like the Sinatra discs EC has always championed (*Only the Lonely*, *No One Cares*), this is an inspired set of songs about lost love, the losing of it, and the pain of the loss.

Yes, there are problems. The instrumentation occasionally employs sounds from the 1970s (electric pianos chugging along, cheesy guitar solos) that fail to serve the songs. The backing vocalists only enhance the songs some of the time; in other instances, their somewhat childlike tone serves to distract. The complex lyrics of past Elvis records has been replaced by a much more direct style; this may put some folks off, but it is the music, authored by both artists here, that contains the complexity. And yes, as the negative reviews tend to underline, EC's vocals are often pushed to their limit here and he occasionally has to sing in an overreaching way. But for critics to wish for a smooth vocalist like Luther Vandross or any of the cookie cutter virtuosos that litter the airwaves these days is to completely miss the point.

Leaving aside that 98 percent of the vocals are the best Elvis has yet recorded, in those instances where his reach may exceed his grasp the emotion of the song and the heart of it are only enhanced, not lessened. Elvis continues to become, technically, a more and more adept vocalist. In terms of conveying emotion and soul, he has always been among the best, and this is what makes this record work. The contrast between Bacharach's brilliant but sometimes too lush arrangements and EC's brilliant but sometimes too rough vocals keeps this record from being too bland. And for the majority of the time, the two are

hitting just the right notes, literally and figuratively.

What I would like to point out below are some of the many, many moments on this record where the vocal, or the music, or both, stir my heart, open my eyes, or take my breath away.

**In the Darkest Place** A strong start with the vocal especially conveying the sadness, agitation, and resignation of one who knows he has lost his lover. *Magic Moments*: The loud, alarm-like piano notes leading out of the second verse; the desperate way "he won't love you like I do" is sung, followed by a space in the music that feels like the bottom dropping out; the "speaking part" given to the backup singers; the beautiful coda, with lovely backing vocals joined by EC first gasping out "that is, where you'll, find me" and then singing falsetto with the backing.

**Toledo** The most immediately accessible number, with its echoes of trademark Bacharach motifs and inscrutable chorus. *Magic Moments*: The opening, with a few seconds of a rattling drum roll from Jim Keltner followed by the most Burt-like musical theme on the record, a flugelhorn line that you can't get out of your head (repeated after the first chorus); the way the backing vocals on the subsequent choruses are presaged by the notes which shadow Elvis on the first one; the chorus vocals, especially the way "anybody," "Ohio," and "citadel" are sung, but also the short stops for phrases like "dream of," and "it's not."

**I Still Have That Other Girl** A perfect little soul ballad, the shortest track and one which feels like it ends too soon. *Magic Moments*: The drama as the music swells and leads us to the chorus, with Elvis bearing down on "But I just/Know I must."; the figure played under "because I still . . ." first on piano and then expertly amplified on the next chorus with full strings; the way the chorus is sung; the strings under the "there may be . . ." lines on the bridge; Elvis' full throated wail on "crying," followed by an immediate and precipitous drop back down to the "That is why" line, with no breath in between; the perfect pull-back on the last word of the song, sparing us melodrama and giving us real sorrow instead.

**This House is Empty Now** A sad tour, with a rawer and more immediate vocal performance. *Magic Moments*: the intro, sounding very much like a *Juliet Letters* outtake for a moment; the out of breath way Elvis sings, so that it sounds the way one

might talk while crying; the extended vocal lines leading up to the choruses, on words like "see," "face," "there," "of," "recognize" and "fine"; the sobbing grace of "unHAPPY then," and "throw away the key."

**Tears at the Birthday Party** An almost jaunty number, almost music-hall in style. The backing vocals here distract with a somewhat shrill tone. *Magic Moments*: The low saxophone that opens the track; the piano over the verses, very much a Steve Nieve kind of sound ("Talking in the Dark" comes to mind); the "what . . . if" on the choruses; the notes that follow "share your cake with him."

**Such Unlikely Lovers** A bit too steeped in 70's style music, and feeling a bit forced in its attempts to sound happy (or is that the point?). EC's vocals get a bit overwrought here, and the title phrase sung by the backup singers grates. Still, the main riff on electric piano is a strong hook. *Magic Moments*: The verses are sung very well; the violins, when they do appear, are inescapably clever. And something about that "somebody help me" makes me smile.

**My Thief** As strong a standard as EC has ever done, in the league of Gershwin. A melody that breaks your heart, especially the lilting extended note in the last line of each verse, with the best singing on the record and a lovely accompaniment. *Magic Moments*: All of the vocals, but particularly the way EC sings "be my thief" so quietly and at a full stop; the brilliant use of the strings, swelling up here, quietly weeping there; the dueling grand pianos; the horn line under "I know it's over . . ."; the very "Boy with a Problem"-like intro to the gorgeous piano solo in the coda; and yes, the vocal solo that closes the song, with a waiflike vocal that sometimes irritates but also somehow conjures up a lullaby mood and also the kind of sad, childlike falsetto heard on my old Rickie Lee Jones records.

**The Long Division** A close cousin to "Such Unlikely Lovers," but more successful; still, it is marred by the retro sounds of a very prominent electric piano which brings to mind Michael McDonald, Donald Fagen, and maybe Richard Tee, as well some "tasty" guitar licks and even a Moog solo! *Magic Moments*: The instrumental intro; the interplay between lead and backup singers on the track, by far the best on the record (the backing vocalists finally sound over 18), especially the dialogue where Elvis sings "that it's a joke"

CONTINUED on Page 23

A

CLOUDY, MUGGY DAY greeted the first day of the Fuji Rock Festival on August 1 in Tokyo. But the day turned hot



when the sun came out, leaving festival goers sunburned and thirsty. The site of the event this year was at Tokyo Bayside Square, a large field made from reclaimed land. Surrounded on all sides by water, it was quite scenic, with views of Rainbow Bridge, Tokyo Tower, and the downtown skyline. Bands appearing on this first day included Bjork, Beck, Elvis Costello and Steve Nieve, Sonic Youth, Garbage, Stereophonics and Midget.

Due to the fact that the site is built on reclaimed land (man made by filling in parts of Tokyo Bay), the entire ground would shake as if there was an earthquake every time the overzealous fans would pogo to the beat of their favorite tunes. Although it did not rain on the day of the event, there was a problem with mud as a result of previous days' rain. Despite this, people managed to put it out of their minds and enjoy the music and the atmosphere that only a festival like this can provide. And at the back of the venue, there was plenty of room to lay out plastic sheets on the grass and sit down and relax.

There were many concessions at the festival, and one of the first things I did was to go to the merchandise area to see if there was any Costello merchandise available. Sadly, there was nothing. But I did pick up a festival booklet which had a one-page feature on the duo, of course written only in Japanese. I got the feeling that the press did not know what to say about the Costello & Nieve pair, since they have only one release together (the out of print limited edition 5-CD box set issued in 1997), and have not done any official tours together other than a jaunt through the US in 1996 and Italy in early 1998. In fact, they did not even have a photo of the two together, hence the booklet included just one photo of Elvis by himself, presumably taken during the *All This Useless Beauty* tour of 1996.

Professional video cameramen were on hand to document the event and provide excellent footage broadcast on a huge screen to the left of the stage, visible even in bright sunlight. WOWOW, a satellite station in Japan, was to broadcast four hours of footage from the two-day festival on August

## COSTELLO & NIEVE PLAY JAPAN'S FUJI ROCK FESTIVAL

by Peter Redin

14, though it was uncertain whether or not any of the C&N set would be shown. Many press photographers were present, so it is likely a few shots will appear in some magazines here in the next month or so. *Crossbeat* is publishing a special issue on the Festival, which will hit the newsstands on August 18.

The first band of the day (Midget) began playing at 10:10 a.m., but Costello and Nieve did not come on stage until 4:35 p.m. Costello was dressed in a black suit and black shirt, gold-rimmed wraparound shades and the extremely short haircut he has been sporting recently. He played a brand new Fender Telecaster which still had the tag dangling from it, promptly torn off and discarded by the end of the first song. Several fans commented on how "cool" this guitar looked. Having always had a weakness for Telecasters, I could not help but agree. Nieve played a full-sized Steinway grand piano, and wore a Hawaiian shirt and trousers. The sound was not too bad considering that this was an outdoor venue. However, this observation was made from near the stage, and it is unlikely that the people in the back would agree.

It had been two years since I had last seen Costello live when he toured Japan with the Attractions in 1996. While watching Costello playing at Fuji Fest it dawned on me (again) how much of a thrill it is to see him perform live, and it made me sad to think that soon that thrill would be gone. I guess I feel a bit nostalgic now that the Attractions have disbanded, and there is little chance they will play together again. To further frustrate me, the C&N set this time was a mere 43 minutes and included only 12 songs with just a single encore.

They opened up with "Accidents Will Happen," and rolled through most of the set with businesslike acumen and not a lot of chit chat. After their seventh song ("Shallow Grave"), Costello shouted that they were now taking requests, but promptly ignored the multitudes shouting out their favorites, and launched into "Alison."

The highlights of the gig would have to be the first-ever live performances in the Costello & Nieve arrangements of "Everyday I Write the Book," "Blue Chair," "Less Than Zero,"



"(I Don't Want to Go to) Chelsea," "(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love and Understanding," and

"Pump It Up." The main highlight was to hear these songs done in their new arrangements, but as previously mentioned, the versions were not particularly inspiring. It left me wondering why they did not play any new songs like they did on the Italian tour. I was also puzzled as to why they would come all the way to Japan to play a 43 minute set, and not even perform at some other venues during their stay here. (Not to despair, however, since there was a rumoured possibility of Costello returning to Japan in November with a new band.)

It would be difficult to say that their performance was inspiring, or even great, but, as I mentioned above, I was just happy to have them on stage in front of me. There were several rough spots in the performance, including a botched ending on "(I Don't Want to Go to) Chelsea" and forgotten words on "(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love and Understanding." I also had a general feeling that either they had not rehearsed enough or the mixture of the heat of Tokyo and jet lag had taken toll on their physical condition. Furthermore, EC's voice sounded a bit hoarse, which is surprising considering this gig was not part of a tour, but just a one night stand.

The estimated attendance at the festival was around 30,000 people, but for the Costello & Nieve set, the crowds did not pack up so tightly around the stage making it easy to get close and see well. Several people were taking pictures, and it made me wish I had brought a camera, even though the promoters had strictly forbidden their use. Also, it seems, several tapers were in the audience with their DAT decks running, so you might see some tapes or CDs of this performance appear before too long.

Because of the subdued nature of an acoustic performance, the crowd was very well-behaved during the Costello & Nieve set and nobody was dancing. However, the people near the stage were very enthusiastic, yelling out requests and cheering loudly throughout the show. One young Japanese man with his girlfriend remarked how happy he was that he could so easily get close to the stage. I imagine he has had the same experience as I have had many times in Japan, where it is





*Brad Kearns with June Tabor at Music Millennium in Portland, OR on March 14.*

impossible to get good seats for reserved-seat events, due to the incredible demand for tickets for popular acts. Personally, I also had expected it to be impossible to get so close to the stage, so I too was thrilled to be only about 25 feet from the edge of the security barrier.

Overall, it was a good day. The setting of an outdoor event is usually far from intimate, and this was no exception, but it could have been a lot worse. I miss the days when Costello would play a solo performance in Tokyo and after the show would come out and sign autographs. I had hoped to be able to do something like this at Fuji Fest, but the promoters saw to it that the artists were strictly "protected" from their fans by busing them to and from the stage in trucks with black tinted glass. At the end of the day, I rode the train home with muddy boots, sunburn, a headache, and another memory of a Costello performance to add to my collection. Not such a bad day I guess.

#### SET LIST:

Accidents Will Happen  
(The Angels Want to Wear My) Red Shoes  
Talking in The Dark  
Everyday I Write the Book  
Blue Chair  
Less Than Zero  
Shallow Grave  
Alison  
(I Don't Want to Go to) Chelsea  
Veronica  
(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace Love and Understanding  
Pump It Up

*Photos courtesy of "Smash" on-line.*

## Beyond Belief Chats with June Tabor

**BB:** *Has Elvis sent you any new songs of his to cover?*

**JT:** Not yet. He waits until I ask him for one! Then he writes to order.

**BB:** *I was wondering, in the case of "All This Useless Beauty" and "I Want to Vanish", did he send you demos or did he perform them in front of you?*

**JT:** He sent me demos. He'd promised me a song for some time. Eventually, when I was doing the album *Angel Tiger*, I was getting the material together and I thought I'd be very brave and ring him up to ask if he ever wrote the song he promised me two years ago. He said "Well, I haven't written it yet but I've got an idea for it. I've got four days free before I start rehearsing for *The Juliet Letters* with the Brodskys. I'll see what I can do". Five days latter, this song ("All This Useless Beauty"), demoed by him, arrived on the doormat.

**BB:** *That reminds me of the story of Elvis meeting Ronnie Drew in the airport and asking him for a song that Elvis had to do the next day or something ("Dirty Rotten Shame").*

**JT:** (laughs) Nothing like being put on the spot!

**BB:** *Do you think you'll be doing "ATUB" or "IWTV" this evening?*

**JT:** I don't think we will this evening. We've got all sorts of other things that we want to play for you. But they are still extremely special to me.

