

PolyGram Pact Hits the Press



IN AN EXCLUSIVE COVER STORY, *Billboard* magazine announced Elvis Costello's signing to PolyGram in its February 7th issue. The announcement also heralded the fact that later this year, EC's first album for PolyGram's Mercury affiliate would be his much-awaited collaboration with Burt Bacharach. Also planned is a sister project on PolyGram's Verve label that would feature jazz interpretations of the newly written Costello/Bacharach compositions. The LP with

Bacharach will include another version of "God Give Me Strength" and, as to the LP's focus on pop ballads, Elvis said "Burt and I are here to kick Celine Dion's ass."

Possible releases in 1999 include a second LP with The Brodsky Quartet as well as a song cycle EC has been writing for Anne Sofie von Otter. And although Elvis again proclaimed the end of the Attractions, a Mercury LP of Steve Nieve's music and Costello's lyrics is expected around the turn of the century.

Mercury CEO Danny Goldberg had this to say about his new client: "After Bob Dylan, Paul McCartney or Paul Simon, who of the next generation has a similar stature?"

Demon to Change Hands

BILLBOARD REPORTED IN ITS FEBRUARY 14th ISSUE that Demon Records, the UK label part-owned by Elvis Costello and his ex-manager, Jake Riviera, was about to be sold to Crimson Productions, owner of Woolworth's, Britain's largest music retailer. Demon is primarily a catalog company with a successful mail order operation. Although the article was not clear, the UK rights to EC's pre-1987 catalog are thought to be unaffected.

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Costello & Nieve Hit Road

THE DUO OF COSTELLO & NIEVE commenced an 10-city tour of Italy in early February. The pair will also play at the *Vossa Jazz Festival* in Norway on April 5th and there has also been talk of a US tour later in the year.

Beyond Belief received an early report on the Genoa show and will provide more extensive coverage of the tour in *BB16*. Highlights gleaned from the Genoa show include the debut of the

third known Costello/Nieve composition. Titled "Unfailing Welcome to the Voice," this song, adapted from Nieve's *Parasite* opera, deals with a drunk man in a theatre who sees the ghosts of his life passing in front of his eyes. After a solo "So Like Candy," Costello performed "Gigi," "Alison" and "The Invisible Man" to the light of a single lamp. The show also closed with a stunning unamplified "Couldn't Call it Unexpected No.4."

Here's the complete Genoa set list: Shot with His Own Gun / Temptation / Talking in the Dark-Poor Fractured Atlas (medley) / Still Too Soon to Know / Kid About It / The Long Honeymoon / Unfailing Welcome to the Voice / So Like Candy / Gigi / Alison / The Invisible Man / God Give Me Strength / I Just Don't Know What to Do with Myself / Man Out of Time / Veronica / Deep Dark Truthful Mirror ENCORE: Almost Blue / My Funny Valentine / God's Comic / The Birds Will Still Be Singing SECOND ENCORE: All This Useless Beauty / Accidents Will Happen / Couldn't Call It Unexpected No. 4.

Other songs played elsewhere on the tour included Clown Strike, Sulky Girl, From a Whisper to a Scream, You Little Fool, Little Palaces, I Want You, Shipbuilding, O' Mistress Mine, Detectives, Shallow Grave, Mouth Almighty, I'll Wear It Proudly, Telescope, Why Can't A Man Stand Alone and the first ever performance of Miss Mary, written with Italian performer Zuccherro.

ELVIS COSTELLO & STEVE NIEVE February Italian Tour

3	Perugia	Teatro Morlacchi
5	Genoa	Opera
6	Aosta	Teatro Giacosa
7	Florence	Teatro Verdi
9	Turin	Teatro Regio
10	Rome	Santa Cecilia
11	Modena	Teatro Storchi
14	Venice	Teatro Goldoni
15	Cremona	Teatro Ponchielli
16	Milan	Teatro Lirico

Exclusive!
News on
Rhino's
Costello Covers
Compilation!
(see page 12)



From The Editor

The period between the 1986 release of *Blood & Chocolate* and the 1989 debut for Warner Bros., *Spike*, marked the longest gap in Elvis Costello's recording career. And until he took the stage in the Spring of 1989 in Boston, it also was one of his longest times away from a US stage. For his return, Elvis chose to strip down the densely recorded new songs back to the way he wrote them and once again he gave us a solo tour like he had first done in 1984.

Yours truly as usual studied the tour dates as well as a map and the airline schedules. I decided on an April three-city jaunt following this tour of colleges through Michigan and Illinois. Even though I was disappointed that I did not get to select one of the "Thirteen Deadly Sins" from EC's throbbing heart stage prop, I found the shows enjoyable. For me, the high point was a rare performance of a back-to-back "Baby Plays Around" and "Chewing Gum" in Lansing, Michigan. Sitting down to focus on the vocal exercise of the former and the guitar virtuosity of the latter, this was an unforgettable moment. The next night in Ann Arbor, I was also quite thrilled about getting invited to a soundcheck for the very first time.

Just a month later I would get another

opportunity to see Elvis as I "conveniently" arranged my planned London vacation with my wife to catch one of EC's "A Month of Sundays" performances at the London Palladium. Aside from the concert, our first overseas trip was also special in that I was able to exchange a ton of frequent flyer miles for a round-trip on the supersonic Concorde!

Arriving in London late at night, it was all too much to pass by the closed Tower Records on Kensington High Street just down the block from the flat where we were staying. Of course, I was there the next morning as the doors opened. The experience was just as a fellow American described it would be: "Everything is an import!" I immediately proceeded to fill out my collection by picking up some Costello Demon LP's and CD's.

We of course did all the tourist things that one does in London and had a splendid time. My lovely wife, who was also expecting our first child at the time, had me on a quota system whereby I earned record store stops during our travels. It was exciting visiting the collectors' shops and I found a few neat items that I lacked such as the "Detectives" phonebook sleeve and the "End of the Rainbow" promo 45. And although I had quickly fallen in love with London, I also felt I could become a very rich man there by simply becoming a master plumber!

The concert on Sunday night which I saw was EC's third of four and it was exciting to be in the Palladium where the Beatles once gave their Command Performance. In addition to learning what the "stalls" were, I saw a great show and got to hear the first-ever

performance of "So Like Candy" as well as EC's only ever playing of T Bone Burnett's "Shake Yourself Loose." Nina enjoyed the show but being six months pregnant made it quite difficult for her to sit still for very long. I also occasionally remind my 8-year-old son Colin of his first Costello concert!



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

Mike Bodayle

110 Granburg Circle
San Antonio, TX 78218 USA
mbodayle@txdirect.net

Mark Perry

6 Hillside Grove
Taunton, Somerset TA1 4LA England
mark@perrys.prestel.co.uk

Dave Pannell

3 Banool Cres. Bayonet Head
Albany 6330 Australia
David.Pannell@uwa.edu.au

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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
Tracie Claypool, Homework

Correspondents:

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

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Rob Tangel at Mercury, Gary Stewart at Rhino, Bill Bentley at Reprise, Alexis Brazel at Lookout, Michelle Knight at Sanctuary, Dean Harmeyer at BMG and Julie Wolf.

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Michele Swersey from Baldwin, NY with her favorite singer after the October 3rd show with the Fairfield Four at the Bottom Line in New York City.

To The Editor

IN DEFENSE OF SPIKE

While we all agree that the first three albums were perhaps the greatest opening salvos of any contemporary pop artist. And while we all concur that *IB* is the masterpiece (among masterpieces?) that everyone acknowledged it is, I feel necessary to jump to the aid of an album which the Man himself has referred to in, if not disparaging, at least defensive terms: *Spike*.

Now don't get me wrong. There does exist a trace of misbegotten experimentation in the early Warners work, as well as on this album. What I take offense to is the often dismissive attitude which has led to this work being lumped together with *MLAR*, a far less coherent album, as necessary for artistic progression but otherwise problematic. The dreaded "Beard Years" moniker jumps to mind. I am sure the numbers who agree with me are legion but I beg the others to give it another listen.

Personally, I prefer to exclude "Chewing Gum" and "Pads, Paws and Claws" from my assessment as examples of the aforementioned misfires during the pursuits of this era. However, beyond that, I can find no missteps. On the contrary, I feel the remainder of *Spike* ranks with his best work.

I will spare you a blow by blow, track by track analysis here (perhaps best saved for a future "making of" piece to appear in *BB* at a later date: hint, hint). I challenge anyone to provide me with the name of a single EC album on which he displays the results of such a wide range of influences as adroitly and effectively as he does on this one. From New Orleans-based to Celtic to vaudevillian, Elvis incorporates them all yet emerges with a focused voice to an enduring effect.

There are two obvious pieces that, for me, exhibit the poignancy of this effort. I offer "Deep Dark Truthful Mirror" (with one of the "saddest" pianos played by Mr. Toussaint in counterpoint to the surging horns of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band) and "Tramp the Dirt Down" (whose bile and topic make it a nice companion piece to Richard Thompson's "Mother Knows Best"). He may as well have backed these two up and collectively named them the "Elvis Costello Tears Your Heart Out and Spits it Back down Your Neck Suite." "Miss Macbeth"? "Any King's Shilling"? "Baby Plays Around"? "God's Comic"? "Coal Train Robberies"? "Let Him Dangle"? You be the judge. I am done.

the Dead Monkey's Hand, USA

VILLAGE MUSIC

Got the new issue and as usual it is a great one. I especially enjoyed the interview with John Goddard from Village Music. That was one of my favorite places when I lived in the Bay Area and John turned me onto a lot of great stuff.

Bill Brown, Indiantown, FL

I'd like to thank Tom DeMarchi for his excellent story about Village Music in Mill Valley, CA. I have never been there, but it has made me want to go there now that I have read this article. I admit. I'm a total collector freak/geek. Anyway, when John Goddard was asked which EC record is his favorite, he chose *ATUB!* This is a guy who has been an avid fan of EC since his first record came out, and still he chose *ATUB!* I was surprised, but not disappointed that someone as well versed in music as he would choose *ATUB* as EC's best. I personally wouldn't choose *ATUB*, but I still respect his opinion.

Peter Redin, Chiba-Shi, JAPAN

MY AIM IS . . . (EDITED)

Thanks for the latest issue of *BB*, which makes excellent reading. Thanks also for printing my letter, although I cannot wholly agree with the editing. I think my point is somehow lost; it looks like I'm only complaining. I'm still very much touched by the music Elvis Costello makes. I merely wanted to state that in order to keep up you have to buy a lot of material only to get one or two tracks (e.g., "The Bridge I Burned"). One single could work miracles for those that don't always have pockets full of money. I can see the point of the person writing the letter saying that he bought *Extreme Honey* right away, but not all people can afford that. A person interested in Elvis Costello has to buy Fairfield Four, Fretwork, etc. How else can you come across these songs when they're not played on the radio? Sometimes it's even hard trying to track down the CDs as they appear. Enough said. I'd better go play some Elvis tracks . . .

Huib Beulen, Montfort, NETHERLANDS

THESIS YOUR BIG OPPORTUNITY?

We have recently set up a Master's course at Oxford Brookes University in Music, History and Culture, and it is with regard to my special study, 'The Aesthetics of Contemporary Popular Song' that I write to you. The course is postgraduate, so you would need a degree to get on, but the degree need not be in Music. The popular song special study would need to be alongside one

other, but many are available in English, History of Art, and History, with new ones coming along in Cinema. At the end, a student would get to write a large-scale dissertation. This I think is where the singer-songwriter literature is lacking. There are plenty of biographies, of variable quality, and lots of journalism, written to varying deadlines, but otherwise there's really little calm, considered writing. When you think of, say, Tom Waits, how many potential themes could be explored over such a large body of work. I'm wondering whether, among your readership, there is someone who has thought, probably for years, that they have one thesis inside them on their favoured songwriter? The fact the course is postgraduate is a hindrance, I realise, but I think it's worth a try. Anyone who is interested should write to me at the University, or contact me by telephone (01865 484986) or via E-mail (dmgriffiths@brookes.ac.uk).

Dr. Dai Griffiths, Principal Lecturer in Music, Oxford Brookes University, The Richard Hamilton Building, Headington Hill Campus, Oxford, OX3 0BP, ENGLAND

DEFENDING "AFTER THE FALL"

I don't want to get het up about it, but "After the Fall" is in my top thirty of EC songs any day. It is only the stronger for clearly being inspired by and striking deliberate parallels with (while never in danger of being a pastiche of) the work of Leonard Cohen - the only other singer in serious danger of being subjected to deification by me.

Graham Bowers, Ekerö, SWEDEN

MORE NEWS WANTED

I've picked up several copies of your excellent magazine at Tower Records over the last couple of years. I even bought a couple of them! (Sadly, as an impoverished student, I can't yet afford a full subscription). As a fairly recent convert to Mr. Costello's dauntingly large oeuvre, I'm very pleased that you are providing such a useful source of background material for fans and I'll be looking to acquire the full set of *Beyond Belief* when funds allow. One thing I'd like to see you include is more advance information on tours and record releases by Elvis.

Pat McFadden, Glasgow, SCOTLAND

Thanks for your kind comments, Pat. Sadly, the logistics of our quarterly publication schedule make it virtually impossible to provide readers with all the EC news "as it

happens.” We have had a fair number of requests along these lines and, although we have considered the possibility of providing some sort of bulletin service to our subscribers, this would not really be practical without full cooperation from Mr. Costello’s office. Ed.