**BB:** *I also noticed on your new album you have a track called "Bentley and Craig". You must be familiar with Elvis' song "Let Him Dangle." I guess that this must have been a major issue in England.*

**JT:** It has been ever since it happened and it still is. It has gone back to judicial review again and his family are still complaining for him to be given a pardon. (see *On the Beat* on page 14)

**BB:** *Finally, is there anything about Elvis that you would like to share with the readers?*

**JT:** I just find him a man of such catholic musical taste, and I mean that in its non-religious sense. He has such enthusiasm for so many different kinds of music. And not just from an outsider's point of view. He can enter into the music of Purcell ... he can just take on and write his own classical pieces ... genius is the word that comes to mind.

*Brad Kearns passed away this past June from a sudden illness. His zeal for the music and concerts of Elvis Costello will be missed by all those who knew him. The upcoming tour just will not be the same without him. Therefore, all of us at Beyond Belief will be dedicating the upcoming tour to Brad's memory. And our apologies for mislabeling the picture of Brad with Bruce Thomas that appeared in BB13/14.*

The ACLU Foundation of Southern California

# Torch of Liberty 1998 Awards

HONORING

DANNY GOLDBERG  
MARGERY TABANKIN

Emcee

Michael Moore

With Special Guests

Alan Bergman

Stanley K. Sheinbaum

Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa

Special Musical Performance By

Elvis Costello

To benefit the ACLU Foundation of Southern California

Tuesday, September 8, 1998

Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles, California

## By Byron Wilson

WE KNEW WE WERE AT THE RIGHT PLACE. Parked out in front of the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles was *Hustler* magazine publisher Larry Flynt's Rolls Royce, complete with its "HUSTLER" license plate and handicapped parking tag. The event was the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California's 1998 Torch of Liberty Awards Benefit. The ACLU, the 75-year-old defender of the Bill of Rights, advocate for freedom of speech and artistic expression, supporter of religious freedom and separation of church and state, and opponent of censorship and discrimination, annually honors those whom it considers the foremost proponent of all that is liberal.

This year's recipients were Margery Tabankin, a lifelong political activist and charitable fund raiser, and Danny Goldberg. Mr. Goldberg, current president of the ACLU of Southern California, is one of the music industry's most outspoken progressive voices, and coincidentally, president of Elvis Costello's new label, Mercury Records. EC was slated to give a special musical performance as part of the evening's program. The event was hosted by filmmaker, author, and comedian, Michael Moore who is best known for the 1989 documentary, *Roger and Me*.

Before the program started, dinner music was the then not-yet released *Painted From Memory*. It was played at an irritatingly low level, so that you could tell what it was, but couldn't actually hear it enough to listen to it.

After speeches by ACLU dignitaries and California Assembly Speaker Antonio



Villaraigosa, Ms. Tabankin was given the first award. Each award recipient was treated with a video tribute featuring musicians, actors, and political dignitaries.

Margery Tabankin began her activist career as a college student at the University of Wisconsin. First a journalist and Vietnam War protester, she later became a leader in national student organizations to coordinate student movements and played an integral part in the passing of the Constitutional amendment to lower the voting age to 18. In 1977 she was appointed Director of Volunteers in Service to America by President Jimmy Carter, making her the youngest woman ever to head a government agency.

In 1988, Ms. Tabankin left Washington and moved to Hollywood and served as Executive Director of the Hollywood Woman's Political Committee, a powerful organization that raised money for progressive political candidates. She currently is the director of Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation, and Barbara Streisand's The Streisand Foundation. After Ms. Tabankin's acceptance speech, host Michael Moore introduced Elvis Costello.

Armed solely with an acoustic guitar and a neon purple and yellow tie, Elvis strolled out on stage. "I went through 200 songs thinking of something to sing for you tonight, and eventually came up with this song . . . (a song) about anyone who stands for what they believe in." "Dirty Rotten Shame," a song written but unrecorded by EC, was first played during the UK *Brutal Youth* tour in late 1994 and later at the Beacon Theater rehearsals in 1995 and during the Costello and Nieve tour of 1996. It was recorded by Ronnie Drew for his 1995 CD of the same name and was included on Rhino's recent EC covers release.

Elvis announced that he would spare the audience his piano playing and play a song from his forthcoming album on guitar for the first time. The guitar only arrangement for "Toledo" was, of course, more sparse than the arrangement on *Painted From Memory*, but it was also less subdued. Rather than simply strumming the melody, Elvis hit the chord changes in a sharp, staccato manner. He ended the song with his now familiar fade out by

slowly backing away from the microphone.

Elvis closed his brief set with a more restrained than usual version of "(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love, and Understanding." He introduced the song as written by Nick Lowe "with his tongue firmly planted in his cheek. (In 1973), songs like this were out of fashion." It was later reported that the song was played at the request of Mr. Goldberg.

Elvis' 17 minute set seemed short, but considering the event, long enough. A totally professional performance. Elvis demonstrated appropriate dignity, yet was engaging, and genuinely entertaining. He was very well received by those in attendance. Technically, the sound was terrific.

After Elvis left the building, the final item on the agenda was to honor Danny Goldberg.

Long time music writer, talent manager, and record company executive, Danny Goldberg's political involvement began in 1979 when he co-produced and co-directed the anti-nuclear film *No Nukes*. Since then he had become the one of music industry's most outspoken voices on social issues. In the mid-1980's, he helped produce the first "Rock the Vote" ads on MTV, and led the fight against the Parents' Music Resource Center who established warning labels on records. He has since produced anti-drug television ads, and endlessly appears on television debating censorship and freedom of expression issues.

Mr. Goldberg's acceptance speech was indeed a highlight of the evening. He is an articulate and compelling speaker, with a passionate wish for a better world. He is an entertainment executive with a true understanding of art and creativity; a true believer in personal freedom and privacy, and in social justice for the oppressed. Danny Goldberg is a genuinely engaging man. A run for public office would not seem out of the question. Speaking candidly about the evolution of his beliefs, he ended the evening on an uplifting, positive note.

Among the top contributors to the event were Polygram, Warner Brothers, Rhino Records, MTV, Sony Music, Home Box Office, Atlantic Records/Electra Entertainment, Walt Disney Entertainment, *Rolling Stone* Magazine, the RIAA, REM, Jackson Browne, and, of course, liberal mogul of the world, Barbara Streisand. Celebrities spotted ranged from Courtney Love and Joan Jett, to actor Richard Dreyfuss, publisher Larry Flynt, and Former President Clinton Cabinet member and San Antonio mayor, Henry Cisneros.



It was...

# 20 YEARS AGO

Part 5: July to September 1978

today



*The latest instalment of our historical series sees EC & The Attractions winding down their European tour in Scandinavia as they prepare to enter the studio for the recording of their next album...*

## July 1978

● 2<sup>nd</sup> - EC remains unimpressed by his first visit to Denmark's annual **Roskilde Festival** where he and The A's debut their band arrangement of "Oliver's Army": "It was dreadful, but so are all festivals. They're just a laugh and I hate them!" Meanwhile, German TV's *Rockpalast* broadcasts footage of last month's Cologne concert. ● 4<sup>th</sup> - First visit to Norway for a concert in **Oslo**. ● 7<sup>th</sup> - A rare performance of "Pay It Back" is included in the set at **Dad's Dancehall, Malmo (Sweden)**. [Editor's note: information about other concerts which may have taken place during the visit to Scandinavia would be welcomed] ● 10<sup>th</sup> - **Konserthus, Stockholm (Sweden)**. ● 12<sup>th</sup> - A year of virtual nonstop touring finishes up in Finland at **Helsinki's Kaivopusto**. ● 25<sup>th</sup> - As the band continues a well-earned break, EC takes a trip to the USA, stopping off at **New York's Lone Star Cafe** to guest on three encore songs ("Don't Lie to Me," "You Win Again" and "Tonight The Bottle Let Me Down") during a Delbert McClinton gig broadcast on AM radio station WHN. ● EC visits Nashville for a scheduled recording session with George Jones at the legendary CBS Studio B. "Somebody at the record company in New York had heard the out take version of 'Stranger in The House' and they'd got the idea that I should record with George. He was doing this duets album (*My Very Special Guests*) and they figured they ought to cover all the markets. The record company paid for me to go down there, took me out to see Bruce Springsteen, who happened to be in town, and then George Jones didn't show, which was a bit disappointing. So I had a look round, bought a stupid jacket and a couple of guitars, and got to play guitar on the track. The producer, Billy Sherrill, said I might as well play a solo on it. I'd never played a guitar solo in my life, so the first one I put on record was this acoustic one." The vocal session with "No Show" Jones is put on hold until EC's next US tour.

## August 1978

● 5<sup>th</sup> - Back in England, EC & The A's make their last public appearance before starting work on a new album, performing "This Year's Girl" and their forthcoming UK single "Radio, Radio" on Granada TV's *Revolver*. ● 25<sup>th</sup> - As Elvis turns 24, Bebe Buell moves into his flat in London's exclusive Kensington district, a mere stone's throw from the Royal Albert Hall. Buell: "He started calling me from all over the world, and we decided that I should fly to London on his birthday ... I was like a mail-order bride."

## September 1978

● Recording continues throughout the month at Eden Studios in London. "The sessions took what we regarded as a very extravagant six weeks," notes EC, who generously donates some of his studio time allowing The Pretenders to record their debut single "Stop Your Sobbing" before beginning work on his own album. Producer Nick Lowe notices a subtle shift in the balance of power during the latest sessions: "[Elvis] definitely had the final say, absolutely, all the way down the line, even though he'd always listen to what anybody had to say. Slowly, I started backing out of my heavy-handed producer's role ...". A BBC TV camera crew attends some of the recording dates, filming the band for a projected *Arena* documentary directed by Alan Yentob. EC recalls their presence during the recording of "Tiny Steps" which "sounds like it belongs on *This Year's Model* ... probably for the benefit of the documentary film crew who were climbing up the walls and crawling across the floor in an attempt to capture us in an act of recording our 'new sound'. For reasons I cannot explain we elected to sound as much like our last record as possible. Not without justification they made their escape and the film was never completed." ● US release of Linda Ronstadt's *Living in The USA* LP which includes a cover version of "Alison." Despite some unkind remarks from EC, the album is a big hit earning him a considerable sum in royalties. ● 14<sup>th</sup> - *Melody Maker* confirms EC's participation in the second London anti-racist carnival after some doubts are raised following a premature announcement by organisers Rock Against Racism. The paper

also reports that the new album now has the working title of *Cornered on Plastic* and is set for release in "late autumn." ● 23<sup>rd</sup> - More controversy for Jake Riviera during a warm up visit to Merseyside in preparation for tomorrow's big RAR event in London. A journalist attempting a post-gig interview with EC backstage at the **New Brighton Grand Hotel** suffers a broken wrist and a head injury requiring five stitches. "I asked him to leave," Jake tells the *NME*, "he said, 'I won't leave unless you give me a valid reason.' So I said, 'I don't like people with long hair'. He said that wasn't a valid reason. So I said, 'Here's a valid reason', and hit him." ● 24<sup>th</sup> - "Welcome to the black and white minstrel show," announces EC as he and The A's top the bill before an estimated 150,000 people at the RAR Anti-Nazi League Carnival in **Brockwell Park, Brixton, London**. Garry Bushell (of all people) is on hand to describe the set as "the musical highlight of the afternoon" noting for the fashion-conscious how Elvis "stood there, red drape, black collar, check shirt, black cords and belted thru 16 songs, powerfully and professionally, starting appropriately enough with 'Night Rally'." EC: "To some people being associated with Rock Against Racism or the Anti-Nazi League automatically means you're associated with the Socialist Workers' Party. But I couldn't give a damn about the SWP. To say you're anti-Nazi is a political statement; to say you're anti-racist is a humanitarian statement. Obviously, I am anti-racist. But the festival was a good thing for us to do *musically*. I have no sense of mission whatsoever. There's a James Thurber cartoon in which two people are watching a woman picking flowers in the garden and they're saying: 'She has the real Emily Dickinson spirit, only sometimes she gets fed up.' That's how I feel about politics."

**Sources:** "Elvis Costello" BBC Radio 1 (Pete Frame & Kevin Howlett), New Musical Express, Melody Maker, Sounds, Record Collector, The Times, Armed Forces CD liner notes (Elvis Costello), Going Through the Motions (Richard Groothuizen & Kees den Heyer), Oui, Juke Box.

## Coming Next Issue:

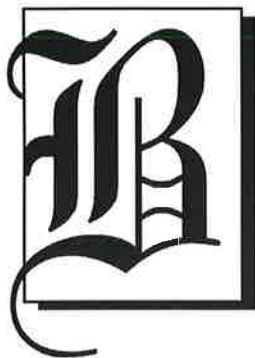
**Mark Brown's unpublished 1994 Brutal Youth interview with Elvis Costello!**

# ELVIS COSTELLO

## A TO Z by Dave Farr

Part 6 of  
a continuing journey  
through the  
Costello songbook

BEING an idiosyncratic journey through the recorded output of Elvis Costello, bounded only by the order of the alphabet, forming a perpetual circle, with allowance for personal opinion, healthy irreverence, and always a request for further information or correction . . .



### BUSY BODIES

One of the best examples of the layered production on *Armed Forces*, with a cornucopia of great musical moments hiding in a wall of sounds. This is also one of those songs (like "Sulky Girl" or "Clubland") where Elvis has combined three or four musical themes in the same song; there are several different hooks in the track. "Busy Bodies" was premiered in the later part of the second US tour of 1978, and was very much like the recorded version, except that the instrumental lines

between verses were repeated twice, and also used as a longer intro to the song. This made the song sound quite a bit longer, and also halted the song's momentum. The album track, by contrast, barely stops for breath, and is all about forward movement. As recorded, "Busy Bodies" hits the ground running, as we enter seemingly at the tail-end of the intro, just before Elvis starts singing. It's as if the band couldn't wait around for us to arrive before they started playing.

In the verses, Bruce Thomas plays a three-note figure that pushes the song forward every few words. When Elvis gets to the refrain, Steve's four-note keyboard hook, echoed by Pete's drums, continues to push us onward. The momentary lull at the end of the refrain (at "concertina," for example) is like the pause at the top of a slope, as the drums accelerate and we race downhill into the next section. Pete's drumming, especially, is amazingly versatile and inspired, although most of the playing on this track has to be listened for carefully, as it is all worked into the wall of sound production. Pete does get a great moment right after each "busy bodies," as Steve plays the title figure and then Pete gives the drums a thwack! which ricochets once in our ears.

Nick Lowe's production also builds the song up as we go. Elvis sings the chorus section ("you check her outline . . .") solo in the first verse, then the vocals are overdubbed on the second and third so that the effect is layered and louder. In the same way, the "nowhere"s at the end of each chorus get louder and fill more of the sound stage as the song progresses. Listen also for the way Bruce goes up and down the neck of his bass during the chorus sections. Elvis' vocal in this song is almost giddy, it's sneering but with a smile. One great moment is the way he hops on the word "hand" in

the "a wave of her right hand" line. His voice runs up to the word and hits the high note almost like a laugh. It's a very glottal vocal, slightly out of control, and perfect for the sound of this track.

There are also a lot of pop influences banded about, from the power chord guitars to the "Pretty Woman" riff in the chorus to the "Nowhere Man" reference to the Beach Boys-style multi-tracked harmonies at the coda.

After the release of *Armed Forces*, "Busy Bodies" was played fairly often during the subsequent UK tour and some of the West Coast shows in the US in 1979, but by the middle of that US tour it had been dropped from the set and has never been played since.

### BUT NOT FOR ME

This recording of a George Gershwin composition, for the tribute album *The Glory of Gershwin*, is probably the most traditional performance of a pop standard that Elvis has recorded. Not only is the instrumentation almost entirely traditional, unlike, say, the guitar and bass of "My Funny Valentine," but EC gives a very straight reading, even including the introductory verse, something which is often left out when the old classics are attempted. It is a little strange to hear Elvis singing lines like "old man sunshine, listen you" or "Beatrice Fairfax, don't you dare," or even the unfortunate "hi ho, alas, and also lackaday" in the chorus, but this is a lovely lyric for the most part, with a warm rendition by Elvis. His vocals are a bit shaky in places; the singing is pitched a bit too high, and this causes his voice to break on the first "kiss." The performance is also hampered by some awkward pauses for breath. Still, EC gathers strength for an excellent final verse, hitting the high note and then dropping down low twice on the last line. The instrumentation is graced by great work by Larry Adler, the artist around whom the album is constructed and who performs on all tracks. Rather than hearing strings or horns, we are treated to Adler's harmonica playing, and it is extremely interesting to hear Adler play in conjunction with other orchestral instruments. The first notes of the song, for example, sound like a clarinet or other woodwind, but are instead harmonica notes. And Adler's solo during the song's bridge works beautifully, sounding old-fashioned and different at the same time.

Elvis has not yet sung this song live.



### CHARM SCHOOL

After the experimentation and occasional excesses of *Imperial Bedroom* failed to win record sales to match its critical acclaim, Elvis and the Attractions opted to use one of England's most successful production teams on their next record. Clive Langer and Alan Winstanley had produced several hits for The Teardrop Explodes, Dexy's Midnight Runners, and especially Madness. Elvis and Clive

Langer had known each other for quite some time before this; Clive and his group The Boxes were on the F Beat label and supported EC and the A's on the UK tour promoting *Get Happy*!! Elvis had produced a couple of sides for Langer's group. And of course, they collaborated on "Shipbuilding" for Robert Wyatt in 1982, after *Imperial Bedroom* was wrapped. This naturally led to further collaboration on the next LP, with Langer bringing his engineer Winstanley along to try to apply their Midas touch to EC's records.

Much of the *Punch the Clock* album sounds quite different from EC's earlier work, with a bright and poppy sheen. Langer and



Winstanley brought in elements from their other work, such as the horn sections used by Dexy's (including several of the same players), female backing vocalists, and strings; one can also hear the emphasis on a prominent, music-hall style piano reminiscent of Mike Barson's role on the Madness records. "Charm School," according to Elvis, was written during the *Punch the Clock* sessions, and written after Langer urged him not to keep bringing in material that sounded like *Imperial Bedroom*. Nonetheless, this track has a tone much more like *Bedroom* than most of the rest of *Punch the Clock*; the lyrical content is more complex and wordy. The pace is slower, the mood more somber.

Fat, punchy bass notes begin the track, soon joined by sharp piano notes which will provide the theme for the entire cut, repeating a basic line throughout, with some variations. And it is indeed a "theme," the theme from the film *Summer of '42*, also called "The Summer Knows," composed by Peter Nero. Meanwhile Elvis strums an acoustic guitar underneath, and Pete and Bruce play a pattern that for the most part is kept very straight and repetitive (making Bruce's fills all the more noticeable). A slight echo, increased as the song goes on, is placed on Elvis' vocal, used to double "voce" in verse two. EC's vocals are very smooth, and especially effective on the bridge, with its elongated "I" sounds at the start of the first two lines. Strings come in as we go into the refrain, and these too get more prominent as the track progresses, finally swelling and sawing in the finish.

Langer and Winstanley make very good use of the Afrodiziak singers on *Punch the Clock*, and this track is a good example. They are used sparingly; first, they simply sing the title line with Elvis on the chorus, then they sing "ohhhh's" over Steve's piano solo on the bridge (with strings up). Another amplification on "sometimes two" brings that line into relief, as does the same effect on "dream and promises" in the bridge and the last "trying to make a living." They also carry the last, falsetto "schooooool" past the point where EC's voice breaks into an echoed sob. Rather than ladle on the backing vocals, the producers do a nice job of coloration here.

"Charm School" was first performed on the Swedish television program *Casablanca* on March 9, 1983, along with two other numbers that would appear on *Punch the Clock*, "Shipbuilding" and "The Invisible Man." The album was recorded by this point. Therefore, the performance was almost precisely like the record. In fact, aside from obvious lack of backing singers on some tours, all future renditions of "Charm School" remained very similar. After the album's release, "Charm School" was performed on the ensuing world tour. Although it was in the set at the tour's start, Elvis soon took it out until the Afrodiziak backing singers were available to join the tour in September 1983. Without them, Elvis tended to do the "ohhh's" on the bridge himself, and they were more shouted than sung, to no great effect. The song was played occasionally in Attractions shows in 1984, still basically in the same mode, with everything just a little looser and more aggressive, and some organ substituting for piano part of the time. It was then performed as a solo number on the solo tour of England and Europe at the end of that year. This version was quiet on acoustic guitar but punctuated with some loud wailing vocals ("TRYin to make a livin'"). In the bridge, Elvis would thrash about on his acoustic guitar after the line "and the noise infernal," and then tell the audience, "THAT'S noise infernal." The song has not been played live since 1984.

## CHEAP REWARD

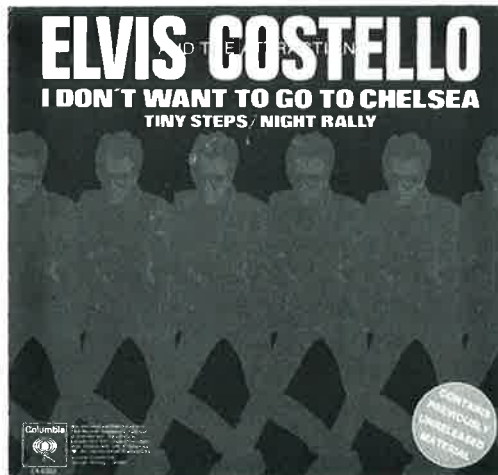
This track is one of the so called "Honky Tonk Demos" which Elvis, as D.P. Costello, submitted in 1976 to Charlie Gillett for play on his London radio show. Bootlegged by 1979, it remained a rarity until

EC chose to include the "Honky Tonk Demos" on the Rykodisc reissue of *My Aim is True*. There are no known live performances, although it may have been played live before D.P. Costello changed his stage name.

The song is soaked in the country influences that figured so heavily in EC's pre-1977 work, yet there is a tension between some of its very honky tonk lines (with references to icons like "Hello Walls," and "I Fall to Pieces") and other phrases like "comical rage." One can hear Elvis coming up with a style, gradually. The melody is very simple, and rather similar to that of "Stranger in the House." One can also hear "Alison" waiting to be written here, with the reference to turning the light off, and the themes of concurrent love and disdain. EC's vocal style is slightly melodramatic, with a sob that by the time of a song like "Alison" would be tightened to something between anger and tears, and thus free a song from sentimentality.

By the first concerts with the Attractions in 1977, part of "Cheap Reward" had been reworked into the rocker "Lip Service." Only a few of the lyrics actually made the transition other than the latter song's title line; strangely, the awkward line "Don't act like you're above me/Just look at your shoes" was one of them, and was rendered even more awkward by the lack of a matching rhyme in its new home.

## (I DON'T WANT TO GO TO) CHELSEA



Canada "Chelsea" EP issued in both black and orange vinyl.

One of EC's pop/rock classics, still being played live in 1998 after being in the very first shows. "Chelsea" is one of Elvis' simplest and most economical songs, and its brilliance comes from the way each player distinctly leaves his mark. "Chelsea" was in the earliest repertoire, having started out in the style of "You Really Got Me" by

the Kinks, with a stop-start rhythm. Two instrumental figures were added that made it a classic. The first was Bruce Thomas' bass line. This is a pulsating figure that feels like it never stops even though it pauses after each run. The result is to add a fluidity to the song even as it remains in stop and start mode. The second addition is EC's guitar riff, the signature of the tune, a skittering descent of notes similar to the unforgettable riff from "Watching the Detectives" but sped up and turned on itself.

In the earliest performances of the song, at the very start of the Attractions' live career, it was neither of these instruments that dominated; rather, Steve Nieve's organ played the main riff, in a very low, croaking fashion. Bruce's bass riff was just developing, it was shorter and had not flowered yet; while EC's guitar riff was simply not there. The organ suggested the guitar line to come, but the organ part did not cut through the song. The tempo was slower, and there

was no bridge at all. By the time *This Year's Model* was recorded at the end of 1977, the song had been honed so that every part was ripe, and the guitar riff slices it wide open.

The recorded version starts, of course, with yet another signature, a drum solo opening from Pete. The croaking organ comes in to play the rhythm part, faster than the earlier live versions, but it is joined (and eclipsed) by Bruce's bass, high and fluid, which pumps out the lines with only a short breath between, and makes the song completely kinetic. EC's guitar then slices down through all of this. It makes for a brilliant setting. On the chorus, Steve plays some spooky "woooo"s, again reminiscent of "Detectives," then goes into a screech between verses. Bruce also punctuates the chorus with a great variation, ending with low notes, dropping the bottom out of each line. Steve also gets the spotlight after the "begin to play . . ." line. The bridge is kept very short.

EC's vocals are razor sharp and tight. The way he sings "OH, no" on the chorus is at once humorous and scary, while the pause and almost whispered. "Chelsea" mixes hatred and lust in equal measure. This is an unusual EC composition in that it's just verse-chorus-verse-chorus-verse-chorus, with no lyric bridge, and the third verse is a total repeat of the third, something the verbose Costello rarely does. To distinguish the last verse, EC's vocal and the drums accelerate around "going to fix," and the organ starts to wail in the left channel. Elvis has to gasp for breath between lines at this point ("capital punishment"). On the last chorus, a lower, almost hummed moan is added to the high "woooo" sounds, then we hit an outro where the drums and the guitar (now double tracked) start to break loose. It's an almost perfect three minutes; not EC's greatest lyric achievement, but great pure pop.

"Chelsea" was chosen as the lead off single from the album in the UK, and rose to number 16 on the charts (about the same as its predecessor, "Watching the Detectives"). This brought the band onto *Top of the Pops*, where a great studio version was recorded for them to mime, a version with a longer bridge and more guitar. Another studio version was recorded for John Peel's radio show, with lots of reverb and whammy bar effects. This reflected the way the song was evolving in concert. A promo video was also filmed.

At the time, aside from the riff from "Detectives," "Chelsea" was really EC's only opportunity to play guitar solos live. In 1978 and '79, this was the song where Elvis would show what he could do with the electric guitar. The keyboards dropped off live, and it was much more a guitar and bass song. The bridge to the song began to lengthen, becoming one of the handful of songs where EC and the Attractions allowed themselves a chance to jam. In the 1978 versions, the bridge was mainly a stop and start rhythm, with the keyboard and bass; in 1979, it became a forum for Elvis and Steve to duel, as each played riffs in turn, and the song stretched out to as long as six minutes. This version was unmatched, as the guitar solos took off during the bridge and Steve was all over the place, throwing in snatches of everything from "Singing in the Rain" to "96 Tears."

A live version was released officially on the *Live at the El Mocambo* CD in 1993. This version from March 6, 1978 features the stop and start bridge, with a pulsating bass. Guitar is mixed down for some reason in this version, and the keyboards do not really come upfront till the middle of the song. You can hear how the pace of the song has quickened, as it would continue to do afterwards. One should listen to the tense bridge with the understanding that when there was silence from Elvis on vocals and guitars, he was usually standing at the microphone, staring at the audience and demanding their attention.