A BIG THANK YOU

I came on board the good ship *Beyond Belief* with issue number 3 after being alerted by the good people at Blackmail. I’d like to say a big thank you to the *BB* team for producing such a wonderful publication. Working in publishing myself, I do appreciate the amount of hard work that must go into producing every issue of the magazine. I am particularly enjoying the “A-Z” and “It Was 20 Years Ago Today . . .” features. It takes me back to the thrill I felt when first hearing those famous demos on Charlie Gillett’s BBC Radio London show *Honky Tonk*, the anticipation of buying *My Aim Is True* on the day of its release and, best of all, my total amazement at seeing EC and The Attractions live for the first time at the Hope and Anchor just a few days later. Thank heavens someone is documenting all this!

Graham Lee, London, ENGLAND

NEW READER

Enclosed is my payment for a year’s subscription to *Beyond Belief*. I was introduced to Elvis’ music by John Buckley from Philadelphia while I was a student at the Curtis Institute of Music. He has highly recommended your newsletter to me on several occasions and my admiration and fondness for Mr. MacManus’s work has finally impelled me to subscribe. I am currently Principal Clarinetist at the Grand Rapids Symphony and I have discovered that it is not difficult to find Elvis fans amongst classical musicians.

Samuel Caviezel, Grand Rapids, MI

COMMENTS FROM AFAR

I really enjoyed reading the electronic version of *Beyond Belief*. Thank you for opportunity to know so many interesting things on Elvis Costello, because it’s so hard to find anything on EC in Russia. I’ve been listening to Costello and collecting info about him since 1981. He is my favourite artist. Thank you and regards.

Alexander Kogan, Moscow, RUSSIA

Thank you for your marvelous *BB* filled up with much devotion to Elvis. Besides the articles, I too have been enjoying “The Elvis

Costello Concert Collection” which will certainly deserve a special file of a collector. I would like to ask you today about the treatment of your envelopes. Would you please indicate that the envelope includes a picture so that the post office will not bend it? The post box at my apartment is not large enough for your envelopes. Fortunately, the beautiful pictures have never been damaged, but I could never feel easy about the forthcoming disaster.

Yumiko Nishikawa, Nakagyo, JAPAN

Happy to oblige to all readers. We’ll get the BB elves to stamp the envelopes starting next issue. But as one UK reader once told us, the Royal Mail love to write “Yes, they do.” underneath the phrase “Photos Do Not Bend.” And for those who buy BB at retail stores, subscribers receive a color photo collector’s card with most issues. Non-subscribers and those who may have missed one or two may inquire about the availability of the past cards. Ed.

Brilliant Mistakes

Nashville journalist and songwriter Ron Young and Canadian reader DeWitt Shainline both pointed out that Anthony Burgess wrote *A Clockwork Orange*, not Stanley Kubrick as we incorrectly noted in BB13/14. Kubrick of course directed the film version of the novel.

Back in BB8/9 we reported that “Daddy, Can I Turn This,” EC & the A’s 2-minute rave-up heard on the *ATUB* tour was debuted August 10, 1996 in Philadelphia. Well, the tune is heard on the *Back with a Vengeance Volume Two* boot CD as performed at The Roundhouse in London on July 27, 1996. At the conclusion of its likely debut, EC called it “our tribute to The Doors.”

The unidentified Al Green song from EC’s *Eclectic Ballroom* radio show play list (see BB13/14) was “I’m a Ram” from the 1971 Hi Records album *Al Green Gets Next to You* (reissued on CD in 1990 by Demon Records).

Thanks for helping out with info for this issue: Francois Drouin, Olivier Ridolphi, Richard Arthur, Graham Bowers, John Foyle, Peter Horsted, Graham Lee, Clive Williams, Rein Zijlstra, Paul Inglis, Jeff Demerly, Masanori Saito, Alfonso Navarro Hurtado, Tim Windsor, Connor Ratliff, Dave Weil, and Steve Castan. A huge thanks goes out to Michel Laake for his continued great work on the Collector’s Cards. Also special thanks to Giovanni Pompili for his report on the Genoa show. His full review will appear next issue.

And Now For A Laugh:

From the March 98 *Playboy*:

Elvis Costello’s Extreme Honey: The Very Best of the Warner Bros Years deserves a swift kick. Oh, “Veronica” is a nice piece of minor McCartney, but for the most part, this collection proves that Costello is the world’s most overrated songwriter. There’s more art, more fun and better vocals - by far - on AC/DC’s five-disc retrospective, *Bonfire*. High energy is still the name of the game, in my book. **Dave Marsh**

Calling Marsh the world’s most overrated rock journalist would be too much of a compliment. Ed.

Bacharach News



In January, Robert Wilonsky interviewed Burt Bacharach for *New Times, Inc.*, the alternative-weekly newspaper publishers. Here’s what Burt had to say about EC.

“He’s a brilliant lyricist - I won’t even suggest a word to him, because he’s one of the great, great writers - and musically, he brings to certain songs, more than others, a distinctly Elvis core.”

“Hal [David] basically did his work with the lyrics. With Elvis, things spill over into the music. I think that the possibility of a tour is really intriguing with Elvis. We’ve talked about it, and it’s going to be a hell of a tour once the album is out. Elvis will do a chunk of what people expect him to do, then I do my chunk, then we wind up doing an hour together.”

The story also mentioned that in April, Burt will be putting together twelve singers to interpret his songs for a TNT television special to be taped in New York. The roster so far includes Costello, Dionne Warwick, Noel Gallagher and Luther Vandross.

New Soundtrack Songs:

“My Mood Swings”

The Big Lebowski

ALTHOUGH NOT PART OF HIS NEW CONTRACT, on February 23rd (UK) and 24th (US), Elvis Costello had his first recording appear on a release by his new label, Mercury/PolyGram. “My Mood Swings,” a quirky 2:10 rocker, was included on the soundtrack to Ethan & Joel Coen’s upcoming feature film *The Big Lebowski*. Anxious to begin working with their new client, Mercury selected the song as the first track from the LP to promote and advance copies were sent to radio stations for airplay in late January.



The song was co-written by Elvis and his wife Cait O’Riordan in New York City last October. As first told in the December 20, 1997 *Billboard*, while EC was in NYC, he had breakfast with T Bone Burnett who served as musical supervisor for the soundtrack. T Bone took the liberty of inviting Elvis to a meeting with the Coen Brothers that afternoon at the legendary Brill Building. EC

recalled “They invited me in, and within a couple of minutes we were talking about song choices - I was even so bold as to suggest a few pieces.” Talk then turned to Costello actually contributing a song for the film to accompany a critical bowling scene.

EC and Cait wrote the song in just two days and they even joked about finishing up the lyrics in the taxi ride to the studio. The song was produced by T Bone and it features Greg Cohen on bass, Jim Keltner on drums and Marc Ribot on guitar. About its recording Costello said “We sat down, and I played them the song once. The first time we played it seriously it was recorded. The reason we didn’t go home before midnight was that we played it another seven times to make sure that first cut was the right cut.”

At press time, an “on again/off again” performance of the song on the *Late Show with David Letterman* in March was “off”. *The Big Lebowski* soundtrack also includes Bob Dylan’s “The Man in Me” (from *New Morning*) and covers of “Hotel California” by the Gipsy Kings and “Dead Flowers” by the late Townes Van Zandt.

RELEASE INFO:

The Big Lebowski Original Motion Picture Soundtrack

Mercury Records US CD 314 536 903-2
UK CD 5369032

Includes “My Mood Swings” by Elvis Costello.

“My Mood Swings”

Mercury Records US Promo CD Single MECP 365

1998 Mercury February Sales Sampler

Mercury Records US Promo

Includes “My Mood Swings” by Elvis Costello.

“Long Journey Home”

The Irish in America

ON JANUARY 13th, THE SOUNDTRACK TO THE PBS SERIES *The Irish in America: Long Journey Home* was released featuring a new Elvis Costello composition as its title track. The soundtrack was the prelude to the presentation of a three-part, six-hour television series which aired in the US on January 26-28. This epic film event from PBS and Disney, “chronicled the powerful role of the Irish in America - from famine-struck Ireland to The White House - with rare footage, stunning photos and poignant remembrances.” A four-volume Deluxe Collector’s Video set of the program was also available via mail order (1-800-463-8727) for \$79.99.



Elvis Costello and The Chieftains’ Paddy Maloney

Costello’s contribution is actually titled “Long Journey Home (Anthem)” and the song surely sounds as such, full of dense orchestration and bombast. Credited to Elvis and Paddy Maloney, EC’s vocal is accompanied by The Chieftains and features backing vocals from Anúna. The track was recorded at Windmill Lane Recording Studios in Dublin. “Long Journey Home” was played over the closing credits to the final TV episode of the series and Elvis is shown for just a few seconds in the studio with The Chieftains.

Something else to watch out for is a planned April 27th appearance of Elvis with The Chieftains on the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* during a West Coast tour by the band. There is no word as to whether EC will be making any other appearances with The Chieftains on their tour.

The soundtrack, as expected, is in a strong Celtic vein and also features Van Morrison, Mary Black, Vince Gill and Sinéad O’Connor. Prior to the airing of the series, Elvis was also spotted briefly discussing his involvement in the project on the weekly PBS series *Out of Ireland*.

RELEASE INFO:

Long Journey Home Original Soundtrack

Unisphere/BMG Classics US/UK/Ireland CD 9026-68963-2
US/UK/Ireland MC 9026-68963-4

Includes “Long Journey Home (Anthem)” by Elvis Costello.

It was...

20 YEARS AGO

Part 3: January to March 1978

today...



Compiled by Mark Perry

Beyond Belief is proud to present the third installment of Mark Perry's continuing series looking back on the musical career of Elvis Costello...

January 1978

• The new year dawns with EC & The Attractions back at Eden Studios in London where they have resumed work on *This Year's Model*, an album eventually completed in a total of eleven days recording time. EC: "There were about three albums that made up the blueprint for *This Year's Model*: [The Rolling Stones'] *Aftermath*, the first couple of Who albums and some Kinks records. It was written following the structures of those." Visiting New York to deliver the finished tapes to CBS, producer Nick Lowe astonishes mastering engineers seeking technical advice about his sound balancing requirements with the simple instruction to "just bash it down and make it as loud as possible." • 15th - US radio's syndicated *Rock Around the World* show carries an interview with EC by Chuck Marshall. • 20th - With work on the album completed, EC & The Attractions warm up for their imminent return to the USA with a hastily-arranged free concert at **The Roundhouse** supported by Whirlwind and The Soft Boys. 1,800 tickets are handed out to the grateful hordes arriving at the venue on the day of the show. "Elvis gets hyped up on the aggression implicit in his songs," notes reviewer Jon Savage, "[he] challenges some punx at the front who have been responding in kind. None of them take him up on his offer..." • 21st - A return to the scene of early rehearsals, as the band honour a commitment to play at a wedding in **Davidstowe, Cornwall**. • EC & The Attractions fly out to



begin their second US tour, a 6-week trek which is really an extension of the previous visit, taking in cities which escaped the band's first assault. With an itinerary featuring mostly small venues (a few 2,000-3,000-seaters are the exception) concert broadcasts by local FM

radio stations are again employed to maximise the impact of 45-60 minute sets comprising a mixture of songs from *My Aim Is True* (peaking at 32 on the *Billboard* chart this month) and the forthcoming follow-up. Pete Thomas: "We were just travelling in a station wagon and it was all fuelled on vodka..." It



was all 500 to 600-mile drives, get to the gig, get drunk, go mad..." A "new" regular on the play list is the rewritten "Dallas version" of "Less Than Zero" penned following persistent confusion of Oswald Mosley ("Mr. Oswald") with Lee Harvey Oswald by American audiences. Also notable are fly-in visits by label-mate Nick Lowe who joins the band on stage for several cameo spots to help plug his *Pure Pop for Now People* album. EC does his best to avoid journalists during the tour, but he's more than happy to call in for a chat at local radio stations (and to berate them for not having "Bartender Blues" by George Jones which, for some strange reason, he seems to have adopted as a theme tune for the tour!). • 25th - **Armadillo World HQ, Austin, TX**. • 26th - **Fairmont Hotel, New Orleans, LA**. (CBS Convention) • 27th - **Opera House, Houston, TX**. • 28th - **Faces, Dallas, TX**. • 31st - **Riverdaze Studios, St. Louis, MO** (broadcast by local radio station).

February 1978

• 1st - **Pogo's, Kansas City, MO** (part broadcast by local radio station). • 4th - **Glenn Miller Club, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO** (part broadcast by local radio station). • 7th - **Zellerbach Auditorium, University of California, Berkeley, CA**. (Broadcast by KSAN). • 8th - Two sell out

shows at the **Coffee House, University of California, Davis, CA**. "He rushes through the first three songs like he's in hurry to leave," notes a *National Vinyl* writer. "To say that Davis or UCD isn't ready for punk or even Elvis Costello is an understatement. Even when Elvis told them to get off their chairs because it wasn't a library, the crowd sat politely in their seats..." • 9th - Forced to deny (yet again!) that he has anything to do with the punk/new wave scene, EC informs a KZEL radio interviewer that he is currently playing "alcodelec" music (that's a cross between psychedelic and alcoholic, apparently). The station's listeners get a chance to check this out for themselves during a live broadcast of the evening's show at **Lane County Civic Centre, Eugene, OR**. • 10th - **Paramount Northwest - Theatre, Seattle, WA** (broadcast by KZAM). "A magical event," writes the *Seattle Times*, "Elvis Costello, a relative unknown, took the place by storm, making such an impression on a somewhat skeptical audience that many refused to leave..." • 11th - **Paramount Theatre, Portland, OR**. • 14th - Columbia issues "Watching the Detectives" as EC's second US single as the band resume work after a horrendously long cross-country haul with a gig at **Jay's Longhorn Bar, Minneapolis, MN** (broadcast by local radio station). • 15th - Writer Patrick Goldstein witnesses the road crew administer a beating to a would-be photographer at the **Center Stage, Milwaukee, WI** and, after the show, claims to have endured both an attempted assault by Jake Riviera and a hostile anti-US rant from EC. He observes that "much of the credit for this hardcore anti-Americanism goes to Elvis's manager, the inimitable Jake Riviera, a serious candidate for the most despicable character of the decade..." • UK release of the delayed *Stiffs Live Stiffs* album which features material recorded on the notorious 1977 package tour, including EC's "Miracle Man" & "I Just Don't Know What to Do With Myself." • 17th - **Kent State University, Kent, OH**. • 19th - **Leona Theatre, Pittsburgh, PA**. • 20th - Two shows at **Bogart's, Cincinnati, OH**. • 22nd - **Lehigh County Community College, Schnecksville, PA** (broadcast by AM radio station WSAW). • 23rd - **The Ledge, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ**. • 24th - **Tower Theatre, Philadelphia, PA**. • 25th - **State University, Brockport, NY** (broadcast by local radio station). • 26th - **Alumni Hall, Brown University, Providence, RI**. • 28th - Still searching for that elusive US Top 40 hit, Columbia combine

"Alison" & "Watching the Detectives" on a new single release which again fails to dent the chart. Meanwhile, a new song, "Chemistry Class" is debuted as a solo finale at the Warner Theatre, Washington, DC in a concert broadcast by radio station WHFS.