After its release, "Chelsea" became a mainstay of nearly every live set, even in America, where Columbia foolishly deleted the track from the second album and did not release it until the soundtrack to *Americathon* in 1979 (followed by its inclusion on *Taking Liberties* in 1980). The deletion seems even more foolish given that the song gives the album its title (with the phrase "last year's model" shifted to "this year's") and is a major part of one of the album's central obsessions, fashion (in 1978, Elvis would often play the three most fashion-oriented songs consecutively live: "This Year's Girl," "Chelsea," and "Lipstick Vogue"). From 1978 to 1981, hardly a concert went by without "Chelsea" being played. The song remained in the live set in 1982, 1983 and 1984, although it was played less often. It was featured in the 1985 Miner's Benefit show, and in 1986, it was placed on the Spinning Songbook.

In 1989, Elvis played a solo show in Ann Arbor Michigan, and as part of the encores had audience members request songs for him to play. One of the contestants was asked where she was from and replied "Chelsea" (a suburb of Detroit, Michigan); the audience laughed and applauded, and Elvis said, "I think we all know what's coming next!" The anticipated request was made, and Elvis improvised a solo acoustic version of "Chelsea," which worked surprisingly well, though he has never repeated it. "Chelsea" was not included in the tours with bands other than the Attractions, although the song's distinctive guitar riff could be heard fighting its way through the mix during the 1989 renditions of "Chewing Gum" at the end of the US tour with the Rude Five. When EC reunited with the Attractions in 1994, "Chelsea" was not in the set at first, but gradually grew out of another classic, "Lipstick Vogue," as Elvis started singing a verse of two during that song's bridge. By the end of the US tour, a full verse and chorus had emerged, although played to "Lipstick Vogue's" beat. In the Japanese and UK tours that followed that year, "Chelsea" finally reentered the set on its own.

In 1996, Elvis surprised the audience again by reworking "Chelsea" into a slower, R and B type ballad that verged on very slow hip hop, and tagging the song onto the end of "Distorted Angel," playing it to that song's tune and tempo, and dropping the signature bass riff. Instead, "Distorted Angel's" bass riff, which suggested "Chelsea's" guitar pattern, provided a transition between the songs. This drastic revision worked very well, better than many of the "quieter" rewrites of the old songs on the 1996 tour, and allowed for lots of hand gestures and stagecraft on EC's part. The medley ended with a bit of the Isley Brothers' "Who's That Lady?", as the mood swung into Philly soul.

"Chelsea" was most recently played with Steve at the Mount Fuji show in August 1998. Here the song was returned nearly to its original tempo, with Elvis playing rhythm on electric guitar and Steve taking the bass part on keyboards. This worked amazingly well, despite the lack of the lead guitar riff. This further illustrates goes to show that this is one of those gems that adapts to every setting and makes the most out of the basic components.

## CHEMISTRY CLASS

Another marvelous production job from *Armed Forces*. "Chemistry Class" was first played live as a solo number. EC premiered this one at the very end of his February 28, 1978-concert in Washington, D.C. It was the third (!!) encore, and many fans had already left the hall. Elvis came out by himself and strapped on his electric guitar and plugged it into an amp way over on stage right, very close to the edge of the stage. He played the song (which had only two verses at the time), shouted "Goodnight" as the final guitar notes rang out, and



walked off. The song, with the third verse added, was also tried out solo at shows in England in April 1978, when the set list was considerably varied due to Bruce Thomas' hand injury. It was then recorded later that year for *Armed Forces*.

Another a cappella start (lasting all of one word) kicks off the album version, followed by the alternation of the two signature sounds: two repetitive piano keys, alternating with drums which literally pound back and forth between the left and right channels. This is one of the more amazing drum sounds Nick Lowe and Pete Thomas provided on an EC record; it overwhelms the rest of the song whenever it comes through. Bass is also mixed very loud in the basic rhythm pattern. The use of the drums and keyboards is constantly shifted as the song progresses; the drums pound on the second and fourth lines of the first verse, but only at the end of each line in the second verse, then first and third lines in the last. Bass and guitar stay in the background until the chorus, when the drums and piano drop back and the sound becomes much more 60's pop, with a climbing bassline and a jangly guitar figure.

EC's singing is very fluid in this song and less affected than on some other *Armed Forces* tracks, with conspiratorial whispers and a smirking smile on the second "piece of your mind" and the almost lascivious last "yeah" replacing the "Oh" on the final chorus. Sound effects also figure in the mix as the guitar is phased and warped into blurbs and feedback-like distortion, and EC's own vocal track is doubled on the "if it wasn't for some accidents" line as an aural joke. Pete's drumming dominates, not only in the astonishingly loud and powerful rhythms during the verses, but also the cracking fills he plays between verses and in the fade. The much-improved mix of the Rykodisc reissue really brings this sound out.

Live performances of this tune, though effective, were rather infrequent during the *Armed Forces* tour; most of the shows featuring it in the US were reserved for universities, presumably as a reference to the title. (It was introduced as "one for all you eager students!"). The highlight of the live version was the extended end, as EC's "ohh's" grew progressively more unrestrained. Since the US tour in 1979, "Chemistry Class" has not been played live.

## CHEWING GUM

An unusual number, even in the midst of an unusual album. Even the most dedicated Elvis fan may be forgiven a startled reaction upon first hearing this track. Elvis cranks up the funk on this one, with echoes of James Brown, Prince, Michael Jackson, and the New Orleans sound. Elvis employed New Orleans' own Dirty Dozen Brass Band on several tracks on *Spike*, using their sound to different effect each time (and never really in their traditional style). Here, the horns play tight charts between verses and on the chorus; the fundamental sound, however, is the amazing "bass" line, played by Kirk Joseph on the sousaphone.

Michael Blair's percussion leads the track off, and his effects using "metal pipe" create much of the atmosphere here, with not only the clanging sounds and rattling percussion but also a sort of yelping noise that almost sounds vocal. EC plays a rhythm riff on his guitar while Marc Ribot engages in his trademark idiosyncratic playing, a fine contrast to the necessarily steady charts of the horn players. EC's vocals are quite unusual for him, as he goes for falsetto notes, yelps and squeals. Overdubbed vocals singing the title come in on the chorus, and Cait O'Riordan chimes in briefly with "in Dusseldorf." The vocals are not the song's strong point, however; it is the rhythmic mix of the sousaphone notes, Blair's metallic percussion, the great drumming by Willie Green (of the Neville Brothers band) and Ribot's dissonant notes, that gives the song its stuttering groove.

"Chewing Gum" is both funky and rather silly at the same time, as its subject veers between something tawdry and low comedy. The sousaphone sound lends both a groove and a comic effect at the same time, while EC's vocal, often distorted and tweaked, also seems to wind us up at least part of the time.



*The boys on the Chicago docks in 1979.*

One would not have expected solo acoustic performances of this song, but that's how it was premiered live, during the US and UK solo tours in 1989. Elvis played the song on acoustic guitar sitting on a stool ("some music you have to play sitting down"), and it was a pleasant surprise, with the guitar taking the place of the sousaphone and the electric licks. EC's vocals were more restrained in this rendition and the song was better for it. A band version with the Rude 5 followed in the 1989 summer tour of the US. This slightly faster version really brought out the polyrhythmic nature of the arrangement, with Blair's percussion joined by Pete Thomas playing a nice dragging beat (with both featured in a percussion solo in midsong). Jerry Scheff, who played tuba on some of the *Spike* tracks onstage, stayed with bass for this one. Since 1989, it has not been played live.

## CLEAN MONEY

This outtake from the sessions for *Armed Forces* is most notable for the presence of Dave Edmunds on backing vocals, his only appearance on a Costello disc. Edmunds had been with Elvis on the Stiffs Live tour in 1977, of course, and appeared onstage during EC concerts in December 1978, January 1979, and April 1979 (usually playing guitar and singing backing vocals on "Mystery Dance," the song which Jake Riviera and Nick Lowe had originally earmarked for Edmunds when they first heard EC's demo tape at Stiff). Rockpile, the group Edmunds co-chaired with Nick Lowe, also toured with EC in 1978. Edmunds, of course, was eventually given "Girls Talk," around the time of this recording, and he scored a Top 5 hit in the UK with it.

This track is fairly messy, with every instrument playing frantically but not producing much of a tune. Bruce's bass work is quite good, and provides the hook on the chorus. But the rest of the track is less coherent. Unlike a similar song like "Wednesday Week," for example, which offsets the hyperactivity with a bit of pop balladry, this one just keeps going around the track like a runaway truck. Bits like the "hey! hey! hey!" shouts seem designed to add spark to something that isn't really moving.

"Clean Money" was rewritten into "Love For Tender" and recorded for EC's next LP, *Get Happy!!*. To my knowledge, the original version was never performed live.



The Latest EC News

### Under New Management

Following the signing of a new recording deal and the sale of Demon Records, there has been a further significant alteration to EC's business affairs with the appointment of Danny Bennett from the New York-based RPM Music Productions company as his new manager. Bennett is widely credited with the successful updating of his father Tony's image, culminating in the Grammy-winning *MTV Unplugged* album; he apparently sees parallels with EC's current career situation, believing that he can help to alter the public perception of his new client. "What I lend to this is [the ability] to prepare people for what albums he will actually produce," he told the *LA Times*. "In the past it's sort of been sprung on people, who are left with the question, 'Is this a real Elvis Costello album?' I think they are all Elvis Costello albums."

Regarding the collaboration with Burt Bacharach, he notes: "The edge Elvis brings to Burt's beautiful arrangements really goes through you. It's a really exciting record." Touching on Costello's poor sales figures (none of his '90s albums have broken the 200,000 sales mark in the USA, with 1994's *Brutal Youth* doing the best at 181,000 and 1996's *All This Useless Beauty* selling just 103,000) Bennett again refers to his father's career: "Tony has always said that he never went for hit records, but a hit catalogue. That's the essence of it right there." EC has been managing his own business affairs with the assistance of Gill Taylor at By Eleven since parting company with Jake Riviera in September 1994. Gill will now reportedly be working "in conjunction with" Danny and RPM which has represented rock acts such as Jamiroquai and the Candy Butchers.

### Derek Bentley Found Innocent

The subject of EC's 1989 song "Let Him Dangle" was finally ruled innocent on July 30. Forty-five years after Bentley was sent to the gallows for allegedly uttering "Let him have it, Chris," the head judge of the Appeal Court overturned the decision, finding the closing comments by the judge (which

heavily stressed 19-year-old Bentley's famous remark) to be prejudicial and unfair.

Bentley became a household name in England and his family refused to give up trying to clear the name of the mentally disabled teenager. In 1953, 16-year-old Christopher Craig shot and killed Constable Sidney Miles during a failed robbery. Bentley was convicted and hung on the grounds that his comment to Craig was an encouragement for him to kill Miles. Doubt existed about both the meaning of Bentley's remark and whether or not he uttered it at all. Craig was too young to be executed and spent 10-years in prison. A 1991 feature film "Let Him Have It" dramatized the story.

### The Missing Gig

In April, while in New York City for the Bacharach tribute, we picked up a buzz that Costello & Nieve would be performing in the Dominican Republic. Although still unconfirmed, a comment from EC in a recent press release in Japan seems to indicate that it did indeed happen: "Since the last concerts in Japan, we played Italian Opera Houses, in the Norwegian mountains and also at the azure Caribbean seaside."

### Rod & Elvis

Although they had met and apparently gotten along famously at the 1997 *Q*-awards, *Beyond Belief* was nonetheless surprised about a report it received last October. Our source claimed that Rod Stewart and Elvis Costello had booked (but failed to use) some studio time together in Los Angeles. But the relationship did bear some recent fruit.

In the liner notes to Rod's new Warner Bros. LP *When We Were the New Boys*, Executive Producer Rob Dickens writes that Rod's covers of "Secret Heart" and "Shelley My Love" were suggested by EC. Rod also had this to say to the *San Francisco Chronicle* about EC's contributions to his pals' royalty statements: "Warner England dude Rob Dickins would go out and find some of the bands that were breaking in England and play me their songs. Before that, I'd started working with Elvis Costello, and we came up with the Ron Sexsmith song ("Secret Heart") and the Nick Lowe song ("Shelley My Love"), but he went off and started working with Burt Bacharach and I haven't seen him since."

### EC & the Beasties

Having once sung "I've got Attractions like I'm Elvis Costello (on "Do It" from the *Ill Communication* LP), the Beastie Boys turn

out to be Costello fans. In a feature story on the chart-topping band in the August 6 issue of *Rolling Stone*, Adam Horowitz gets on the subject of EC after hearing "New Amsterdam" while getting coffee in Manhattan's East Village: "It's not every day you hear them playing Elvis at Starbucks. This is one of my favorite Elvis songs. Fourth-album Elvis too."

Adam continued by noting that all the band were fans although "Yauch's not that into it. He likes Elvis, but it's never been his thing. Me and Mike have a very special Elvis thing - my brother and sister, and his two brothers, we all like Elvis. Just the early Elvis, though." We also learn that the Boys' *Paul's Boutique* LP includes a sample of "Pump It Up" and that when Horowitz was thirteen, he played Presley's "Heartbreak Hotel" and Costello's "You Belong to Me" at a talent show in Queens.