March 1978

● 1st - University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA. ● 2nd - Quinnipiac College, Hamden, CT.



● 3rd - UK release of "(I Don't Want to Go to Chelsea)," EC's first single on the new Radar label. "This

single's so good," announces *NME*, "that the very act of releasing it amounts to bragging on a colossal scale." Over in the US, radio station WLIR airs the first of two shows at CW Post College, Greenvale, NY. ● 4th - Nick Lowe and guitarist Martin Belmont join the final two US shows at State University, Buffalo, NY. Belmont augments The Attractions for the "Pump It Up" finale and Lowe's guest spot. An instrumental version of new song "Moods for Moderns" (which the band has been knocking into shape at recent soundchecks) is performed during the guest introductions. ● 6th - EC does radio interviews for Q107 and CHUM-FM prior to his Canadian debut at the tiny El Mocambo Club, Toronto where an estimated 1,000 people are turned away at the door. "Much more memorable than his New York debut not three months ago," notes one writer, adding that "in the interim Elvis seems to have discovered the Sixties. The taut rock 'n' roll basics of his Fifties sound were spiced with distilled psychedelia and flashes of progressive rock theatre . . ." Elvis pronounces himself glad to be back in a proper club after playing to "a bunch of students" on the US East Coast while label-mate Lowe again guests in a concert carried live by CHUM-FM. 500 copies of a promotional album sourced from the radio station tape are later distributed by Columbia's Canadian division - without the agreement of a certain Mr. Riviera who is, understandably, more than a little miffed at the prospect of bootleggers falling on a ready source of unreleased songs like a pack of hungry dogs. ● 7th - EC is interviewed by CBC Radio, Toronto. Asked whether he will be playing ice-hockey stadiums on his next tour (already planned to start in April) he

replies: "We're not likely to do something just for the money . . . there's no reason why we should start doing the obvious, crass thing just because it's within our reach." *NME*'s Charles Shaar Murray witnesses the final night of the tour, a second show at the El Mocambo, and is impressed by the band's transformation since the *Live Stiffs* tour: "Costello can reach people who'd never understand The Clash in a million years. He's capable of getting as big as Elton and Frampton and Fleetwood Mac and The Bee Gees (*ah, those were the days!* - *Ed.*) without having to compromise his music by one iota." ● Back in England, EC guests on Nicky Horne's *Your Mother Wouldn't Like It* Capital Radio show, chatting and playing some of his favourite records (including songs by Dylan, Bowie, George Jones, Gram Parsons and T Rex). Asked by Horne about his reception in the USA, Elvis responds bluntly that "Americans have never produced one decent home grown rock & roll band, so when they're confronted with the real thing they tend to get overexcited." ● 13th - Session recording for Radio 1's *John Peel* show at the BBC studios in Maida Vale, produced by Tony Wilson ("Chelsea," "The Beat," "Pump It Up" & "You Belong to Me" are the featured songs). ● 14th - With "Chelsea" hitting the UK Top 20, EC & The Attractions visit the BBC TV studios to film a version for *Top of The Pops*. "I really don't understand why we're not as big as the Bay City Rollers," confides Steve Nieve to the visiting Nick Kent. "I mean, it seems very slow, this pop business thing . . ." ● 16th - As BBC1 TV's *Top of The Pops* screens "Chelsea," EC & The Attractions are in Ireland to resume their hectic live schedule, opening a month-long UK/Irish tour at the Stella Cinema, Dublin. This first proper UK headlining tour will see the band begin the gradual assimilation of post-*This Year's Model* material into the set, with "Moods for Moderns," "Two Little Hitlers," "Green Shirt," "Big Boys," "Accidents Will Happen" and "Oliver's Army" all being essayed at some point. ● 17th - UK release of the critically-acclaimed *This Year's Model* LP on Radar. The first 50,000 copies include a bonus single featuring "Stranger in The House" (an out-take from the first album) and a live cover of The Damned's "Neat Neat Neat." "There's simply no one within spitting distance of him," enthuses *NME*'s Nick Kent. "He has his finger on the pulse of this desperate era . . . *Model* is just too powerful, too dazzling to be ignored." Meanwhile, *Melody Maker*'s Allan Jones calls it "an achievement so comprehensive, so inspired, that it exhausts

superlatives . . . Elvis Costello's talent, we can see in retrospect, was only superficially exposed on his first album . . ." (in the USA, Columbia request what EC later calls "bizarre changes" to the album's running order, deleting "Chelsea" & "Night Rally" and adding "Radio Radio"). Pete Silverton of *Sounds* catches the night's concert at the Ulster Hall, Belfast where "the band's playing was so powerful, so - there's no other word for it - wired that it was like watching some kind of high intensity encounter group therapy." ● 19th - Top Rank Suite, Cardiff. ● 20th - BBC Radio 1's *John Peel* show broadcasts the session recorded on 13th March, as the tour reaches the Odeon, Canterbury. ● 21st - De Montfort Hall, Leicester. ● 22nd - City Hall, Newcastle. ● 23rd - *NME* (25th March issue) carries another interview by Nick Kent in which EC claims to have around 15 new songs ready for possible use on his third album. Asked whether he now considers himself an "artist," the reply is emphatic: "No, absolutely not . . . my ultimate vocation in life is to be an 'irritant'! Not something actively destructive, just someone who irritates, who disorients. Someone who disrupts the daily drag of life just enough to leave the victim thinking there's maybe more to it all than the mere humdrum quality of existence." ● 24th - Eric's, Liverpool. ● 25th - Eric's, Liverpool. ● 26th - Locarno, Bristol. ● 27th - Winter Gardens, Malvern. ● 28th - Village Bowl, Bournemouth. ● 29th - Top Rank Suite, Brighton. ● 31st - Corn Exchange, Cambridge.

Sources: BBC Radio 1, New Musical Express, Melody Maker, Sounds, Musician, Creem, Record Collector, ECIS, National Vinyl.



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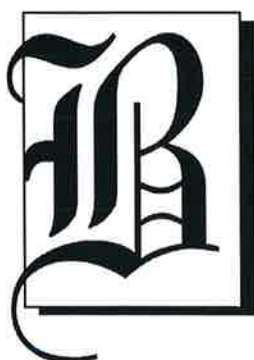
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ELVIS COSTELLO

A TO Z by Dave Farr

Part 4 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...



BIG BOYS

What started out as a one-chord exercise became a study in great pop production. Elvis premiered this song in solo performances during the March-April 1978 tour of Britain, and this is presumably when the demo released on the Ryko reissue of *This Year's Model* was recorded. Elvis describes the demo as an attempt to write a song using only one chord. While that may be a slight exaggeration, the song contains little

variation in its musical or vocal tone. Still, as with most of EC's earlier demos, the foundation is solid and the passion is strong. The album version, recorded later in 1978 for *Armed Forces*, transforms the song into a piece filled with variations, making a fairly flat number into a three-dimensional treat.

After another a cappella vocal intro, an ominous electric hum and low bass notes lead into one of the most innovative rhythmic structures on any of EC's albums. The verses feature an almost tribal march, while the bridge and last stanza feature a fantastic combination of rolling drums and a rat-a-tat sound on each line. Meanwhile, the bass notes which punctuate the song nearly puncture it, slamming through the soundstage. What was straight ahead and somewhat monotonous in the demo is made multi-layered by this rhythm arrangement, and further enhanced (and also sweetened) by overdubbed vocal harmonies which pop in and out (seasoning just one line at "came alive and left for dead," for example). The overdubbed backing vocals lend the song a kind of twisted pop lilt. Two of the major influences cited for *Armed Forces* were Phil Spector's work and the music of Abba. On "Big Boys", the "wall of sound" technique of both is very much in evidence, although the wall is created with a minimum of instruments, rather than strings and such. The keyboards/synths cover the floor and ceiling, creating a surface upon which the vocals and rhythms interact. The drums and bass notes are so loud and heavy that they define the song's sound; the drum/bass boom is the song's hook. Finally, the multi-tracked vocals add a background vocal group sound to the mix; yet it never sounds crowded. It just sounds full.

The last stanza, written almost as a call and response, was the highlight of the demo. In the album version, it remains so, as the

drums snap across overlapping lead and one-harmony vocals (creating a vocal duet) and Bruce's bass grinds over shimmering keyboards. Interestingly, the lead vocal actually becomes the backup during this refrain, and the backing vocal takes the form of a lead. They then join to repeat the title phrase. The final chorus ends with a shout, then fades out on reverberating bass lines and spiraling keyboards.

"Big Boys" became a concert staple after *Armed Forces* was recorded, usually coming late in the main set. It was played at a faster tempo, and most of the subtleties were lost in translation from record to stage. The overlapping vocals were of course replaced by hasty singing by Elvis on his own. The song remained in the set through the end of 1979, when *Get Happy!!* had been recorded and the songs from that LP were finding their way into the set. By 1980, however, it was out of the set and has not been played live since.

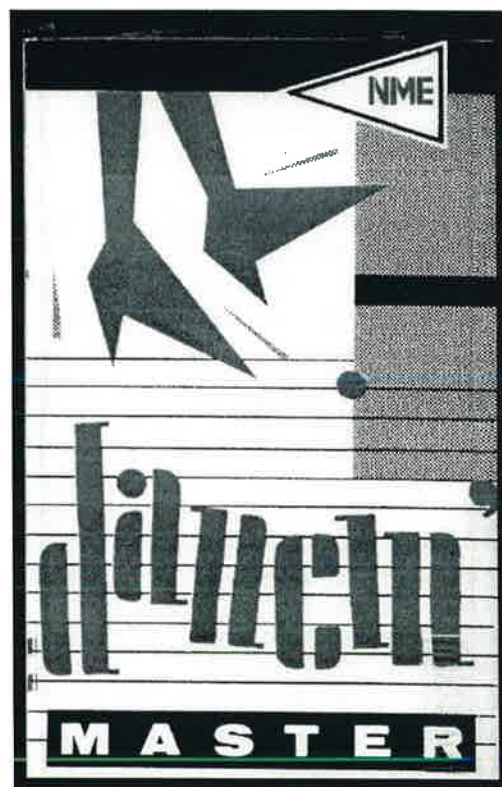
BIG SISTER

This track was originally slated for *Trust* and was recorded with the Attractions during the final sessions for that record.

The intro is a great attention-getter, with Elvis shouting a hoarse first line before the drum kicks in and then Steve zips down the keyboard. The main theme is basically a slightly revved-up version of the riff from "Under My Thumb," with Steve pounding out a separate rhythm on piano.

An interesting variation is added as the last section of each verse adds (or does it subtract?) a beat so that the rhythm is just a bit off from where your ears expect it to be at that point. EC's vocals are a bit strained, and the lyrics are a bit too wordy and complex for the rock and roll arrangement they're given here. While a fun track to listen to, and a nice dance number, it really isn't the best presentation of the song. As a result, it was remodeled at the last minute into "Big Sister's Clothes" (see below).

This track originally was released on a free cassette (the *Dancin' Master* cassette) given away by the UK music paper *New Musical Express*, in November 1981. After its initial appearance on the limited edition cassette, it then became the subject of a bootleg one-sided seven inch single issued in the US. In June 1982, it made a more official appearance on the B-side of the single "You Little Fool" in England, and eventually was included on *Out of Our Idiot* (1987) and the Ryko reissue of *Trust* (1994). "Big Sister" has never been played in concert.



1981 "Dancin' Master" cassette.

BIG SISTER'S CLOTHES

Unhappy with the way "Big Sister" sounded, Elvis created an alternative alone in the studio. Like "New Amsterdam" and "Kid About It", among others, this is basically a demo recording to which Elvis adds overdubs until it does not sound out of place among more sophisticated studio recordings (still, the production credit on *Trust* for this track reads "Nick Lowe not to blame for this one."). Like EC's other solo studio works, this track has a mood to it that makes it one of the best tracks on the album.

The intro and outro for the recorded version are almost a sound effects record, with tympani and what Elvis has said is an accordion track, looped backwards, conjuring the image of someone stumbling into a tunnel or opening a creaking door. It sounds as if we're stumbling in the dark and happening upon this song. Elvis plays the bass on this one, and what his bass playing lacks in virtuosity it makes up for in charm, and is very effective ("Hoover Factory" is another example of this). The chugging bass line in this track is its signature sound, creating a feeling of motion that is a little queasy and menacing (reminiscent of the second "American Without Tears"). EC's voice is treated and distorted a bit. The vocal sounds obviously less frenetic than that on "Big Sister", although the majority of the lyrics are basically the same. Actually, the tempo is only slightly slower; what is most different is the pitch at which Elvis sings. By dropping down to a lower register, he brings a calm and a resignation to this song that serves the words much more effectively and allows us to digest what is being said. Combined with a new chorus lyric that is far more complex than the earlier song's, this treatment makes a great song out of a minor one.

Several of EC's demos have a sort of reggae feel to them, due to the way he plays his guitar on the tracks. "Big Sister's Clothes" keeps this feel and in fact has a "dub" atmosphere to it, particularly on the bridge, with its dragging beat, tapped out on a couple of high hats, its deep bass notes hanging in the air, and the lack of a bottom to the sound, a floating feeling that like great "dub" tracks has an unsettling effect. There is a little bit of keyboards (before the bridge), a few drum taps, but mostly that bass and guitar, till we stumble back out with the yowling sounds and the tympani. The track, and the album, fade out.

"Big Sister's Clothes" first appeared in the live set immediately after *Trust* was recorded, in the Scandinavian concerts in late 1980, and became a nightly feature in the 1981 tour. By the time the *Trust* tour was in full steam, the song had moved to the prominent position of ending the set most nights. Live, of course, the Attractions added much more musical coloration. Steve's keyboards sometimes dominated the song, with a variety of arpeggios winding through the song as well as sharp notes on the beats. Bruce's bass lines were more fluid, with EC's guitar actually taking the place of the main melody line voiced by the bass on the record. An instrumental bridge was often added before the final chorus, with Bruce getting the chance to really stretch out on bass, going way up the neck for some high notes and then heading back down for loud, low, pounding ones and some flat-hand slapping of the four strings.

"Big Sister's Clothes" remained in the set nightly through the tours in 1982 and 1983, with the latter tour moving the song to the middle of the set as part of a politically-tinged mini-set. During the US tour in 1983, it was performed in a medley with a rousing cover of the Beat's "Stand Down Margaret," bringing the song back to its "Big Sister" roots a bit. (This medley was premiered on a Radio 1 session for David Jensen's show, recorded on Election Day 1983.) By this time, the live version was more corrosive, with EC's guitar

playing loud and jagged and the tempo of the music and the pitch of the vocal up a beat. At the same time, the vocal presentation benefitted from a very simple change in the singing: where the lines on the recorded version and the earlier live versions ended sharp and short, the later renditions stretched out the last words of each line, making a syllable into two or three (so that "slaughter" became "slaugh-ter-er," "daughter" became "daughter-er," etc.). It's a small difference, but an important one, the effect being to further the feeling of movement that the music suggested.

This song was last performed at the Miner's Benefit in March 1985, in a fierce version with the Beat's song added on.

BIG TEARS

Hardly B-side material, but somehow relegated to that status in 1978, "Big Tears" nevertheless was a staple of the Attractions' repertoire. The song was premiered live during the October 1977 *Live Stiffs* tour, with the arrangement and lyrics firmly in place. The only variation was a surprising falsetto vocal on the word "who's" in the chorus, a pop touch that was out of place in the song as it was recorded. Although "Big Tears" was in the set occasionally through the late 1977 tour of the USA, with the falsetto note eliminated, and was recorded during the sessions for *This Year's Model*, for some reason it was not included on the album, even though it is as strong as many of the tracks thereon. Instead, initial release was as the B-side to the UK single release of "Pump It Up" in 1978 (followed a month or so later by release as the B-side to "This Year's Girl" in the States).



A n o t h e r memorable intro-duction here, as the guitar repeats a line until a very heavy drum and then a wonderful bass figure brings in the full band and the basic riff. The recorded version's sound hints at the production style that would dominate the next album, *Armed Forces*, in that Steve's keyboards are used to erect a wall of sound

underlying the entire structure. Pete's drums also stay in a fairly fixed arrangement, while punctuating for dramatic effect on the lead-ups to the choruses. Bruce plays very fluid and versatile bass lines, giving variation to a verse-chorus-verse (with no bridge) pattern that might otherwise sound a bit repetitive. Elvis' vocal is one of his most "angry". It sounds very "live", in that the chokes, the short breaths, the spittle are right there on the track. You can picture his veins bulging out on this one. It almost goes over the top.

Mick Jones of The Clash guests on lead guitar and does a great job of adding color to the song. The guitar part is not showy or dominating; instead Jones adds a lot of *Give 'Em Enough Rope*-style figures to the mix, with notes that chime and wail. The lead instrument here is really the repeated bass and drums pattern; Jones' "lead guitar" instead does what Steve Nieve often does in Attractions songs: it plays brief counter melodies in the verses and then joins in on the choruses to accent the lines. The song's last verse features particularly nice work by Jones, as he introduces the verse with bell-like tones, almost like a horn chart, then swirls under EC's vocals discordantly to add tension; then as Elvis shouts, bug-eyed, his refrain of "tell me!!", Jones' guitar plays its own wailing refrain before everything comes in for a landing.

After the initial release as a B-side, "Big Tears" was included on the *Taking Liberties* and *10 Bloody Marys* compilations, as well as *Girls Girls Girls* in 1990, and is now properly on the reissue of *This Year's Model*. Live, this song has stayed in the Attractions concert set ever since, played every year EC toured with the Attractions through the last tour in 1996. Slight lyric variations to the last verse surfaced in 1978, but vanished after the song's official release. Musically, beginning in 1980, an instrumental bridge with a sped-up rhythm was often added in live performance.

BLACK AND WHITE WORLD

The demo for this song was recorded by Elvis alone in the fall of 1979, and proved sufficiently charming to merit release on the *Taking Liberties / 10 Bloody Marys* compilations in 1980, after the group version had come out on *Get Happy!!* earlier that year. The demo is another of those very enjoyable self-produced works of EC's on which he plays all the instruments, resulting in a track that seems very simple but is filled with clever quirks. An acoustic guitar is strummed throughout but soon joined by an electric that jangles off to the side, and a blustering bass note that sounds like "Big Boys" little brother. Like many of EC's demos, there is almost a reggae sound in the guitar rhythms. Drums are lightly tapped for very brief figures that sound almost like congas. The main vocal is very close and intimate, and smiles at you in a mildly disquieting way. Harmony vocals in some higher register repeat key phrases, then echo and fade, followed by the main vocal also echoing a word or two.

The bridge seems surprisingly loud, as the overdubbed vocals join together while the bass lurches up from below and the guitars jangle, then the electric guitar meanders its way back down to the verse. The drums chime in more frequently, and there seems to be a keyboard in the background as well. The refrain has the bass more prominent and the electric guitar meowing as it all fades out. It's a great little track.

The *Get Happy!!* album is pitched very high; nearly every track has a tense energy that is almost unnerving. The demo for "Black and White World" was transformed on the LP into a two minute carnival ride that defies the listener to keep still. The song crashes into the speakers with a note comprised of all the band members playing at once: a guitar, a bass note, hard drums, and the starting point of Steve's shrill keyboard figure, a mad instrument that careens around the borders of the track. The song's signature is its lurching rhythm, as the drums and bass crash down like waves and then pull back for a few seconds while the keyboards or a reverbed electric guitar take up the slack. In the last lines of each verse, the rhythms change again, with bass and drums repeating their patterns rapidly while Elvis spits out the lyrics.

EC's vocal is at a sharp pitch, almost hoarse on the middle

lines of the verses, and then smoothed out by a treatment which almost echoes it. The bridge again changes the sound of EC's voice, almost doubling it, and is then followed by a great massive guitar line which drops the song back down to its starting point. The refrain brings in a sort of vocal harmony, more of a duet of Elvis trading the title line with his twin; in fact, his main vocal suddenly sounds double tracked. The song is almost, but not quite, too fast, too hyperkinetic; but it stops short, very successfully, and is one of the best tracks on the album.

"Black and White World" is one of those *Get Happy!!* songs that was not played live very often, although it may have been played more often in the out-of-the-way towns on the March 1980 UK tour that have slipped under the radar. It was definitely played live at some shows during that tour and the spring tour of Europe (with Martin Belmont in place of Steve Nieve), and also made an appearance in a few of the early 1981 shows on the *Trust* tour. Since then, it has not been played live.

BLACK SAILS IN THE SUNSET

Temporarily one of the great lost Elvis songs, this track finally surfaced seven years after it was first recorded and then made its way back to the set list ten years after that!! "Black Sails in the Sunset" was actually first recorded in 1980 for *Get Happy!!*, and then re-recorded in a different arrangement for *Trust*, but for whatever

reason was left off both albums. In a radio interview in 1982 EC mentioned that he had a good song that simply could not find a place on those albums, or on the then-new *Imperial Bedroom*. It never did make it onto a regular LP.

On the East Coast leg of the US tour supporting *Trust* in 1981, Elvis played the song live several times. It was instantly memorable and effective, with its great keyboard lines, sideways reference to "Mystery Dance", and unusual vocal phrasing. Still, it failed to appear on any B-sides following *Trust* (for some reason, the UK singles for *Trust* provided no new material on the B-sides). The song vanished from the set list after that 1981 US tour,



and failed to appear on the next several LPs. Finally, in 1986, the *Trust* outtake version of "Black Sails" was released as the B-side to "Tokyo Storm Warning" in the UK.

Elvis, in the *Trust* liner notes for Ryko and onstage in 1996, pointed out the melodic similarities between this song and "Oliver's Army"; but what one first notices as the track begins is the direct quote from the Byrds' recording of "Turn, Turn, Turn." After that intro, we settle into a lovely tune that is clearly dominated by Steve's piano, a performance that is always a pleasure to listen to for its variation and precision. The call-and-response interplay between Elvis and Steve is a pleasure to listen to. While the first halves of the verses feature long vocal lines, the second halves have short phrases with responding piano figures. The rhythm section is muted in this song aside from some drum buildups in the chorus, and there seems to be no guitar at all.

EC's singing is a little flat in places but appealingly languid. Live, Elvis would vary on the choruses between a high-pitched "ooo-ooo" and a low one; on the recording, this is solved by having him overdubbed so that both variations appear together. The performance seems very relaxed and assured, more so than most from the *Trust* era. Strangely, the reissued version on the Rykodisc issue of *Trust* fades out early, eliminating the song's original conclusion, and leaving the listener with a lack of closure. Otherwise, the Ryko version sounds far superior to earlier releases, with much better separation on all instruments and a punchier drum sound.

The signature sound of "Black Sails" is Steve's versatile piano work; thus it was only natural that this song would be revived in some of the shows on the 1996 *Costello and Nieve* tour. This marked the first live performances of the song since 1981. Usually played after "Oliver's Army" and introduced as a song derivative of that hit's melody, it came over quite well in this setting, the rhythm section having been secondary to the song anyway. The live performance was preserved on the New York City disc of the *Costello and Nieve* box set. Steve's playing is both more ornate and also a bit more rhythmic, probably due to the fact that this version does feature guitar. He cleverly takes the harmony vocal part on the chorus on keyboards. Elvis sings with a lot more intensity and less polish on this version, ending with shouted "oh's" on the coda, which returns in all its glory. It's a treat that EC recognized what a little gem this tune is and didn't let it sink into oblivion.

BLAME IT ON CAIN

Elvis has often told the story of how, after winning an opportunity to record an album at Stiff in 1976 on the strength of his demo tape, he then wrote a bunch of new songs in rapid succession as the album was recorded. Some of the older demo songs were reworked; some were cast in modes (like rockabilly) that still were fashionable in the heady days of 1977; but "Blame it On Cain" stayed as it was, and sounds old fashioned. Not old fashioned like "The Very Thought of You" or "My Funny Valentine", but more of a late 1960s-early 1970s sound that was probably the mainstay of a group like Flip City. (And which of course was terribly old fashioned in 1977!) There are echoes of The Band here, whether it's in the guitar line that follows the title phrase on the demo, or the echoes on the LP version of Robbie Robertson's 1966 guitar work backing Dylan in England. It keeps its shape on the album, and is very much a pub rock song.

The demo, released officially on the Ryko reissue of *My Aim is True*, is probably the most effective of the demos from that period. It is extremely well-sung, with less of the mannerisms that appear on the demos. The melody is strong and the guitar figures interesting.

It sounds rather downbeat. The album version, recorded with Clover, attempts to rock more, in a pub rock mode. One unfortunate aspect is the way the intro is truncated so that there is no guitar or drum lead-in to the main melody; instead we are in the middle of the intro when the song starts. The guitars are a little too busy; EC's rhythm, which functions as a lead, is enough; John McFee's fills are a little distracting. The drum sound is a bit trashy. Still, there is a swing to the song that can't be denied. The chopped off intro can be heard between verses as the guitar and drums run back up to the next verse. There is a nice bass part under the last singing of the title, and the sharp, syncopated finish works well.

After Elvis recruited the Attractions in the summer of 1977, the band recorded a studio session for John Peel's UK radio show which aired in August and included their version of "Blame it On Cain." The lead-in to the song is back, as the drums and guitar build up to the verse melody. The biggest change however, is the addition of Steve Nieve's keyboards, mostly a honky tonk piano which takes the place of McFee's coloring instrument and adds a nice counterpoint to the "lead" Elvis is playing. EC's guitar work on this song begins to stretch out. Steve switches to organ for the song's last verse. The finish is now extended, with another guitar solo, instead of concluding on the vocal.



Back cover of UK single for "Watching the Detectives" which featured live versions of "Blame it on Cain" and "Mystery Dance"

A similar live version was released officially as one of the B-sides to "Watching the Detectives" in the UK and in the States. (It has not been included to date on any reissues or compilations.) This version, recorded live at the Nashville Rooms in London on August 7, 1977,

sounds fairly monophonic. The instruments are pretty far back and undefined. The drums count in the number, and Elvis' guitar is more and more aggressive and interesting. The song is much tighter than the recorded version. The coda remains extended, with the last "turn" even dropped from the vocal. The song is becoming more a showcase for the music than for the words.