### Excerpt from 1982 Contract Rider providing the services of Elvis Costello & the Attractions:

Refreshments - Band The following must be available from one hour prior to Artist's arrival at venue:

Slabs (not slices) of imported cheeses for ten (10)  
Basket of whole fruit, celery, tomatoes, etc.  
12 lemons  
Tea with milk, sugar, honey and lemon  
3 cases of Heineken  
3 gallons pure unsweetened orange juice  
6 bottles good California Chablis  
3 bottles vodka (Stolichnya or Blue Label Smirnoff)  
6 large bottles Coke  
6 large bottles Perrier  
4 gallons still mineral water  
2 quarts milk  
6 large bottles tonic water  
2 dozen glasses  
Ice

### EC Not On Dockers Benefit Album

Contrary to a report in the March 28 *NME* suggesting his involvement, no EC track appeared on *Rock the Docks*, a fund-raising album for the sacked Liverpool dockers which was issued on September 7 in the UK.



## Tiny Steps

**Elvis Sightings:** While in NYC for the Bacharach tribute concert, Elvis went to see hip British comic Eddie Izzard at his residency at the Westbeth Theater. ■ In early June, while working with No Doubt in Los Angeles, EC went to see Madness at the Universal Amphitheater. Lead singer, Suggs, acknowledged Elvis before singing "Tomorrow's Just Another Day," a song on which EC provided lead vocals for a 1983 Madness B-side. **Famous Fans:** Count American actresses Janeane Garafalo (*Reality Bites*, *The Larry Sanders Show*) and Chloe Sevigny (*Kids*, *Gummo* and *Palmetto*) among EC's fans. Both mentioned him in recent interviews on the back page of *Alternative Press*. ■ In an on-line interview from the Cannes Film Festival, Canadian TV actor, Callum Keith Rennie, included in a list of what he would do during his last six hours on earth, that he would "listen to 'Poor Fractured Atlas' by EC. **Attractions:** Pete Thomas reportedly will playing drums on the next Tracy Bonham album. He also can be found on the new Tim Finn LP, *Try Whistling This*. **Quotes:** Debbie Harry, on tour with the Jazz Passengers, told the *San Francisco Examiner-Chronicle* this about collaborating with EC: "It was fun. He was a nice guy." ■ On getting the chance to play the Bacharach tribute concert, Ben Folds Five drummer Darren Jessee said on-line "I never in my life thought I'd meet Elvis Costello. We've all decided that we'd like to go to a cookout with Elvis. We'd all just kind of stare at him and freak him out. It would freak us out just to be around him." ■ As to the live mutations of his songs on the new Counting Crows LP *Across a Wire*, *Live in New York*, in *USA Today*, singer Adam Durwitz compared the approach to that of Van Morrison, Bruce Springsteen and Elvis Costello: "I'll trust that more than I'll trust applause." ■ In a Q&A on Graham Parker's webpage: **On writing with EC:** "Eh . . . Nah. It'd be like two elephants in a bowl of soup." **On comparing their work:** "It's tired old stuff. Just get your history right and remember who came first." **Film News:** While in New York in April, EC filmed a scene for the upcoming *200 Cigarettes*. The film stars aforementioned Costello-fan Janeane Garafalo, Ben Affleck and EC's *Straight From Hell* mate Courtney Love. ■ French magazine *Les Inrockuptibles* reports that Elvis will appear along with French pop-singer/actor, Alain Soucho, in the first film, *Made of Lead*, by young producer Manuel Tédoni.

## Covers Corner

The new album from the legendary (and ancient) **Jimmy Scott** will include his cover of "Almost Blue." *Holding Back the Years* will be released in October on the Artists Only! label.



Speaking of "Almost Blue" covers, we hear that an album of the benefit concert that included Gwen Stefani's version (*BB16*) is being pressed up. However, initially at least, it will be used as a sort of Christmas card by a corporation that gave a large donation to organizer Don Henley's charity. Interesting collectors' item that will be!

After our initial discovery of **Jeffrey Gaines'** live version of "Riot Act" mentioned in our last issue, a studio version of the track can now be heard. Jeff's rather faithful rendering of the song is included on a free 5-song limited edition "covers" EP available as a companion disk to his new release *Galore* (Ryko).



French reader Filip Dejongh informs us that Chicago-based group **Big Hello** included a version of "Lip Service" on their "Girl vs. Boy Verses" 7-inch

EP issued in late 1997 by Break-Up! Records (B-U! 004). Big Hello, incidentally, features drummer Brad Elvis who was previously a member of Champaign, Illinois band the Elvis Brothers (along with Graham Elvis and Bob Elvis!). More information on the record can be obtained from Break-Up! Records, 3935 Farm Brook Lane, Columbus, OH 43204, USA. Phone: (614) 272-9008. E-mail: pdull@ag.ohio.GOV Internet: <http://www.cringe.com/break-up/> (*The EP was sold out last time we checked.*)

Finally, reader Tim Windsor reports finding several karaoke CD's sold through [www.karaoke.com](http://www.karaoke.com) that include Elvis songs. "Alison," "Everyday I Write the Book," "Pump it Up" and "Veronica" are available for you to create your own "Covers Corner."

## Label News

Following on the heels of the sale of Demon Records (*BB16*), two other labels associated with the past and present Costello catalog have changed hands in recent months.

On May 21, distiller and entertainment giant Seagram announced its intention to acquire PolyGram, parent company for EC's new recording contract. In releasing second quarter profits, PolyGram touted the Costello & Bacharach LP amongst the new releases that it expected to help its sagging profits.

Announced on August 12 was the sale of Rykodisc to Islandlife, a company owned by legendary music mogul, Chris Blackwell. Rykodisc of course was involved along with Demon in the recent Costello reissue program.

## Spanish Trip with Brodsky Quartet Postponed

EC and the Brodsky Quartet's planned contribution to the 1998 centenary celebrations of Spanish poet Federico García Lorca's birth unfortunately had to be postponed due to other commitments. A performance featuring Michael Thomas's musical settings of verse from Lorca's book "Poeta en Nueva York" was originally scheduled to take place on June 12 at the Teatro del Generalife in Granada as part of a huge programme of Lorca centenary activities coordinated by the Spanish government this year. *Beyond Belief* understands that the concert has now been rescheduled for autumn 1999 when it will, hopefully, be performed in La Huerta de San Vicente, the house where Lorca lived during his final years.

## Hinton Book Delayed

Sanctuary Publishing advise us that they will not now be issuing Brian Hinton's book *Let Them All Talk: The Art of Elvis Costello* until March 1999. A company spokesperson cited a recent change of distributor and "various other things" as reasons for not meeting the scheduled publication date of August 21.

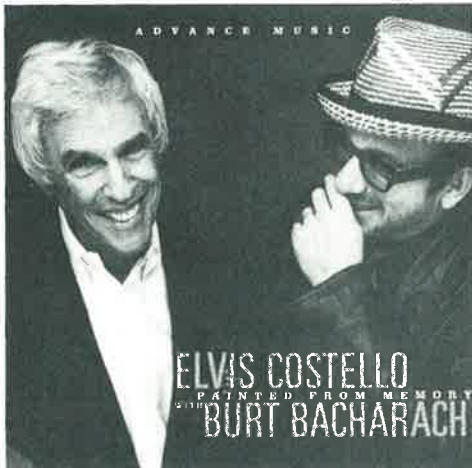
## EC To Play New Zealand

Elvis will make a return engagement to the Sweetwaters Festival in Auckland to be held January 23-25th, 1999. Said the festival promoters "Elvis was really pleased when he heard we were running another show, and we know he'll help to recreate the magic of our earlier days." EC last played Sweetwaters with the Attractions in 1980 and it has not yet been announced how he will perform in 1999.



Spotlight On New Releases

### Painted From Memory:



Pictured above is the advance promo CD for the new LP. Details of all worldwide releases will be included in BB18.

**Rhino Burt Box:** Available from Rhino Records on November 3 is a 75-track, 3-CD box set entitled *The Look of Love: The Burt Bacharach Collection*. The set will feature "original artists performing hits by the legendary popular music composer" and will include "God Give Me Strength." It will be available at retail stores for a suggested list price of \$49.98 as well as through RhinoDirect at 1-800-432-0020, <http://www.rhino.com> or c/o Rhino Direct, 10635 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90025. "GGMS" also appears on a 16-track promo sampler from the set, already out.

Readers can also order *Bespoke Songs*, *Lost Dogs*, *Detours & Rendezvous: Songs of Elvis Costello* from Rhino Direct as well. Sorry, only a USA release is planned.

**More Burt:** *ICE* magazine reports that on November 10, the N2K label will issue *One Amazing Night*, (on both CD and video) taken from the April Bacharach tribute concert. Costello will be included but track info was not available at press time.

**Video Spice:** *Spice World* is now out on video. On VHS, set your VCR counter to 000 and fast forward to 1:05 and you'll see EC. The Laser Disk makes it even easier as

track 48 is entitled "Elvis the Bartender." Completists alert - it's also out on DVD. Noticed on the video viewing is that EC's appearance occurs just after the uttering of "Fame is such a fickle thing!"

**My Mood Swings:** The recent release of "My Mood Swings" on the soundtrack to *The Big Lebowski* was accompanied by a promotional-only CD single, a not uncommon occurrence. Given that the artwork for the promo is nothing special, one might not think to add this to one's collection, except for the fact that the promo CD's mix is significantly different from that on the official release. This is apparent from the song's start, as the stereo separation reveals itself to be much greater on the promo. The left channel sounds dead as the song starts, with a guitar strumming to the right, then a second guitar comes in way over on the left. On the album, all instruments are much more centered. Secondly, on the official release, a surf-music style bass run precedes Elvis' initial vocal; this is absent from the promo. Most surprising of all, the peculiar "marshmallow!" Elvis sings at the end of the first verse is followed on the promo by another word or words! There are four more syllables but it's hard to tell what he's singing. In any event, this entire word or words is deleted from the regular release. Much more significant musically is the effect of the far better stereo separation on the promo, which allows a fine performance by Marc Ribot to be heard properly. His guitar is isolated in the left channel and is sharp and clear, rather than being stuffed into an almost mono mix on the album. Other moments, like Keltner's metallic drum fill before the last chorus, also stand out much more on the promo. It's a mystery why such different mixes were prepared and released. And to complete the story, the version given free to Guardian readers isn't a third take. It's just a poorly mastered version of the CD mix.

(Thanks to Dave Farr for the above analysis and kudos to readers Craig Smith and Connor Ratliff for also spotting this peculiar happening.)

**Fugees Fun:** EC has often named The Fugees among his favorite recording artists. Prakazrel "Pras" Michel from the band will be releasing a solo album on October 13 and alternating with his songs are "phone interludes" in the form of actual answering-machine messages. Among those who call to wish Pras luck or "beg" him for work: Quincy Jones, Donald Trump, Naomi

Campbell, Flavor Flav, Eartha Kitt, Chris Rock, Puff Daddy, Robin Leach and Elvis Costello.

## Television

**In Tune** (May - DirectTV - USA) In a segment on the *Live on Letterman CD*, musical producer Sheila Rogers commented on the Costello/Bacharach performance: "Elvis says that that's really his best television performance ever. He's a favorite on the show."

**WOWOW** (August 14 - Japan) Show of highlights from The Fuji Rock Festival includes two from Costello & Nieve: "Blue Chair" and "Shallow Grave" from August 1.

**Endless Harmony: The Beach Boys Story** (August - VH1 - USA) (September - ITV - UK) Elvis joins Glenn Frey, Maurice Gibb, Sean Lennon and Jackson Browne and comments on the band in this great special (soon to be released on home video) which was researched by BB-reader, Andrew Sandoval.

**Surfing:** "This stuff about surfing - it's only later I found out that it was only Dennis that surfed. We were quite willing to believe that it was all really what they did." **Clean Looks:** "I really can't remember the first time I heard the Beach Boys. It could have been an early record, it could have been "Fun, Fun, Fun," or one of those that was suddenly on the television. They just looked so strange. They looked kind of clean cut. Their hair was well cut and it was brushed. It brushed across like they were going for a school photograph. It's very, very American." **Pet Sounds:** "After it was sort of dumb and goofy, and before it got too weird and spooky - maybe that's why everybody loves it so much - because it's the bit where it all is right." **"Surf's Up":** "There's that demo version that they released of Brian Wilson singing "Surf's Up" at the piano. I think it was on a Leonard Bernstein special or something. It's like having a record of Mozart singing. It's such an amazing tune. The words are very much the type that they sound beautiful when sung. Quite a lot of that is true of most of the songs that come from this period. Obviously there was a lot of stress and strain in realising the music." **Dennis:** The only time I ever saw the Beach Boys play live was in the Liverpool Empire in 1971-72. But the highlight of the show, Brian Wilson wasn't on the tour, was



Dennis Wilson. It's still one of my favorite performances of anybody I've ever seen."

**Imagination: Brian Wilson** (August - VH1 - USA) In this special touting Brian's new LP, EC is seen sitting on Brian's couch in his Los Angeles' house telling him "I brought you some records I thought you might like". He also adds some comments.

**Brian's writing:** "I've never been particularly concerned with what the words were saying in Brian's songs, I think because the music is saying it all anyway. I mean, "Don't talk, put your head on my shoulder" is a very beautiful lyric, but the music would say it if you took the words away anyway."

**Pet Sounds:** "I knew all the famous songs from it, because they were all played on the radio as singles. But I didn't know it as an album as such, and when I heard it as an album, it was like, this is amazing."

**Tony Bennett's New York** (August - Bravo - USA) Full version of the 1997 BBC special is aired which includes EC remarks on Tony: "He's enjoyed this terrific revival of success among a very unexpected audience. I don't really understand it, because often when these things happen, it's usually to do with somebody's clothes or something. 'Those clothes are fashionable so we like that person'. But it isn't. He sings very much from the heart. The songs are so very good that he's doing. A lot of people watching MTV, they just don't know these songs. They're hearing them for the first time."

**TV Rerun:** American cable channel Ovation is rebroadcasting the *Sult* music series from Ireland. On August 20 they aired EC's performances of "Dirty Rotten Shame" and "Little Palaces" with Donal Lunny and Steve Cooney from January 1997.



## Magazines:

**NME** (May 2) British music weekly carries a feature on the forthcoming posthumous Jeff Buckley album which includes some reminiscences from Costello. "I know that the release of *Sketches for My Sweetheart the Drunk* is very difficult. It's still such a raw time for his mother, the band members and the record company. I know that they went back and forth about whether or not the material should be released, but it's all we've

got. And I love it! ... Some of the songs are very rough, but the singing is still so amazing. When you listen past all the distortions and all the conflict that's going on, there are such beautiful melodies. Even though he was struggling with what he wanted to do, I'd rather hear the unfinished pieces than nothing at all. I don't think there's anything that does a disservice to him. We should just accept what ended up on tape, now he isn't around to say how he intended things to come out. I feel that the joy and the beauty that's in the music is the thing to concentrate on and remember."

**Rolling Stone** (June 11) Elvis gets a mention in a feature on Karyn Rachtman, music supervisor for several recent successful soundtrack LP's (*Bulworth*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Reality Bites*). Karyn also lays claim for the EC and Burt Bacharach pairing for *Grace of My Heart*. During her interview with RS, she is even able to get EC on the phone since he was in the midst of recording a song for her *Rugrats* soundtrack.

Said EC: "In a month I'm going into the studio to make a whole album with Burt, and, if nothing else, I owe Karyn a debt of gratitude for that. I always look for her name on things, and consider that a recommendation from a musical point of view. People say 'That's a Bernard Herrmann score or an Elmer Bernstein score,' and now there are musical supervisors who they're starting to say that about - 'a Karyn Rachtman soundtrack.'"

**Esquire** (July) EC gets to comment about Nick Lowe in an interview with The Basher. As to why Nick has not been more commercially successful: "Because he's not an arrogant bastard. I've been telling Nick he was great for years, since I was a punk - not a punk as you think of, with spiky hair, but just a kid walking about like ' 'Ello mister, you're in a band. 'Ow do you do that, then? But just being a real person, it isn't natural to want to go out there telling everyone what's what. It isn't his style. You just have to dig his mood, as the record says."

**Mojo** (July) Mag's tribute to Sinatra includes an extended reprint of EC's tribute to the Chairman of the Board which originally appeared in UK newspaper *The Guardian*.

**Uncut** (July) Just room (between Allan Jones's increasingly tedious reminiscences about how much vodka he drank while working on the *Melody Maker*) for a retrospective feature on Jerry Dammers and the 2 Tone label. Of course, the withdrawn "I

Can't Stand Up" single is referred to repeatedly as if it were the flipping holy grail (when everybody knows the bottom fell out of that particular market years ago). Dammers's comments on EC's working methods during his production of The Specials' debut album no doubt strike a chord with the *Uncut* editor: "He was great, just brilliant. He was a real laugh. The main thing I remember is him sitting behind the desk and falling off his chair. Everyone was pissed during the recording of that first album. We spent most of the time in the pub over the road and then we just used to work during closing time, which was between four and six in the afternoon."

**Q** (August) Costello counts in at number 68 (with an estimated net worth of £8million) in "The 100 Richest Stars in Rock 'n Roll." Estimator, specialist music accountant Cliff Dane, cites EC's great catalogue, new record deal and his 30% stake in the £2million sale of Demon. For his spending habits, he notes Costello's addiction to rare record shops and how he once bought an American tour bus and had it shipped to England. Most interesting is Steve Nieve's revelation that their recent Italian tour was just a guise so that they could catch every concert on a tour by opera diva Celia Bartoli.

**Time Out New York**, (August) Sister publication to London's *Time Out*, picks a celebrity each week and does a bit on their favorite restaurant when they are in town. EC gives a recommendation for the Blue Nile, an Ethiopian restaurant on the Upper West Side. He specifically cited the vegetarian plate.

## Newspapers:

**The Wall Street Journal** (June 12) Tony Bennett is asked to pick his favorite music for the US business daily and selects the Count Basie Orchestra, Wynton Marsalis, k.d. lang and Elvis Costello. Says Tony: "Elvis had a good music education from his father. His music will stay with us."

**The News Observer (Raleigh, NC, USA)** (July 17) Carries a report about Bill Frisell recording an album of songs co-written by Elvis Costello and Burt Bacharach. "It's one of the weirdest things I've ever done," Frisell says. "They were in LA doing the Hollywood, big commercial record with a whole orchestra and all this stuff. Somewhere along the line, they asked me to take all of that music and do jazz arrangements of all these new tunes they were doing. It's so

CONTINUED on Page 21

**BB casts a critical eye over the latest Elvis Costello biography to hit the shelves**

## YOU CAN JUST LOOK AT THE PICTURES, YOU DON'T ACTUALLY HAVE TO READ IT

**T**WELVE YEARS after the appearance of Mick St. Michael's biography, "award-winning" Irish writer Tony Clayton-Lea has taken it upon himself to fill a perceived gap on the bookshelves with his "Elvis Costello: A Biography," published by André Deutsch in May. Critical reaction to the book was less than ecstatic. "No access to subject equals dry read" ran the headline to Tom Doyle's review in *Q*, while Dublin's *Evening Herald* echoed the opinion of many fans in wondering why Clayton-Lea chose to go ahead with the project at all given the lack of cooperation from Costello's camp. The author's response was initially upbeat. He told the *Irish Sunday Times* that EC's refusal to help was "a superficial difficulty" which turned out actually to be "a bonus insofar as authorised biographies tend to be reasonably sanitised." However, interviewed by Irish radio in June, Clayton-Lea appeared to be manning the defensive barricades. At pains to point out his lack of access to EC, he stressed the fact that he was busy working full-time as a journalist whilst writing the book between November 1997 and March 1998. (He also went out of his way to heap praise on his researcher - presumably the same one who couldn't even get EC's date of birth right?) To summarise then, what we have here is a book which apparently took a mere four months to write, with no input from EC or his cohorts, by an author denied permission even to quote from the Costello lyrical canon. It was never really going to be the definitive word on Elvis Costello, was it? Fittingly, Irish correspondent John Foyle headed the queue of those sharpening their critical faculties on BB's behalf...

Regardless of all its faults, this book is a handy compilation of the facts of the case that is "The Life of Elvis Costello." The book jacket is tastefully done and the sturdy, flexible binding makes the publication easy to use. There are some nicely-reproduced pictures, including an out-take from the *Brutal Youth* sessions and one of Elvis & Jake Riviera from the early 80s which I hadn't seen before. In many ways it's an acceptable present for someone who knows damn all about Elvis. However, for those already familiar with the story there are one or two

problems...

My first complaint is that the book reads like an audition. It is as if the writer produced it with the intent of sending it to its subject in order to seek his approval before writing a proper biography. In other words, if Clayton-Lea (who also produced a groveling retrospective piece - presumably for similar reasons - in the *Irish Times* of August 1, 1997) could persuade Costello how polite and reverential he could be, then maybe Elvis would agree to help out. If this was indeed the strategy, it clearly failed and what we are left with is a bland, toothless effort characterised by contradictory paragraphs towards the end of the acknowledgement pages. First Clayton-Lea states that "my life wasn't made any easier by his refusal to cooperate, but neither was it made any more difficult." Yet, mere sentences later, he explains that no lyrics are quoted because of Costello's management's advice that "copyright of his lyrics would be protected to the utmost." What the hell does that mean? Serious frowns whenever they meet, or (shades of Jake Riviera's celebrated letter to another would-be biographer Krista Reese in 1981) the nailing of people to the wall?

The book's feeble sign-off line ("Simply, thank you for the music ...") irritates still further. A more acerbic tone might have helped. Clayton-Lea could even have tried to make a merit out of the lack of cooperation. His informal style of writing could easily have incorporated this. How simple it would have been when discussing a particular song to have joked about wishing he could quote from it but, sadly, he couldn't etc., etc. Instead, we are left with top-heavy paraphrasing such as that which occurs on page 48 ("And who else would allow the first line of the song on the record [*Armed Forces*] to ponder precisely how they might begin proceedings?") to bog the narrative down.

Such crippling limitations aside, a comprehensive retelling of the Costello story is achieved. A few inaccuracies leapt out at me. A reference to working with the J.Geils Band in 1979 (page 61) is surely a garbled account of Costello working (as he did that year) with the Australian band Jo Jo Zep & The Falcons. On page 117 we are told that Elvis did "a brief acoustic set" at Dublin's

Self-Aid in 1986, when in actual fact it was a scorching set with The Attractions. Irritating omissions abound. On page 15 Clayton-Lea details a bootleg source for some early demo tapes - why not highlight their availability on the more accessible Demon CD edition of *My Aim Is True*? Coverage of 1982 makes no mention of the "From Head to Toe" and "Party Party" singles - surely prime examples of Elvis's ongoing attempts to assert himself commercially.

The restrictions placed on the use of lyrics presumably also extended to any of Elvis's journalistic efforts, quotations from which might have been useful. I am thinking in particular of the piece he wrote for *Hot Press* in 1987 recounting the highlights of his first ten years as "a pop star," or the sleeve notes on the CD reissues. Even an appendix which merely listed these writings would have been a useful addition. The comprehensive discography is also incomplete in that it does not list Elvis's production work. The final annoyance is the lack of an index section at the end of the book, surely a painless enough inclusion in these days of computer compilation of data?

My comments on the book must be qualified by the following. Short of keeping abreast of news in *Beyond Belief*, I am not really that interested in reading about Elvis. One thing the book does succeed in communicating is the fact that he is an intensely private individual, as is his right. If, by being so, he is able to produce work of the quality he has so far produced then, as we say here, more power to him. If, however, someone does feel the need to write a book about him, I would prefer something a little more challenging than Clayton-Lea has managed here. I was, fortunately, given a copy of it as a present. If I had forked out money for it, I would be hopping mad. As it is, I will be finding an obscure corner of my bookshelves for it, just for the sake of completeness.

● *The hardback edition of "Elvis Costello: A Biography" by Tony Clayton-Lea was published in the UK by André Deutsch on 21st May 1998 priced at £12.99 (ISBN 0233992952)*



# 2½ Years In and Around The Big Apple

by Harold Siegel



IT IS NOW SPRING. THAT IS SPRING OF 1997. I just recently had the pleasure of seeing a New York exclusive at the Supper Club. "Doncha Go 'Way Mad" was performed as a duet by Elvis Costello with Deborah Harry in front of the Jazz Passengers. Here were these two icons from the so called "New Wave" era performing together twenty years later. It seems hard to believe that a whole generation has gone by. Twenty years ago, New York became one of the most potent "hot beds" of Elvis Costello enthusiasm. It was in the spring of 1977 that I had my first encounter with Elvis. Shortly thereafter, I became an avid fan. What follows are some recollections by this suburban New Yorker of those early years of Elvis in and around "the Big Apple."

## 1977

During the early part of 1977, I was in the throes of completing my doctoral dissertation. That spring semester, I found little time to sleep. I was generally up through the wee small hours working. During those long, busy nights on Long Island, my radio kept me company. It was easier to leave the radio on than to keep changing records on the turntable. I loved rock music, but late 70s rock was what one friend once referred to as "the stale donut era," namely the remnants of San Francisco, the British invasion, and the sixties. The overnight on WNEW-FM would suit me

just fine. So it was, in the middle of the night, perhaps in April of that year, that I first heard the name, "Stiff." The DJ began talking about this UK import called *Bunch of Stiffs*. It grabbed my attention because the announcer said that it included an uncredited, unreleased version of a Graham Parker song. Since I was somewhat of a Parker fan, I took note. However, it was not "Back to School Days" that this DJ chose to sample. Rather, he introduced a track by a new artist with an absolutely unforgettable name, "Elvis Costello." Of course, we now know that the song played was "Less Than Zero." Although I was not terribly impressed on this first listening, it was hard to forget the name. Despite the fact that I spent a couple of days in London during that summer, my next exposure to Mr. Costello came during the fall of 1977. I was in my car on the Williamsburg Bridge on my way to Manhattan when WNEW-FM DJ, Dave Herman played "Alison," predicting that it was going to be a big hit single. It wasn't, and I still wasn't moved.

I next encountered EC's name in November, while perusing the *Village Voice*. On a weekly basis, I would check out the listing for the Bottom Line. On this particular week, there was our Elvis Costello, with a banner reading "Sold Out." I was amazed.

Then, it started to happen. It was Friday afternoon, December 9, 1977, to be exact. I was on my way to a local Sam Goody's, listening again to WNEW-FM, this time to Scott Muni's "English Hour." He played the then current British hit, "Watching the Detectives." When I arrived at Goody's, I looked at *My Aim Is True*. Sure enough, at the end of side one was "Watching the Detectives." I returned home, but I was

unable to get the song out of my mind, so I returned to Sam Goody's a few hours later, and I purchased *My Aim Is True*. I won't pretend that I loved the album on first listening; nevertheless, I kept on listening, and some five days later, on December 14, I found myself on a standing room line at the Bottom Line. It was a rainy night, with some three hours of waiting ahead. I was close to the front of the line, but since I had never waited on the standing room line for this venue before, I was uncertain.