"Blame it On Cain" was in the set most shows in the early days, and more sporadically through the 1978 tours of the US and Europe. It made a strong comeback in the last leg of the second US 1978 tour, becoming increasingly more intense and extended. Elvis' guitar solo takes over the song at this point; Steve sometimes switched to organ for the whole song, taking a more supporting role. Bruce Thomas often joined in on harmony vocals for the chorus, and added some great bass lines to EC's guitar spotlight. The song was a much more electric number by the time it left the live set; at that point, it featured the most versatile and stretched-out guitar solos Elvis had ever played live. Unfortunately, it exited at its peak. After the 1978 tours, "Cain" left the set and has never reappeared.



The Latest EC News

News from Rhino

Rhino exec and *BB*-reader Gary Stewart has given *BB* the exclusive news about the long-planned release of Rhino's compilation of Costello covers. The wait is almost over and on May 19th Rhino will release *Bespoke Songs, Lost Dogs, Detours & Rendezvous: Songwriting by Elvis Costello*.

The 21-track collection was titled and handpicked by Elvis and includes some amazing liner notes penned by the subject himself. All tracks are previously released but it would certainly take a superhuman effort to find them all. The compilation required a significant effort to obtain all necessary publishing rights but Gary reports that they were able to secure everything they wanted. Here's the track listing:

- Girls Talk - Dave Edmunds
- Unwanted Number - For Real
- My Brave Face - Paul McCartney
- Hidden Shame - Johnny Cash
- All Grown Up - Tasmin Archer
- Miss Mary - Zucchero
- Shadow and Jimmy - Was (Not Was)
- Upon a Veil of Midnight Blue - Mary Coughlan
- Deep Dead Blue - Anúna
- The Comedians - Roy Orbison
- The Deportees Club - Christie Moore
- Punishing Kiss - Annie Ross & the Low Note Quintet
- Shamed Into Love - Ruben Blades
- Shatterproof - Billy Bremner
- Dirty Rotten Shame - Ronnie Drew
- Shipbuilding - Robert Wyatt
- The Birds Will Still Be Singing - Norma Waterson
- I Want to Vanish - June Tabor
- The Other End (of the Telescope) - 'Til Tuesday
- Indoor Fireworks - Nick Lowe & His Cowboy Outfit
- Almost Blue - Chet Baker

As for a sneak preview of the liner notes, here are some newly learned facts:

- Add "Tommy's Coming Home" to the list of unreleased McCartney/MacManus compositions.

● Roy Orbison also recorded a version of "The Comedians" on which his voice is accompanied only by a Van Dyke Parks orchestral arrangement.

Spice World!

Well, if you blinked, you might have missed it. But brief as it may be, Elvis Costello furthered his acting career with a cameo role as a bartender in the new movie from England's darlings, the Spice Girls. EC appears for a nanosecond in a scene where the girls' manager and his assistant are sitting at a bar. After EC mutters "So what can I get for you?", the assistant (played by Claire Rushbrook) orders a gin & tonic. She then does a double-take and gets his attention making you think she recognizes him. When Elvis responds with a "yes?", she simply says: "Make it a double."



The film premiered in London on December 15th with a general UK release on Boxing Day (the 26th) and a US release on January 23rd. Archivists do not fret. Of course *BB* will let you know when it gets released on video, laser disk and DVD so you can add this Costello item to your collection!

J-Letters at the Hall

As part of a regular series of performances at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, a Chamber Music Concert was planned for January 11th by the Cleveland Orchestra. The program was to be of rock-influenced music, including Elvis Costello's "Juliet Letters" and Frank Zappa's "Black Flag for Solo Percussion." Unfortunately, it never happened as the Cleveland Orchestra

could not come up with a vocalist. EC was said to have been asked but had declined. In November 1995, the Gothenburg (Sweden) symphonic orchestra performed an opera that included music and lyrics from *TJL*.

BB-staffer Tony Sacchetti recently made a trip to the Hall and reports only a few Costello-spottings. In an interactive exhibit, Costello is featured under New Wave and "Alison" is played when you touch his *Brutal Youth*-era photo. You are then led to EC's influences, George Jones and Randy Newman, and hear songs from them as well as quotes about each from Elvis. Jones' "A Good Year for the Roses" fades into EC's version and Newman's "Mama Told Me Not To Come" fades into EC's "Blame It on Cain." Outside of "Pump it Up" in an exhibit of 1978 songs and a pair of Pete Thomas drum sticks, the only other thing Tony reported was hearing "Watching the Detectives" play over the P.A. as he toured the hallowed upper level of the Hall. Perhaps it was an omen of things to come?

UK Poll Blues

We know that these things shouldn't be taken too seriously, but there was further evidence of EC's dwindling popularity in two recent UK polls which sought to find people's favourite 100 albums of all time. *Q* readers found room for just one Costello album, *Imperial Bedroom* at number 96, on a chart published in the February issue of the magazine. While it was pointed out that Elvis was among those artists who suffered from having their votes spread across a large number of albums, this was, nonetheless, a pretty miserable showing (and one which surely would have been unthinkable just a few years ago). Even worse was the *Music of the Millennium* survey of some 12,000 UK record buyers, the result of which was broadcast in a special programme on Channel 4 TV in January, where Elvis failed to register even a single entry.

Pass/Last?

Recently, a discussion started on the Costello Internet mailing list about a line from the *Trust* song that was recently again brought to life by Costello & Nieve, "You'll Never Be a Man." While we at *BB* stand firm behind "I don't want to be first, I just want to last," some heard it as "pass."

What does a check of official sources reveal? Since the *Trust* LP did not come with lyrics, the *Everyday I Write the Song* music book is the guide. Well, would you believe that the US version of the book quotes "last" and the UK version quotes "pass?"

Hinton Book Due in August

Shortly before press time, *BB* tracked down the British author Brian Hinton to his island hideaway to get the latest news on his forthcoming EC book *Let Them All Talk*. Our phone call caught him at the typewriter, pounding away in the face of an early March deadline for delivering the completed first draft to Sanctuary Publishing. As we spoke, he was fast approaching 400 finished pages, having covered the period up to 1984 only (which might prove something of a surprise to the publisher, since the book is already being advertised as a 240-page work!).

Brian told us that he has thus far resisted pressure to hunt down any of EC's associates for interview purposes in view of the wealth of published and broadcast material already available for him to wade through ("Besides - who'll have anything new to say at this stage?" he asks). He seemed unconcerned at having only a few weeks in which to complete the book, cackling wildly and muttering something about finishing the last 50 pages of his Van Morrison book in a single day. He did, however, express the wish that EC might see fit to take a break from his hectic musical activities at some point in the near future, so that there will at least be an end to the project in sight.

Sanctuary confirm that they expect to publish *Let Them All Talk* on August 21, 1998 (ISBN 1 860 74 1967) and we hope to arrange some sort of special offer on the book for *BB* readers in a future issue. Brian's two previous pop music biographies for Sanctuary are *Celtic Crossroads: The Art of Van Morrison* and *Joni Mitchell: Both Sides Now*.

Tribute CD Updates

As first reported back in *BB12*, EC will be participating on upcoming tribute LP's for two artists he greatly admires. Here's the latest info that *BB* could obtain.

Now scheduled for 1999, the Almo Sounds Gram Parsons' tribute will include "Sleepless Nights" by Elvis. A live 1984 solo acoustic version of this song already appears on the *Goodbye Cruel World* reissue and it is unknown if EC will be recording a new version. Written by Felice and Boudleaux Bryant, the song was recorded by Gram and Emmylou Harris during the sessions for his last LP, *Greivous Angel*, but was not released until it became the title track of a posthumous compilation of unreleased tracks.

Reprise Records Joni Mitchell tribute may come out in late 1998 and *BB* did learn that EC was able to cover his favorite Joni song.

Costello Production at a Glance

My Aim Is True	Nick Lowe
This Year's Model	Nick Lowe
Armed Forces	Nick Lowe
Get Happy!!	Nick Lowe
Trust	Nick Lowe
Almost Blue	Billy Sherrill
Imperial Bedroom	Geoff Emerick, <i>from an original idea by Elvis Costello</i>
Punch the Clock	Clive Langer & Alan Winstanley
Goodbye Cruel World	Clive Langer & Alan Winstanley
King of America	J. Henry (T Bone) Burnett and Declan Patrick Aloysius MacManus <i>with Larry Kalman Hirsch</i>
Blood & Chocolate	Nick Lowe with Colin Fairley
Spike	Elvis Costello, Kevin Killen and T- Bone Burnett
Mighty Like a Rose	Mitchell Froom, Kevin Killen and D.P.A. MacManus
The Juliet Letters	Kevin Killen, Elvis Costello and The Brodsky Quartet
Brutal Youth	Mitchell Froom and Elvis Costello
Kojak Variety	Elvis Costello and Kevin Killen
All This Useless Beauty	Geoff Emerick and Elvis Costello
Other notable efforts:	
Walking on Thin Ice	Allen Toussaint
Mischievous Ghost / The Night Before Larry Was Stretched	Donal Lunny
St. Stephens Day Murders / Long Journey Home	Paddy Moloney
Weird Nightmare	Hal Willner
Put Your Big Toe in the Milk of Human Kindness	Rob Wasserman & John Cutler
Full Force Gale	Van Morrison & Phil Coulter
Sally Sue Brown	Jon & Sally Tiven
My Dark Life	Brian Eno with Elvis Costello
But Not For Me	George Martin
God Give Me Strength	Burt Bacharach and Elvis Costello
Aubergine	Joel and Adam Dorn
That Day is Done	Mark Prentice and Lee Olsen

Tiny Steps



Newsworthy: It was forever immortalized in the line from "Green Shirt": "Somewhere in the Quisling Clinic there's a

shorthand typist taking seconds over minutes." Now, the Madison, WI landmark (that EC most likely spotted before his November 29, 1977 show), will be torn down and replaced by an apartment building. Although the clinic had been abandoned, many local residents had sought that it be preserved as a historic landmark. ■ *Time* magazine reports that New York University has added the study of Elvis Costello to its syllabus. ■ **Los Attractions:** Steve, Bruce



Ariel Rot & Pete Thomas

and Pete (sitting behind a drumkit advertising "The Attractions") all appear in the video for Spanish artist Ariel Rot's single. The boys

recently backed him up on his *Hablando Solo* LP. ■ Steve Nieve wrote the theme music for the Channel 4 sitcom *Dressing for Breakfast*, screened from January. ■ Pete Thomas plays on the latest single by Japanese rocker Hotei. ■ **Quotable:** When asked "How would you like to die?" in the February *Vanity Fair*, Tracey Ullman responded: "When I'm 95, with my own hips, on a Sunday afternoon, snoozing in an armchair listening to Elvis Costello". ■ In the March issue of *CMJ New Music Monthly*, Ben Folds is interviewed in the presence of a "rare 1978 Elvis Costello bootleg LP" and cites EC as an influence. Tiring of the comparisons to Elton John and Billy Joel, Ben notes "Costello was a blast. For me, Costello, Randy Newman, Joni Mitchell and Rickie Lee Jones are much more of a blueprint." ■ An article on UK group Embrace in the October issue of Swedish magazine *Pop* states that EC is "one of the band's most fervent admirers." Embrace's Danny McNamara confirms that the respect is mutual: "The man writes absolutely brilliant lyrics. He came up to our record company during the summer and showered us with compliments. And what can you say about that? I mean, he's the bloke who wrote 'I Want You'." ■ Aspiring one-hit wonder Lisa Loeb ("Stay") told *Acoustic*

Guitar World magazine "I think what I do is much closer to someone like Elvis Costello" in an objection to being classified as a folk singer. ■ **Trainspotting:** On December 30th, Channel 4 TV's *The Big Breakfast* included a quiz question asking the name of the "former lead singer for The Attractions!" ■ Screened in January was BBC2 TV's excellent *Looking After Jo Jo* series (starring Robert "Begbie" Carlyle) which featured background excerpts from "Welcome to The Working Week" and "Alison." ■ An episode of the US cartoon series *The Simpsons* titled "Clown Time Is Over" was scheduled for broadcast on February 22nd. ■ A recent BBC Radio 4 serialisation of Daphne Du Maurier's *The Birds* used EC & The Brodskys' "The Birds Will Still Be Singing" as its theme music. ■ In February on BBC 2's, "University Challenge," Magdelene College, Cambridge failed to identify EC singing "Lost in The Stars" in a music round based on the works of Kurt Weill. (Their guess was Randy Newman!) They eventually lost to Queens University, Belfast. ■ Also in February, the *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* band, led by E-Street Band member Max Weinberg, led into the show with a musical version of "Goon Squad." ■ "Lyrically Incorrect," a new MTV (US) feature on misunderstood lyrics, ran a clip from MTV News in 1991 of Suzanne Vega speaking about singing along with an Elvis Costello record and then going back and checking the lyric sheet to find that she got it wrong. After cutting to a clip of "Clubland" they cut back to Suzanne saying that she still likes him anyway. ■ A feature on Bono in the November 30th edition of the UK's *Independent on Sunday* newspaper mentions EC among the various friends of U2 who flew in to join their US-tour camp in the Delano hotel on Miami's South Beach in September. (The writer of the piece is aggrieved when EC won't take his side in a rant against the Spice Girls!)



Elvis & the Grammys

Although Elvis had no new material to qualify for a nomination this year, he was indirectly involved with two Grammy winners:

I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray by the Fairfield Four (w/ EC on "That Day is Done") for Best Traditional Soul Gospel Album.