Not long after I arrived, a young man came by with a ticket for sale for \$10.00. Not relishing the thought of a couple more hours in the rain, I purchased the ticket. Soon thereafter, I was at a table right in front of the stage eating dinner.

After sitting through a set by Tuff Darts sans Robert Gordon, the moment was at hand. Elvis and the Attractions took the stage for their 54 minute set. Naturally, I had no idea that the band was named the "Attractions," that is until Elvis informed the audience of this fact.

Elvis wore a nervous and intense look on his face throughout; there was not a moment of relaxation on his part. My first reaction when I set eyes on him was that I had no idea how old this man was; he might have been 20; he might have been 50! Elvis counted to four; the band banged out the first chords of their first number. I didn't know the song; it was not on *MAIT*. The song would later become legendary both in sports arenas and as Elvis' grand finale. It was, of course, "Pump It Up." He went right into "Red Shoes," the first familiar song. Half of the set was from *MAIT* while the other half was "new" material. Elvis performed two songs that I never saw him do again, "Living in Paradise" and "Blame It on Cain." He apprised the audience that he had written "Living in Paradise" before he ever set foot in the United States. Although I was thrilled that he performed my then favorite, "Watching the Detectives" (segued from "Lipstick Vogue" of course), I found that I

was very impressed with new songs such as "Radio, Radio" and "No Action." Elvis closed with "Mystery Dance"; his encore was "Lip Service."

So it began; I was quickly an Elvis Costello fan. The year 1977 had one more event featuring EC. Following the Sex Pistols withdrawal from their scheduled performance on "Saturday Night Live," Elvis Costello & the Attractions substituted. "Watching the Detectives" went off without a hitch. However, as we all know, the second song would make EC history. He sang the first few lines of "Less Than Zero," stopped the song, announced that there was no reason to perform it, and spontaneously broke into "Radio, Radio." Elvis already owned a reputation.

## 1978

My next encounter with Elvis and the Attractions was on a snowy night, March 3, 1978 at Long Island's C.W. Post College. It was between the time that the old domed arena fell in because of too much snow on the roof and the opening of the Tilles Center. Thus, the show was held in a large "lecture hall" at "Hillwood Commons." It was to be a busy night for me. First I had tickets for the EC early show, then I was to see Bob Weir's late show at the Palladium in Manhattan.

The opening act for Elvis was one "Stu Day." There was then an intermission that seemed to be eternal; there was doubt about whether Elvis was really going to show up. However, as everyone now knows, the band was late because the door fell off their bus. The early show was taped and would eventually be broadcast on WLIR-FM. It was quite memorable that Elvis wore a little name badge (like a waiter might wear) that read "Woody." We speculated that this might be have been a reference to his often noted resemblance to Woody Allen.

When the show ended, I started my drive in the snowstorm to Manhattan. When I arrived at the Palladium, the marquee announced that Bob Weir had been snowed out. My first inclination was to return to C.W. Post for Elvis' late show. However, my dilemma was that I had no tickets for this sold out show. However, I took a shot at it. It paid off; an usher who remembered me from the early show let me in. The bad news was that Elvis was already on stage when I arrived. He opened with "Welcome to The Working Week," a song that I have yet to see him perform. The good news was that I was on time for the likes of "Roadette," "Stranger in The House," and "Big Tears."

It was on this tour that Elvis played his famous El Mocambo show. (Later in 1978, the promo record of this show issued in Canada would become one of the prized pieces in my EC collection.) During the broadcast of that show on the *King Biscuit Flower Hour*, it was announced that Elvis would be touring with Nick Lowe and Mink DeVille during the spring.

This entourage hit the Palladium Theatre in Manhattan on May 6. By this time, the second LP, the first with the Attractions, *This Year's Model* was out. To this day, this is one of my favorite albums ever. The marquee of the Palladium was adorned with the legendary stand-ups of the US album version of Elvis behind the camera. There were two shows. We would be treated to the first renditions of four songs from the next album, *Armed Forces*. Costello & Nieve opened with "Accidents Will Happen" with Steve on organ. The band also played "Party Girl," "Two Little Hitlers," and an early version of "Goon Squad" (with substantially different lyrics). During Mink DeVille's late show set, we asked one of the security guards at the entrance if we might be able to get the stand-ups on the marquee. He said that if we were able to get them down, they were ours. It was quite an effort, but today that very stand-up is in my garage. It is the first thing that greets me when I get home.

Two days after the Palladium shows, my next major event as an Elvis Costello fan occurred. It was the first time I met Elvis personally. There was a hastily arranged show by Rockpile at the Bottom Line. We attended the late show. A friend and I noticed that the three Attractions were sitting a table toward the back of the venue. Shortly after meeting Steve, Pete, and Bruce, we noticed Elvis walking near our table. It was with some trepidation that we approached. By this time, Elvis had the reputation of being a very angry young man. However, he was, as he would be during later encounters, extremely gracious. He asked us where the Attractions were as he signed autographs. Also, he was wearing a name tag again, similar to the "Woody" one. This time, it read "Curt." When I asked him why he was Curt that evening, his cryptic reply was to the effect that Curt was his favorite Bay City Roller. A different explanation for the Curt name tag would be supplied years later in *The Big Wheel* by Bruce Thomas.

After an exciting first year of virtually nonstop activity in and around the "Big Apple," the balance of 1978 would essentially be down time. In the interim, Elvis Costello

was becoming one of the most collectible rock musicians. Items such as the US picture disc with selections from his first two LPs or his first two UK Stiff singles with picture sleeves were drawing top dollar in metropolitan New York record stores and record shows. And more was coming.

## 1979

Things in 1979 started out with a bang, no pun intended. Promoted as "World Album Three," originally entitled *Emotional Fascism*, *Armed Forces* was released at the beginning of the year. Allegedly the US album was the first record ever released with a bar code on it.

Elvis Costello was headed for world domination. With that, Elvis items were becoming more and more collectible. One Saturday, I was driving on Long Island, and I heard an EC song on WNEW-FM; it was not on *Armed Forces*; in fact, it was totally unfamiliar. It was entitled "Talking in The Dark." We would learn that this was the A-side of a Radar Records "freebie" single catalogued "RG-1," later referred to as the "Dominion" single. Even at \$50 or \$60 a pop, New York record shops were unable to contain this single.

Elvis and the Attractions were booked into the standard metropolitan area venues on their spring US tour promoting *Armed Forces* (i.e., Palladium; Capitol Theatre). Posters emerged with lists of these dates, proclaiming that on April 1, they would be "nowhere." In fact, we know that was not true. The band was scheduled to play three local clubs on that date. Tickets were distributed by contest.

However, by the time the band reached New York, Elvis Costello was in the throes of his worst crisis. The unfortunate episode with Bonnie Bramlett and Stephen Stills had just occurred. Elvis Costello was being branded a racist. Columbia Records was determined to head off the bad publicity. They hastily arranged a news conference in New York for Elvis to explain himself. It didn't seem to help.

On March 31, the band played two shows at the Palladium supported by the Rubinoos. Aside from a fair sampling of *Armed Forces* and a rare rendition of "Tiny Steps," Elvis and the Attractions played numerous new songs that would eventually, in substantially different form, make up the album, *Get Happy!!*. I especially loved "B Movie" and "High Fidelity." The performance of the latter was nothing short of transcendent. I've never fully shaken off my disappointment that these early versions of those two songs were never issued.



The next day on April Fool's Day, a friend and I played fools by waiting on an endless standing room line for the show at the Bottom Line. It was a far nastier and crowded scene than 15½ months earlier. We were assured by staff of the Bottom Line that there would be no problem getting in, but we didn't. At one point during our wait, we watched as Mick Jagger got out of a limousine to see the show. The scene was replete with anti-Costello demonstrations. The protesters declared Elvis to be a racist. After the standing room line was disbanded, we found a window adjacent to the stage, where we had the opportunity to see the whole show. Elvis, very aware of the demonstration outside, performed "Night Rally." After the show, we gleefully purchased copies of the *Dominion* single, being distributed to the emerging crowd, for \$5.00 to \$10.00.

There would be one more show in the New York area, on April 10, presented by Hofstra University, at a Long Island theater, the Calderone. The show opened with "Radio, Radio," and featured a performance of "He'll Have to Go." However, it was most memorable for the ear shattering volume at which they performed. Elvis and the Attractions would not return to New York again for more than 21 months.

It was at about the time of the *Armed Forces* tour that I started "Psychosound Records" (which has long been defunct). Having devoted much time and energy into collecting, I figured that I might turn that effort into something fiscally productive. It didn't work out that way, but it proved to be an interesting experience. The idea was to work record shows and to sell by mail order. Psychosound was to specialize in Elvis Costello/Stiff collectibles. The first flyer announcing the advent of this outfit was distributed at the Palladium shows.

During the summer of 1979, I made a trip to England to develop connections for my business and I visited Radar Records. At the entrance to their office was a life size stand-up of Elvis behind the camera from *This Year's Model*, UK style. Wouldn't we love that for our collections? I also went to the then distributor, Bonaparte Records in Croydon. Their offices sported a placard of Elvis that was several stories high.

It was through Psychosound that I first met the legendary Lorenzo at a Rockages record show in New York. It was somewhat stormy at first; has he yet forgiven me for the ratty condition of the then impossible to find first two UK singles with picture covers? However, we went on to become great friends, and I



eventually accompanied him on his first trip to the UK.

The first two and a half years of the Elvis Costello invasion of New York concluded in the fall of 1979, with the 2-Tone craze. Elvis' production of the first *Specials* album brought a great deal of attention to both the group and the label. Then, sensing an impending contract dispute, the first *Get Happy!!* single, "I Can't Stand Up for Falling Down" was pressed on the 2-Tone label. When unreleased copies surfaced in New York record stores early the next year, they sold for \$300 to \$400.

Believe it or not, it is now 1998! It seems like a reverie that I began a year ago is now winding down. Although the foregoing represents some nostalgic memories of a time in New York that is in the distant past, what is refreshing and actually quite incredible is that Elvis continues to be so vital and so musically fresh.



From  
Page  
17

bizarre. I had this little demo tape of Elvis singing and Burt playing the piano and then some lead sheets. Neither one of us has heard what the other has done. I guess they're going to put the albums out around the same time. So it's like my take on what they're doing without even having heard it. It was amazing to have these tunes. They sound like classic Burt Bacharach tunes that you've heard a

million times, but they're all brand new. It was the weirdest thing."

*The Los Angeles Times* (July 19) News is broken about EC's engagement of Danny Bennett as his new manager as well as the first leak of the new LP's title.

*The Mirror* (Irish edition) (August 7) Yes, folks, it's her again. Publicity-shy Bebe Buell "sets the record straight about her passionate affair with Dublin-based Elvis Costello" in an interview apparently stemming from her irritation with the impression - further fostered in the recently-published Costello biography - that she still carries a torch for her ex-lover. "Tony Clayton-Lea's book doesn't say anything inaccurate," she concedes, "but I just wish people would stop bringing up the same stuff about us over and over again." Without trace of irony, she goes on to rake over the same old stuff one more time before revealing plans to bring out her own book: "I want to explain things in a way that they've never been explained before. I want to make it clear that I am very happily married and am not in love with Elvis Costello."

*The Examiner* (August 12) More crimes which Mr. Clayton-Lea must answer for as his wretched tome prompts this Irish newspaper to publish a lengthy feature article on EC's career, from the days when he was plain "Declan Anthony" through to his current existence in Dublin with "ex-Bananarama wife" Cait. Aaaarghh!



**More!**

### EC to Join Macca Tour?

In September, Paul McCartney announced that he and Chrissie Hynde of the Pretenders are organizing a series of concerts next year to "keep alive his late wife Linda's crusade for animal rights." "Good animal activists around the world might think, 'Oh, God, we've lost a very powerful voice when we lost Linda,'" McCartney said. "Well, we have. But my voice is there now and I'm going to try to use it. We are going to keep up her good work."

Paul also said he is talking with Elvis Costello, the B-52s, the artist formerly known as Prince, Blur, Lenny Kravitz and Natalie Imbruglia about participating. Elvis Costello & the Attractions participated in the Concerts to Benefit the People of Kampuchea organized by McCartney in December 1979.

# ZENJI'S BRILLIANT PARADE

*Zenji Nagahata tells Mary P Kerr all about working with the Attractions...*

AS HE BOARDED A FLIGHT from Tokyo to London at the start of 1997, Japanese singer-songwriter Zenji Nagahata could easily have been forgiven for pinching himself just to make sure he wasn't dreaming. A major fan of both The Beatles and Elvis Costello, he was en route to fulfil two lifetime ambitions in a single trip. Not only did he have recording time booked at legendary Fab Four haunt the EMI Abbey Road Studios, he was also on his way to a session with long-time musical heroes The Attractions.

"I've longed for Elvis Costello & the Attractions since my childhood," confirms Zenji to *Beyond Belief*. He even went so far as to call his first album *Flip City* in a nod to EC's obscure pub-rock group of the same name. "I loved his early albums, especially *This Year's Model* and *Get Happy!!* and my own music was affected by them," confesses the man who also lists Dr. Feelgood, Paul Weller, Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison, and Oasis among his influences. "I often went to Elvis's shows in Japan, from my high school days. The concerts were so cool - especially his acoustic live sets."

The trip to England was the culmination of a year-long campaign on Zenji's part. "I belonged to the Tokyo branch of the Humble Heart Music Company," he explains. "The company has a recording co-ordination section in Los Angeles and I was continually telling them that I would like to record with The Attractions from the time that I first signed a contract with them. A year later, one of my dreams came true..."

Working with The Attractions did not disappoint, although Zenji confesses "I couldn't sleep and was very excited the day before." On January 24th, a preparatory session took place at Pete Thomas's basement home studio. "As I'd already sent them a demo tape of 'Modernist' and 'Homerun Kings', the two songs we were recording, the pre-production went very smoothly." So smoothly, in fact, that the participants were able to adjourn to the nearby *White Swan* pub, where they remained until the early hours of the following morning. "Pete's wife Judy got a little bit angry..."



Three days later, the musicians reassembled under the watchful eye of producer Simon Sheridan at Abbey Road for the recording session proper, the fruits of which would see the light of day on the Japanese CD single "Modernist ~ Passion Pistol" in April 1997 (and later on Zenji's *Camden* album). "ZENJI NAGAHATA arranged and performed by THE ATTRactions" proclaims the single's credit alongside a touching dedication to the band from Zenji himself: "Many thanks for the great experience with you. I love you with all my heart!!!"

A camcorder was running throughout the trip, resulting in a couple of excellent promo videos which include footage of both studio sessions as well as the memorable sight of an outrageously pink-suited Zenji wiggling out with his guitar during an alarming bus ride around central London. "Just look at me, I'm having the time of my life..." seems to be his defiant message to bemused passers-by.

The debt to early Costello is distinctly audible in Zenji's singing style and he has clearly taken EC's "every songwriter is a thief and a magpie" quotation at face value. On *Camden*, for instance, you'll hear shameless plundering of the "Pump It Up" riff, the guitar intro to "All The Young Dudes", and the chord progression from "Whatever" by Oasis (or is it Neil Innes?). "Modernist" finds the Attractions entering wholeheartedly into the spirit, revisiting their classic sound with typical gusto against a swirling psychedelic guitar backdrop courtesy of the mighty Steve Donnelly. "Homerun Kings", meanwhile, finds the band comfortably masquerading as a Rockpile for the 90s.

Fortunately, there's plenty of Zenji himself in the mix too, although the effect of hearing him overlay such uncompromisingly western pop and rock & roll styles with his aggressively-delivered Japanese lyrics was a little disconcerting to these English ears at

first. It was a bit like hearing something on the radio in the next room and being unable quite to distinguish the words (or trying to decipher *My Aim Is True* on my old battery-operated Boots portable record player back in 1977!). Ultimately, however, the experience proved a rewarding one, with Zenji's patent sincerity transcending language barriers, and the excellently-judged arrangements ending up more often than not on the right side of the division between inspiration

and pastiche.

Although clearly a talented and determined man, dedicated to making a success of his own career, Zenji has not lost any of the passion of a true fan. In March of this year he fulfilled still one more ambition, meeting another musical hero, Nick Lowe, for whom he opened a show in Tokyo. "I was there on business," Zenji notes, "but I was just a fan in front of him". So much so that he couldn't resist asking for Lowe's autograph and taking the opportunity to furnish "Basher" with some Zenji Nagahata CDs, including, of course, "Modernist".

And The Attractions? A year later Zenji looks back on his musical adventure with them fondly, expressing his sincere hope that the band enjoyed themselves as much as he did. "The Attractions played my songs! And I played guitar with them!" he recalls with a mixture of amazement and pride. Naturally enough, he'd love to do some more work with them in the future, but for the moment his musical priorities, understandably, lie elsewhere: "I really hope I'll be able to record with them again. But before that I have to break in Japan..." We wish him luck!

## Zenji Nagahata Discography (English titles) Albums

"**Flip City**" Sony SRCL 3585 Jul 96

"**Camden**" Sony SRCL 4034 Sep 97

## Singles

"**Monkey Face**" Sony SRCL 4203 Jun 96

"**Smiley Smile**" Sony SRCL 4296 Nov 96

"**Modernist ~ Passion Pistol**" Sony SRCL 3797 Apr 97

"**Chocolate City Big Plan**" Sony SRCL 4033 Aug 97

"**Cry Baby**" Sony SRDL 4451 Jan 98

To obtain Zenji's CDs, please write to Quark, 401 Sakura-shinmachilchibankan 1-31-3, Sakura-shinmachi, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo, Japan. A web site dedicated to his work, the "Flip City Lounge", is located at <http://www.network.or.jp/fab/flipcafe.html>.



# GLITTER

# GULCH

Free Classifieds To Readers

## WANTED: STIFF RECORDS T-SHIRTS

Looking for any original Stiff Records t-shirts. Price negotiable. Rachel Harvey 1047 Grant St. Santa Monica, Ca. 90405 USA [racheltal@aol.com](mailto:racheltal@aol.com).

## COSTELLO COLLECTION FOR SALE

Extensive worldwide Elvis collection for sale. Includes vinyl, tapes, books, mags, posters, etc. Please send large stamped addressed envelope or two IRC for list. S. Grafton 34 Mt. Pleasant Terrace, Southville, Bristol, BS3 1LF, ENGLAND.

## RARE ELVIS COSTELLO CD'S

For sale or trade. Please contact Olivier Ridolphi 22 Rue Gratien, Strasbourg FRANCE.

## ECLECTIC BALLROOM TAPES WANTED

Anybody willing to trade or sell tape copies of EC's appearances on Irish radio show 'The Eclectic Ballroom' (28<sup>th</sup> October 1997 & 24<sup>th</sup> March 1998)? Andrew Moorhouse, 380 Bury Road, Oakenrod, Rochdale, OL11 4EB, ENGLAND.



## I.D. INTERNATIONAL DISC WORLDWIDE MUSIC IMPORT AND FAN CLUB SERVICE

1-800-280-2990

E-MAIL [ldintl@worldnet.att.net](mailto:ldintl@worldnet.att.net)  
<http://www.sarahsplace.com/intldisc>

**Your Source for Costello import items!**

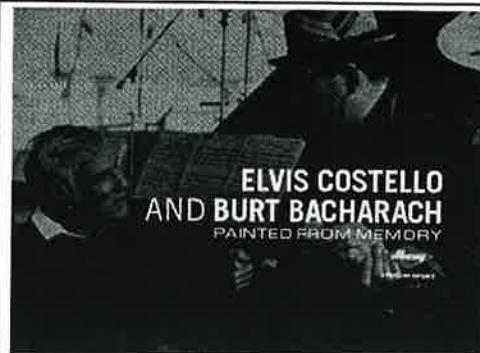
## Framed and Hung Up

Here's our first artistic rendition depicting one of Elvis Costello's songs: "Deep Dark Truthful Mirror" by "Cherry Pristine" from England.



## BB READERS ARE DOIN' IT FOR THEMSELVES

UK reader Trevor Tall is the latest BB subscriber to venture into a recording studio. The resulting self-financed 7-track CD, Collins & Tall's *filthy con*, is an impressive debut packed with aggressive guitar work and some punchy vocals. "I don't know if any EC influences come across - maybe in the double-tracked backing vocals," notes Trevor. The disc comes highly recommended by our European Editor and copies can be obtained by sending £6 (UK) or £7 (elsewhere) to: Trevor Tall, 4 Misbourne Drive, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, HB16 0BL, England. Go on, treat yourself (and find out just what went on down at the Crook's Arse that night!).



## Continued from Page 5

and the backup singers chime in "so ask yourself . . ."

**Painted From Memory** A wonderful small piece, almost like a Costello-Nieve curio but with a lovely string arrangement as well. *Magic Moments*: The basic melody, a beautiful figure which drops in at every interval, particularly when it underscores "they smile for someone/Else . . ."; the acoustic guitar quietly echoing the piano melody; the fading strings at the song's end.

**The Sweetest Punch** By far the most Elvis Costello-like tune on the record, this could have easily been an Attractions number. *Magic Moments*: The falsetto on "you knocked me out . . .," followed by a piano triplet; the bells, of course, after "the bell goes."; the nervous piano figure after "I didn't see it coming"; the stop and start at the end of the first chorus, bumped back into the groove as the next verse begins; the fantastic strings that end the last chorus and take the song out (just substitute the TKO Horns on these lines and it's *Punch the Clock!*).

**What's Her Name Today?** A sleeper that eventually reveals itself as perhaps the most powerful song on the record. *Magic Moments*: The very Joni Mitchell-like piano notes before the vocal and in the coda; the high piano notes at the end of lines like "you'd leave her crying" or "fixed with a ribbon"; the diving bass figures; the unsettling, off-key way "but as the radio played" lines are sung; the way "and your reason" is snuck in; the pauses in the beginning of the second verse (What's...her...name..today?); the fantastically abrupt line "well, is it or isn't it?"; the way the vocal disintegrates in the last verse and the music becomes more ominous, suggesting the mental state of the protagonist; the swelling of the piano at the very apex of EC's last vocal line, which leads into a rather frightening snake-like cymbal sound, alternating with piano and strings, that takes us out.

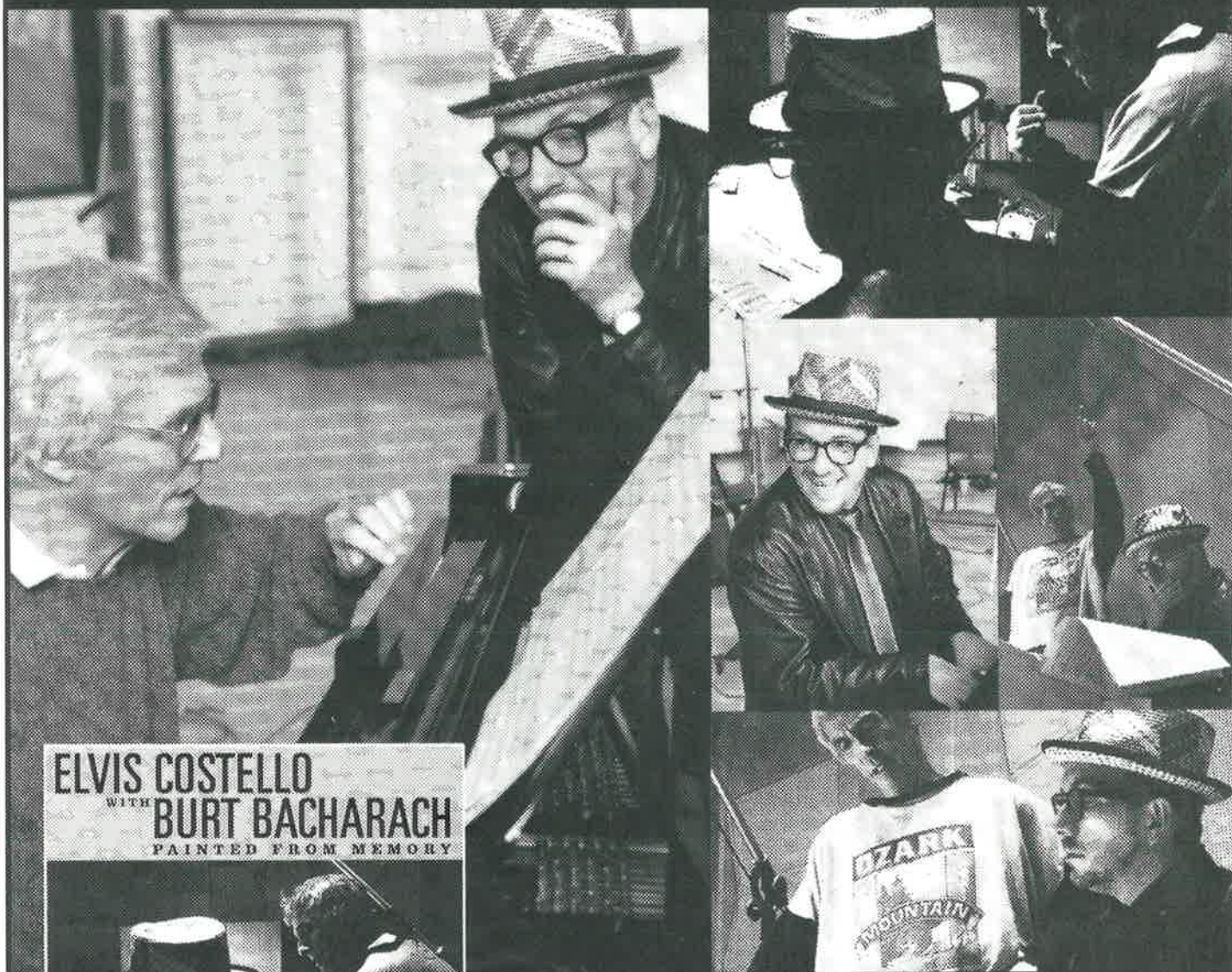


# ELVIS COSTELLO

WITH

# BURT BACHARACH

PAINTED FROM MEMORY



ELVIS COSTELLO  
WITH  
BURT BACHARACH  
PAINTED FROM MEMORY



THE NEW SONGS  
OF BACHARACH & COSTELLO

THE NEW SONGS OF BACHARACH & COSTELLO

"TIMELESS SONGS OF LOVE AND LONGING...  
A STUNNING, VITAL SONG CYCLE." -ROLLING STONE

© 1998 Mercury Records 314 538 002-2/4



a PolyGram company