Anthology of American Folk Music for Best Album Notes (although EC's contribution was brief and he was not listed in the nomination).

Covers Corner

San Francisco-area reader Hugh H. Lovell brings to our attention a cover of the MacManus/O'Riordan song "Baby Plays Around" that appears on the Julie Wolf CD *Walk the Worn out Floor* (Palimpsest PR30). Hugh reports that Julie's CD is a collection of songs, mostly covers, played in a slow, quiet style mainly on solo piano suitable for late-night romancing or just unwinding. The CD includes songs by a wide variety of composers including Jerome Kern, Rodgers & Hammerstein, Keith Jarrett and Annie Lennox. Julie sings and plays piano throughout and her CD was also included amongst the nominees for best debut recording at the 2nd Annual Gay/Lesbian American Music Awards in New York City.



Julie Wolf

Julie told Hugh how she discovered the song: "The gorgeous Elvis Costello tune was put in front of me in a middle-of-the-night recording session by my dear friend John Silverman, who is a bass player from Seattle now residing in Paris. He was home for a visit, and we were having some beautiful, loose recording sessions in the studio of a friend of ours. We were enjoying some red wine, and he put this chart in front of me and said 'I want you to sight read this. It's quite a song.' So I did, and we rolled tape, and that first take is what landed on the album. It's got an energy and intimacy that moves me. Since then, I've come to know the tune much more intimately, because I've sung it thousands of times, but there was something immediate and spare and longing about that first take. The song itself is such a treasure. I too am a huge lover of Costello's music. He has a heartbreaking way with melody and lyric."

Julie's CD is available by mail directly from her. Write to: Julie Wolf, P.O. Box 18183, Seattle, WA. 98118-0183. The cost is \$15 per CD, plus \$2.50 shipping and handling for the first one, \$0.50 each CD thereafter.

News of yet another live cover of "Pump It Up" has reached us. Back in the late 1980s, five male students would regularly return to their hometown of Oxford during vacations from various UK universities and resuscitate their old school band, the imaginatively-named **On a Friday**. Their live shows were often performed with the addition of a brass section, and would usually end with a storming encore version of the old Costello rabble-rouser. Later, with their studies completed, the band would set out to seek fame and fortune under a catchier name lifted from a Talking Heads song title. Who were they? Why, none other than the mighty Radiohead, of course.

In last issue's complete recap of *Covers Corner*, we included three covers by Flemish bands. For the curious, here are the titles in Flemish: "Ik wil je" - Raymond van't Groenewoud ("I Want You"), "Gefluister en geschreeuw" - Clouseau ("From a Whisper to A Scream"), "Hotel Stil Verdriet" - Erik van Neygen ("Stranger in The House").



Last year, Swedish band **No Fun at All** issued a 4-track CD single with artwork owing more than a little to Barney Bubbles's famous *My Aim Is True* sleeve

design. Titled . . . *And Now for Something Completely Different* and released by Sidekicks Records (JABSCO 003), the disc included covers of songs by Magazine, The Hard-Ons, and The Misfits, alongside a version of EC's "Welcome to The Working Week."

Although not quite a cover and not quite sampling, UK hip-hop artists **Galliano** cop EC's line "the boys from the Mersey and the Thames and the Tyne" in "Slack Hands," the lead song to the soundtrack from *187*, a recent US film starring Samuel Jackson. The soundtrack is available on Icon/Atlantic and was assembled by Chris Douridas of KCRW-FM and *Sessions at West 54th* fame. (Thanks to alert listening by reader Bill Brown.)

Finally, reader Dan Felsenheld found a cover that you can listen to on-line at www.live-online.com/jukebox. Listed as "There's No Action", it's a straight ahead version of EC's "No Action" by US band **The Muffs**. The track also can be found on the 1997 Lookout Records compilation *More Bounce to the Ounce*.



Spotlight On New Releases

It certainly seems that in recent times, Elvis Costello has changed his attitude and has opened up his back catalog for inclusion in compilations, soundtracks and TV series. And that's all right with us - at least we don't see Nike ads using "Pump It Up" and the US Army using "Oliver's Army!". Here are some new releases touting Costello tracks:

Sideways Soundtracks:

EC's new Plangent Visions publishing arm "Sideways Songs" recently placed vintage Costello cuts on the soundtracks to two new US films:

"Everyday I Write the Book" is included on the soundtrack to the new Adam Sandler/Drew Barrymore film *The Wedding Singer*. Set in 1985, the CD sounds like an early-1980's MTV video collage including tracks by Culture Club, The Police, The Thompson Twins, Billy Idol and David Bowie.

The Wedding Singer

Maverick/Warner Bros. CD 9 46840-2

Includes "Everyday I Write the Book."

"Mystery Dance" is heard during the opening credits and is found on the soundtrack to the Bill Pullman/Ben Stiller detective flick *Zero Effect*. This modern sounding collection also features Nick Cave, Dan Bern, Mary Lou Lord and the Candy Butchers.

Zero Effect

Work/Sony Music Soundtrax OK 69103

Includes "Mystery Dance."

Compilation Cut: Advertised as "When Alternative Was Alternative," this collection includes a rather timid Costello choice amongst cuts by Siouxsie & the Banshees, Shriekback, Suicidal Tendencies, Love & Rockets, Peter Murphy, The Stone Roses and others.

Before X

BMG/Intersound US-CD: 9524

15-track compilation includes "Everyday I Write the Book."

Updates From Last Issue:

Some more info about releases that came out around press time of *BB13/14*:

+ *Bridge School Concerts Volume 1* was released in Europe (Reprise WEA 9362-46824-2) and in Australia (Reprise/Warner 9362468242).

+ *Live on Letterman: Music from the Late Show* was released in Europe (Reprise WEA 9362-46827-2), Australia (Reprise/ Warner 9362468272) and Japan.

Tidbits: Heard about but not yet seen is a German promo release of *Extreme Honey* (Warner PROP333). In December, the VHS video for *Grace of My Heart* was released in the US at a retail price geared to the consumer. Recall that this video is the only source of the Costello & Bacharach music video for "God Give Me Strength." Reported last issue as an Australian release, out now in France is *MTV Unplugged - Meilleurs Moments Volume 2* (Paramount 212681 VHS SECAM) featuring the live "Deep Dark Truthful Mirror." In December, Demon Records switched the extended CD editions of "11 classic Elvis Costello albums" to mid-price. JVC Musical Industries shows an upcoming release by a Steve Nieves entitled *Dream Harvest* which they claim is a different artist.

Television

Paul McCartney's Musical Ways (December

- PBS) EC comments about Macca's classical compositions (*Liverpool Oratorio* and *The Leaf*) in this documentary. The 1996 show chronicles a Canadian's dream to rearrange the music that Paul composed for a



1966 Halley Mills film *The Family Way*. Elvis notes he would most like to see Macca compose a violin or cello sonata because of the vocal qualities of these instruments.

The Last Resort (December 24 - Channel 4 - UK) Steve Nieve & The Playboys are reunited as house band for a one-off live revival of Jonathan Ross's 1980s chat show. With Bruce Thomas taking over the bass chores, 1997's Playboys line-up is actually The Attractions plus Bruce's old Sutherland Brothers & Quiver colleague Tim Renwick on guitar. Disappointingly, they only get to back comedian Frank Skinner's sincere-but-dull reading of "Mystery Train" before accompanying a chaotic Ross/Skinner duet version of Black Sabbath's "Paranoid" which sees the novelty act "Wasp Boy" (don't ask!) joining the fray on bells. A demeaning comedown? Or simply harmless Christmas Eve fun? It probably depended how heavily you had been drinking . . .

Radio Radio

First - One that we almost missed:

Upbeat (August 26, 1997 RTE Radio 1, Ireland) EC visits the RTE studios in Dublin the morning after his 43rd birthday to spend a relaxed 90 minutes playing relevant records while discussing the "family business" (music) and, in particular, some of his collaborative projects. (Among some familiar anecdotes is the revelation that Elvis and all three Attractions once performed a 4-acoustic guitar version of "Knowing Me Knowing You" for Abba themselves!) RTE's daytime audience is, apparently, pleasantly surprised: "I thought he just sang punk," observes one caller. Elvis rounds off the show by singing "A Good Year for The Roses" live in the studio.

The Hank Williams Story: I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive (January 25 - BBC Radio 2)

In a brief medley of covers and comments right at the end of the one hour show, EC had the following to say about the long gone daddy: "Well I think he's still the best country songwriter. Maybe there aren't too many more country songs to be written and he, kind of, wrote the blueprint for a lot of the songs. There are still people rewriting Hank Williams' songs".



In Print

Magazines:

The Big Issue (December 1-7) A colour EC



mug shot adorns the cover of the UK magazine sold on the streets to provide income for homeless people. Inside, a confusingly-written interview piece finds an upbeat Elvis

excited by his new (potentially 15-year) record deal. "It's 20 years in and I'm still doing things that are brand new - it can't be better than that," he declares. "Whether or not the records will still be in the charts next week feels less important." Meanwhile, it's time to round up the usual suspects . . . **Bruce Thomas:** "Bruce just doesn't love music. It makes me sad because he used to be a really good player and still can be on occasions when he concentrates." **Warners:** he reveals that the "billboard exercise" which saw him issue four singles in July 1996 resulted in hostility from Warners executives: "I was being told officially from the most senior levels that I was wasting my time." **The BBC:** "The head of all music at the BBC said I would have more hits if I took all the seventh chords and all the minor chords out of my songs . . . such a frighteningly ignorant statement." **The Internet:** "a boom town for obsessiveness." **Troublesome fans:** "There are things that would probably qualify as stalking . . . some of it more psychological than physical. It can be people who say that you've written a song for them or you've promised them a job in your office." **Tony Blair:** "He could be [the enemy]. I wouldn't be at all surprised if he turns out to be." Ominously for those complaining about the endless recycling of old material, he observes (taking the opportunity for another swipe at Warners): "I have a large back catalogue of work - I own it - and next year we're going to promote a new record, the older 'best of'. We're going to kick their arse, is what we're going to do."

Uncut (December) Issue spotlights *film noir* around the UK release of the new film, *L.A. Confidential*. "Watching the Detectives" tops a list of "Ten Noir Songs" that also includes The Flying Burrito Brothers' "Dark End of the Street," Bob Dylan's "Joey" and Bruce Springsteen's "Nebraska."

Mojo (January) Includes a short piece on the Costello/Bacharach collaboration in which it is stated that the pair "have had three 'intense brainstorming sessions' actually together in the same room. 'We've got a dozen songs now,' says Costello. 'We're trying to make it a bit thicker . . . bigger and stronger. Emotionally speaking, "God Give Me Strength" sounds like a Partridge Family song next to a couple of the others we've written since."

EC is also among the artists looking back on 1997 in a feature titled "The Best Thing I've Heard All Year." His lengthy contribution includes honourable mentions for U2 ("Please" might be the best song I've heard all year, I very nearly did it as a cover"), Radiohead, Portishead, Ron Sexsmith ("the most beautifully, tightly composed songs") and Elliot Smith ("very beautiful melodies, nice guitar playing - it's a great trick"). Unsurprisingly, Bob Dylan's *Time Out of Mind* is chosen as best of the year ("the more I listen to it, the more humour and uplift I draw from it"). Oasis? "I don't have anything to say about Oasis. I've no disrespect, it just didn't move me at all. I've got a problem with Mancunians in general." On reissues: "not everybody's gonna share your interest in some Art Farmer record that came out on Verve, or a classical record of viol music, which is truthfully what I'm listening to. The Stanley Brothers' record, just reissued on Columbia, is fantastic. A lot of their songs would be easy to mock - mothers die, babies die - but then they're probably singing to people whose babies and mothers died on a horribly regular basis." Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music* is another favourite: "It's six CDs, an awful lot to get through, and wherever you start you come across something the like of which you've never heard before." As for live shows: "I've seen this woman Toshi Reagon in clubs in New York with a fantastic band called Big Lovely . . . she's got a half-folk, half-R&B voice with a kind of gospel tint to it but she sings secular material. Otherwise, a Springsteen concert I saw on holiday in Nice . . . he played with such power - very delicate at one moment, very powerful the next - it was extremely

impressive, something I can learn from."

Hot Press (February 18) Irish magazine carries an interview with Ron Sexsmith in which he recounts how EC first became aware of his music: "Mitchell (*Froom, Ron's producer*) was working with Tasmin Archer in England and he went into a bar and Elvis was there just by chance. He had just finished my record and had a cassette copy of it, so Elvis took the tape. Mitchell told me the next day and I thought 'Oh, he's just going to hate it'. I had this impression that Elvis could be pretty irritable or whatever. But a few days later Mitchell was all excited, saying 'He's just raving about it'."

Mojo (February) A feature on Bob Dylan includes a half-page appreciation of last year's *Time Out of Mind* album by EC, accompanied by a photograph of the pair on stage together. "I think it's the best record he's made," asserts Elvis, as Dylan purists everywhere splutter into their cappuccino.

Q (February) **Q** heads across the sea to Ireland, and Johnny Fox's pub, to put some readers' questions to teetotaler EC ("fuck knows why he came to live over here, then" observes



Q's taxi driver) in the magazine's regular *Cash for Questions* feature. For the most part the answers range from enigmatic to humorously evasive, but one or two readers draw a thoughtful response. Asked about his current lack of commercial success, EC replies: "I'm passionate about what I do, but people are sceptical that you can mean it as much as you do, this far in. But I do. I mean it a lot more than some people I can see who are coasting. But I'm sick of working as hard as I do for no reward in terms of selling records. That had to stop." On the subject of the Spice Girls, he observes: "I hated the way they were treated at the Ivor Novello awards. They won one for sales, plus they're credited as writers. But none of the old farts there, and some of them were young old farts which made it sadder, wanted to believe it. And when they went up for their awards there was this low, grumpy rumble like you get in the House of Commons. And I thought, You bastards! It's only a bit of fun, it's only pop music! So then I was all for them. I went

from not giving a toss to, OK, I'm on their side now." The subject of music on TV elicits a good old-fashioned rant: "Much as I like Jools Holland, is he really the only person that can do a music show on television? Is it a rule? In the '60s, Clodagh Rodgers, Bobbie Gentry, Cliff, Cilla, Lulu, Dusty all had their own shows. I reckon I should have a mainstream television program but they are too cowardly to do it. I'm dead serious. I could do a weekly show, no problem, but they haven't got the guts. It's like what Brian Clough said about being the England manager: if they'd given him the job he would have fucking taken over. If you got all the smart people in, too many people would lose their jobs that don't know what they're doing. And that's why most music programmes on TV are crap." So now you know.

Uncut (February) A full page photo of Elvis portraying Rosco DeVille in the film *No Surrender*, accompanies "Dr. Know's" response to a question about EC's work with Alan Bleasdale. Referring to Costello's acting in this film and the *Scully* television series, Dr. Know remarks: "The calibre of both performances accounts for the absence of BAFTA's on Mr. C's mantelpiece."

Bass Player (March) Interview with Costello's other bass player who also happened to be the bass player for the other Elvis. (Now does that make sense?) Jerry Scheff answers a question about "our Elvis" and there is also a photo of them on stage together at Sweetwater in 1989. (See below and also available on Jerry's Web Page at www.scheff.com) There is also a transcription of a brief bit of the bass line from "Lovable."



Cait O'Riordan, James Burton, Jerry Scheff and Elvis on stage at Sweetwater in 1989 for the Village Music concert.

Jerry says: "I was originally supposed to be on only three *King of America* tracks, and I got called back to do eight more! Elvis is a very, very nice man. He's also one of the

most intense people I've ever met. I was doing a bass overdub for him once, and he was hanging over the console right in my face. I made a pass or two at it, and then I just looked at him and pointed to the door. I couldn't play a thing with him there!" Jerry also fondly recalls that he hasn't played the tuba since the 1991 Rude 5 tour.

Q (March) The previous month's Cash for Questions feature draws an anguished response from reader Terry Joynson of Liverpool, who relates EC's difficulties with Warners to previous complaints by Prince and George Michael, and can find precious little sympathy: "In Elvis's bitter little world, it's the record company's fault that he can't get arrested anymore. On the contrary, he is, and always has been, hoist by his own petard. A mouthy prat who is always going on about classic pop yet couldn't write something as heartfelt as The Las' 'There She Goes' or REM's 'The Sidewinder Sleeps Tonite' if he tried."

Internet:

Associated Press (December 19) AP writer David Bauder spoke with Elvis over coffee at a midtown Manhattan cafe for a brief story that surfers could find on the Internet. As for the challenge his recent varied musical direction presents to his fans, EC notes "I'm not trying to annoy them. I have to be prepared to lose people who want everything the same, in order to gain the people who are prepared to listen with all their heart. That's much more important, really."

Calling *Extreme Honey* a "divorce settlement," here's what he had to say about the Warners years: "I have absolutely no complaint with the musical freedom I've been allowed over the past eight or nine years. I think I've exploited it in my own way, sometimes to the detriment of commercial logic. But the shoddy treatment I've had over the last two or three years had to end. I was either going to quit completely or they were going to let me out."

As for his former band: "[Bruce Thomas] just couldn't concentrate any more and he was making a lot of embarrassing mistakes. And the Attractions had taken pride in never being erratic. As for the music, we did set a very high standard and the last thing I wanted it to be was a sorry excuse for it. I think the two records we made made a very good case for the band as a bunch of grown-up guys playing music together - one playing in the framework of the music we started out with and the other doing all of the other things that

we had learned in the interim. And that's really where I wanted to end it."

Claiming to have his next five albums mapped out, EC reveals a most unusual recording goal. "If I ever make an instrumental record that's really, really moving and does the same thing as a record with songs on it, go immediately to the stone mason to buy my headstone, because that would be the end of it. The great thing is to have an objective that's almost impossible to achieve, because then you have something to strive for."

Billboard Online (December 11) US trade magazine's site reports that: "Pop composer Burt Bacharach was in Las Vegas earlier this week to present at the *Billboard* Music Awards and said he was headed back to New York to meet with his latest collaborator, English singer/songwriter Elvis Costello. 'We're working for four days, continuing writing,' Bacharach told *Billboard*, adding that the pair have completed close to 10 songs. The new material will likely surface on Costello's first album after he secures a new label deal."

Billboard Online (December 15) reports that "the Mercury Records soundtrack to Ethan and Joel Coen's new movie *The Big Lebowski* is a genre-jarring compilation of tracks featuring artists ranging from Bob Dylan to Kenny Rogers with the First Edition to Gipsy Kings to Elvis Costello, who penned a new song for the release. T Bone Burnett invited Costello to join him at a meeting with the film-makers and 'I went from meeting with them to working with them in 20 minutes,' Costello says. The song, 'My Mood Swings', which will accompany a critical bowling scene in the film, is described by Costello as 'just a rock'n'roll song, not any more or less than that'."

Books:

Post Punk Diary 1980-1982 George Gimarc St. Martin's Griffin ISBN 0-312-16968-X)

Great follow-up to 1994's *Punk Diary 1970-1979*. This edition includes Costello's activities from *Get Happy!!* through *Almost Blue* and also includes EC on a free CD pressed by Cherry Red Records. A collection of interview snippets from Gimarc's days as a Dallas DJ, the CD has a brief hysterical bit of a March 14, 1986 phone interview with EC. It seems that the call's wires got crossed and we get to hear Elvis try to convince the unsuspecting callers to simply just hang up and let him get on with his interview.

NEW

BOOTLEGS

"Live bootlegs can be funny; studio bootlegs are the work of gangsters and thieves."

Elvis Costello

After a long dry spell, here's the lowdown on three new releases in the UK, all of the CD-R variety.

Political Action (Doberman) UK label kicks off the new year with more tidily-packaged and discerningly-chosen material. Sourced from an audience recording of unusually good quality for its time, this one contains the full set from EC & The Attractions' only live appearance of 1985 (a benefit concert for the UK miners' strike fund held at Logan Hall, London on 9th March). Plenty of unique stuff here, including prototype Attractions versions of "Brilliant Mistake" and "Sleep of the Just," the unreleased "All You Thought of Was Betrayal" (later cannibalised for "Tramp the Dirt Down") and "We Don't Even Try Anymore" (co-written with John Doe of X). Ironically, the miners' strike had collapsed by the time this concert took place and the dire consequences of their defeat serve only to increase the poignance of heartfelt versions of The Louvins' "Must You Throw Dirt in My Face?" and Merle Haggard's "No Reason to Quit," both still capable of moving this reviewer to tears some thirteen years on.

The Little Hands of Concrete (Doberman) This 2-CD set is again sourced from an audience recording. A little muffled and slightly distorted in places but still of above average quality for the period in question, it catches EC warming up for his forthcoming Almost Alone US tour with a one-off solo appearance on March 29, 1987 at the Watermans Arts Centre in Brentford, England. Notable inclusions are "Shamed Into Love," "True Love Ways" and a great audience-participation version of "Twist & Shout," plus the first public appearance of the "Napoleonic Beatbox" for "Uncomplicated." As a bonus, disc 2 is rounded out with selections from the November 28, 1986 solo show at London's Royalty Theatre, including the unreleased "Having It All" and a cover of the Psychedelic Furs' "Pretty in Pink."

Tokyo's Brilliant Parade (Pincher) 2-CD "reissue" of the hard-to-find Japanese bootleg Brilliant Parade, originally sourced from a superb soundboard recording of the 22nd

September 1994 show at the Kosei Nenkin Hall in Tokyo. A chance to experience the Brutal Youth tour sound with your own hand on the volume control rather than some idiot who thinks you want to have your ears ringing for a week afterwards.

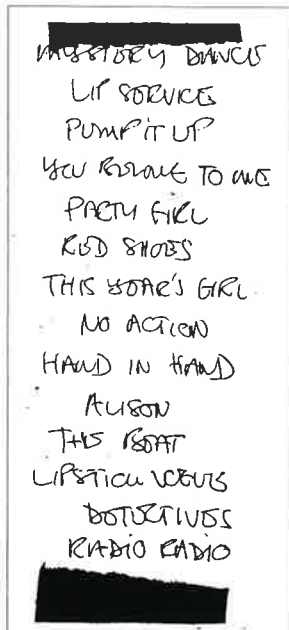
Fan Flashback

Gary M. Vollono: BRUCE! May 9, 1978

The Shaboo Inn, Willamantic, CT \$3.00 Nick Lowe & Dave Edmunds & Rockpile, Elvis Costello & The Attractions \$1.00 rebate at door - quarter brew night.

The stage is only knee high. I'm standing to the right of center, stage-left to the band. The stage itself is maybe 15 feet wide by 10 feet deep. Looking from the audience at the stage, Steve and his farfisa are on the left, Pete is back-center, Bruce is on the right and Elvis performs in the cramped space between Steve and Bruce (in front of Pete). I'm standing directly in front of Bruce, in fact, I'm leaning (being pushed) onto his PA. (The club is packed like sardines - probably 600 people in a club with only enough space for 400). Rockpile was great. They whipped the crowd into a frenzy (along with the quarter brews). Next, EC & the A's come out and launch into a set incomparable to anything I had ever seen before. It's basically the same set as the "El Mocambo" show (with probably a few differences - But, it's been so long ago I just can't dredge up each & every detail - I was also quite drunk too).

Well, a couple of songs into the set they're playing "Waiting for the End of the World" and Bruce is just blowing me away! He isn't moving anything but his hands, fingers, and his inner self. His inner self, you say? Yes, his inner self. I was right there, face to face with the man and he is so calm, so cool, that I just start freaking out! This guy's bass lines were so



smooth and moving, they were taking on a life of their own and they were taking me along with them. I momentarily forgot about Elvis, Steve and Pete, and I just started digging it.

"Yeah, Bruce. Way to go man, serious, serious." For those of you (probably all of you) who are not familiar with this mid '70s Connecticut slang, think: awesome; groovy; cool; da bomb; etc. Bruce speaks and I kid you not: "Thanks man, I'm glad you're enjoying it." All the while he doesn't miss a note and keeps on grooving. "Hey Bruce man," I say, "Can I have your tie?" "My tie? What'd ya want my tie for?" "I dunno, I just want it, It would be cool." "No way, It's my lucky tie".

Meanwhile the song is still cooking along and Bruce hasn't missed a f**king note! In fact he's picking up the intensity as our conversation continues! "Lucky Tie?" I say "Bullshit." Bruce laughs. "Come on," I say "I really, really want it." "Just, enjoy the show OK. I've got to get back to work." And with that he closed his eyes and went back to work. Damn good work in my opinion.

A side note. I never got Bruce's tie, but I did get Pete's drumsticks that night.

One year later . . . April 11, 1979 Armed Forces tour Approx. 2,000 people Hard Rock Cafe, Hartford, CT The Rubinoos, EC & The A's

I'm front and right of the stage natch (which is now shoulder height). The guys come on stage and as they are milling around taking their places and getting set to go, I yell up "Yo, Bruce - Hey! Bruce!" He looks at me. I shake my tie at him. He points and gives me a "How ya doing?" "Great, How 'bout yourself?" He nods & starts playing.

OK, I know I'm defending him based on my "Ooh I had a semi-conversation / bonding experience with a star/idol of mine." But, all I can say is work or not, the dude can play! The man never was one to move much physically, but when he got into it (and I'd say I saw him get into it 11 out of 12 times - hey, everyone is entitled to an off-night every now and then), when he had his inner self moving, he moved every part of me. And I still listen to his bass lines in songs and still feel the same way.

Bruce and Elvis may not have gotten along personally touring together, but when it came to playing Bruce is the ONLY one who could ever make the Attractions what they were. The same goes for Steve and Pete. Take any one of those three out and replace them with someone else and the Attractions are only half the band that they were.

**COSTELLO ON
BRITISH
TELEVISION**

**THE FIRST FIVE
YEARS
1977-1981**

By Tony Sacchetti

What's On July 21, 1977

For those who tuned into *What's On* on this warm July evening in 1977, an intriguing sight appeared on their TV screen. There appeared a bespectacled performer clad in a blue sport jacket, neck tie and jeans, accompanied with only an electric guitar. Upon first glance, the UK television debut of Elvis Costello was probably shrugged off with the notion that it was just another strange looking chap attempting to fit in with the misfits of the day, trying to make a name for himself. Who would have thought that this unorthodox individual would become a driving force in popular music and have the staying power that nearly everyone else from that era lacked. Here was Elvis, confident enough in his own ability as a solo artist to perform his latest single, "Alison." Although the song is a ballad, there was a certain edge to this delivery. The roughness of the chord strokes combined with the abrasive vocals push the song to the brink without going over the edge. This unique rendition of one of Costello's most well known songs still remains memorable 21 years later.

Top of the Pops September 1, 1977

Elvis makes his first UK television appearance with The Attractions to promote his most recent single, "Red Shoes." The filming took place on August 30 as Costello mimes to an alternate take of the song recorded with The A's earlier that day. This gives the viewer a taste of things to come as this assembled combo has its own distinctiveness, with Steve Nieve's Farfisa organ replacing a lot of the guitar work found on *My Aim Is True*. The lip-synch is most evident when Elvis downright muffs the line, "She said drop dead and left with another guy." "Red Shoes" comes off as a catchy pop song from an artist that has a lot more to offer.

Good Afternoon September 30, 1977

Elvis once again appears as a solo artist. It is here that we get to listen to the spoken word of Costello as well as hear him sing. Elvis first performs a new composition, "Hoover Factory," a song that would not be recorded

and released for some three years! Mavis Nicholson then interviews Elvis. Her take on "Hoover Factory" is that it is a sad song to which Elvis responds to the gist of the song saying, "it's not a big deal - The Hoover Factory. Art, architecture, it's not a matter of life or death." Mavis then indicates that she has difficulty understanding Costello's words when listening to his songs. Elvis recalls a similarity he shared in listening to "She Loves You" by The Beatles. Still, he's content enough to have people interpret or misinterpret the songs and the lyrics any way they'd like. He concludes by stating that he's not content to go about his business as a "pop Woody Allen." His appearance concludes as he straps on his electric guitar once again to perform "Watching the Detectives."

Top of the Pops November 10, 1977

Another *TOTP* appearance is recorded on November 2 and aired several times in November and December. The A's once again join EC to perform his final single release for Stiff Records, "Watching the Detectives." As with their previous appearance on *TOTP*, EC mimes to an alternate take of the song recorded earlier in the day at BBC Studios. Elvis is starting to become slightly more animated as he utilizes sneering and scowling in strategic placements like no one else.

So It Goes December 3, 1977

EC & the A's recorded live from Eric's in Liverpool on August 2. Three songs are aired in their entirety, "Chelsea," "Lip Service" and "Detectives." For those that missed it, portions of "Lip Service" and "Detectives" were included on *The South Bank Show* in 1981 and a complete "Detectives" was shown on *The Way They Were* in 1986. The performances are early vintage Attractions, played with power and conviction. Interestingly, the songs are all played carefully in a slightly slower tempo. The singing is spirited and the lyrics are clearly enunciated. Some minor modifications on "Chelsea" and "Lip Service" would occur throughout the year as the band would try to find the right groove before going into the studio to record these tracks. The stage set at this venue is sparse and the modest two camera shoot is the perfect compliment to this intimate engagement. *So It Goes* also captures nice live in studio solo renditions of "Alison" and "Radio Radio."

Top of the Pops March 16, 1978

Elvis has now become a customary figure on *TOTP*. He keeps the momentum of his soaring popularity going by releasing *This Year's Model* and performing the first single from it, "Chelsea." Wearing a blue suit and sporting

the same tie worn on the cover of *This Year's Model*, Elvis is comfortable and sings (or rather pretends to sing) with supreme confidence. By now, we're accustomed to hearing Costello lip-synch over a prerecorded alternate take of the song and this practice will continue on *TOTP* for the duration of 1978. The stage set is polished, with glass, shiny metal and blinking lights, reflecting EC's increasing polish as a band leader.

Top of the Pops June 15, 1978

It's time to "Pump It Up" and speed it up! This alternate take is reminiscent of the way EC & the A's would play it in concert as the tempo of "Pump It Up" remained in high gear until 1996. On this day however, Elvis looks great as his wardrobe expands and modernizes. Wearing a red jacket with a thin black lapel and a black and white polka dot shirt, he is this year's model! To compliment the threads, El's hair length has reached its maximum stage, curling outward in the back - a great look! The crowd politely dances to this straight forward, no frills rocker.

Revolver August 5, 1978

"Peter is the Greatest!" is the chant you hear from the crowd patronizing host Peter Matthews before EC & the A's take the stage for live performances of "This Year's Girl" and "Radio Radio." As the band kicks in to "This Year's Girl," some visual effects appear. A five-part split screen is imaged with Elvis being filmed live in the middle screen, or box, surrounded by four boxes which alternate images of girls and women to correspond with the song. This is an interesting effect, reminiscent of the "Pump It Up" promotional video, but makes for frustrating viewing if you're just interested in seeing the band play. For the next song, Elvis introduces "Radio Radio" and the image shifts to a proper full screen shot. This straight ahead rendition meets with audience approval as there is a mass pogo scene in front of the stage. Traditional cinematography is deviated from once again by utilizing a vision mixer to provide special effects. These effects briefly freeze certain motions as the live performance continues, creating a triple or quadruple exposure "swirling movement" look. An ominous looking portrait of Peter Matthews hangs to Costello's right.

Top of the Pops October 26, 1978

A nice rendition of "Radio Radio" is aired this evening chock full of great visuals to compliment this particular version. Costello is smartly clad in a black suit and matching tie with a white button down collared shirt. Steve is seen from time to time manhandling his

keyboards, rocking them back and forth a la Terry Adams of NRBQ. This take is fairly close to the original with a smoother, less abrasive delivery. The camera pans in for a full facial shot of Elvis as he sings, "I wanna make them wish they'd never seen me" with his head tilted and his eyes wide open to drive the point home. Also, EC sings "and the radio is in the hands of lots of silly men . . ." substituting the last few words to alter the recorded version's lyrics which states "and the radio is in the hands of such a lot of fools . . ." We also get to see a lot more of Bruce Thomas than what we're accustomed to seeing as he mimes the "listen, listen, listen" background vocals along with Steve. Lastly, there is a rare look of Elvis and Bruce standing side by side miming the "radio" outro. Portions of this clip were also shown on US television in 1987 on "Rolling Stone Magazine's 20th Anniversary Special" which also was released on video.

Tiswas January 6, 1979

A brief interview with EC transpires as he announces the release of his latest LP, *Armed Forces*. Here, to help those that buy the album and might not know what to make of it, he displays the LP cover along with the freebie postcard inserts and "Hollywood High" EP.

Kenny Everett Show January 30, 1979

In a bright stage set up, about as loud and colorful as it gets, EC, himself decked out in a blue lamé jacket and pink tie, is a very animated and wired artist this day. He and the Attractions go through the motions of lip-synching and playing over the official release of "Oliver's Army." The spacious stage set places Pete high above Costello with Steve and Bruce generously placed on stage left and stage right. This set affords Elvis the opportunity to move and groove as he darts to and backs away from Camera A. The abstract colorful artwork that adorns the walls and floor reflect a style reminiscent of Peter Max. Images of Costello's face are present on the decor as well. Overall, this clip is a visual aphrodisiac of color, splendor, animation and good fun. Based on EC's sweaty look and wired mannerisms, one could believe that he arrived on the set after visiting the "Peruvian" confines of his dressing room.

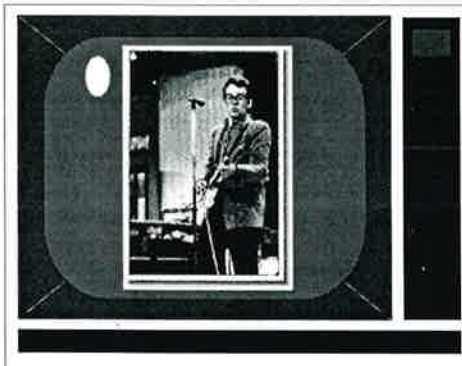
Top of the Pops February 8, 1979

In a much more laid back approach to the aforementioned clip, the studio version of "Oliver's Army" is once again mimed. Elvis, looking well groomed, displays a calmness for this public presentation of his current single. The limited square footage of the stage is not conducive for Elvis to break loose like he did

on *The Kenny Everett Show* as he pretty much remains stationary during the song's execution. The most exciting part about this *TOTP* appearance is the TV debut of Costello's black and white checked jacket.

Multicoloured Swap Shop May 20, 1979

The second single off of *Armed Forces*, "Accidents Will Happen," is promoted with this visit to "Swap Shop." Unfortunately, there is no alternate take this time either. A dense and darkened background is prevalent to correspond with the intimate mood of the song. A straight ahead, no frills delivery of "Accidents" is given here. Noticeable in the background are the mannequins from the *This Year's Model* LP inner sleeve.



Top of the Pops May 24, 1979

Another obligatory TV spot for "Accidents" in the same vein as the "Swap Shop" appearance four days earlier. You guessed it. EC mimes to the studio recording. In select intervals of the song, Elvis treats us to those infamous upper lip sneers in which he enunciates forcibly. The pink suit looks great, offset with a black shirt and red tie.

Top of the Pops December 25, 1979

A special Christmas edition of *TOTP* as EC & the A's make their second appearance on *TOTP* to perform the same song! The smashing success of "Oliver's Army" certainly warranted another TV presentation of this tune. A rather serious and laid back EC goes through the miming motions armed with a big, stupid guitar and stationed in front of three large circular blinking lights.

Tiswas January 12, 1980

It's time to "Get Happy!" It is reported that EC conducts a brief interview and then joins The A's as they act out "I Can't Stand Up for Falling Down."

Multicoloured Swap Shop January 26, 1980

EC and the A's play along with the studio versions of "I Can't Stand Up" and "High Fidelity." Although the date and appearance have been confirmed, I've yet to come across anyone who has this clip.

Whitelight February 13, 1980

In a feel that harkens back the 60's, the boys mime to "I Can't Stand Up" and "King Horse." The stage set is traditional looking. The band is lit in only white light (hence, the name of the show?) and there is no camera trickery. Elvis looks very traditional himself in a black suit, white shirt and black tie. In an effort to mix things up a little, Elvis has strapped on his guitar upside down.

Top of the Pops February 28, 1980

Another chance to hear "I Can't Stand Up." It looks like Steve and Bruce haven't stopped dancing since watching the promo video in their hotel room a couple of nights earlier. They have even switched places, deviating from their normal stage positions. Some neat camera movements occur each time EC sings the song's title, the best of which is saved for last. He is hooked onto a wire which comically and unexpectedly elevates and drops him as he mimes the song's final lines.

Kenny Everett Show March 10, 1980

On a hip, multicolored stage, Elvis and The Attractions play along to a juiced up version of "I Can't Stand Up" which makes the *Get Happy!* version seem slow! The drawback here is the song clocks in at under two minutes and it finishes before you can really settle in and enjoy it. The clip was also shown in the US in late March during a time when late night Friday and Saturday were about the only periods allotted for musical visuals.

Multicoloured Swap Shop May 28, 1980(?)

Looking suave in a three-piece gray suit with black and white polka dot Ascot, Elvis mimes to "Hoover Factory." There are still shots of the factory that are projected behind Elvis to enhance the visuals of this clip. Of note, EC is competently fingering a Hofner bass to the backing track. Contrary to the above date which is widely reported as being accurate, it is our strong belief that "Hoover Factory" and "Clubland" were aired together in December.

Fun Factory May 31, 1980

Elvis appears as a solo artist this day, miming to "New Amsterdam." There are numerous children who are gathered behind and to the side of Costello, swaying to the soothing sound of the song. Sporting a red and white hollow body Gretsch, Elvis looks as relaxed and comfortable as ever. He truly enjoys the interaction with the children and is proud to show that there is a human element behind the revenge and guilt facade we've been accustomed to. After the song, a brief chat ensues with a young Gary Crowley which is basically a "hi, how are you?" session.

Alright Now August 7, 1980

EC & the A's kick it into high gear as they perform two songs live. The first track, "I Stand Accused" is true to the recorded version. The audience dances wildly in approval of this upbeat number. The frantic pace of the band could have been enhanced by a heavy dose of alcohol before taking the stage. My case in point arises when the next song, "Possession" is performed. This undoubtedly is one of the sloppiest takes that the band have ever run through. The vocals are slurred and Costello's timing appears to be lost. The song has a cool, unexpected instrumental break in the middle so that Elvis can prove to the folks at home that this is in fact being performed live. His ensuing attempt at a guitar solo is absolutely horrible. The program fades mercifully before the song ends as air time had run out. In spite of this, I am, in a perverse way, always fond of EC's "untidy" performances, sour chords, and sporadic throat problems as they set themselves apart from the "average" take.

Multicoloured Swap Shop December 1980

In an outfit similar to that worn on this show several months prior, Elvis chooses to roll out the opening number on the upcoming *Trust* release, unveiling "Clubland." Of interest here is the fact that Steve has shaved his head, a practice that would not be uncommon in the years ahead. The band mimes the execution of this song in front of a bank of white lights that wouldn't look out of place at a Glam Rock show. Bruce, playing Hofner bass, combines it with a beautiful high button double breasted jacket that sets his look back 15 years in time.

Jim'll Fix It March 7, 1981

Glenn Tilbrook is a special guest of Elvis and the A's as they act out "From a Whisper to A Scream." A lucky youngster gets to be a roadie for the band and helps Elvis with his gear. During the alternate take of this song, the young roadie also gets to spend some time on the soundboard and receives a laminate "Access All Area" pass along with an official tour jacket presented to him by Costello himself. As for the song, it is rocked up a bit and it's good to see Glenn add some variety to the many TV appearances thus far. It's a tad strange to see Elvis strumming an acoustic on this track which relies so heavily on electric guitars, but that's the point, isn't it?

What's On March 16, 1981

Elvis and Steve give us a live performance of "Shot With His Own Gun." Nieve plays magnificently behind his grand piano which provides us with a taste of his classical training. Elvis looks spiffy with top hat, scarf,

and red lensed horn rims. A very nice rendition is given, true to the recorded version. There is no doubt now that Elvis as a singer is beginning to refine his skills and challenge himself beyond the artificial boundaries of the three minute pop song.

Fundamental Frolics July 31, 1981

Filmed live at the London Apollo on June 1, EC performs, "Gloomy Sunday" and "Psycho." The solo acoustic performance of the former is aired on BBC TV with the latter song only found on a video commercially released years later. Unique to this TV clip is the fact that Elvis is not singing one of his own songs as neither tune was penned nor previously recorded by him. It is the first time since appearing on UK TV in 1977 that he has deviated from the practice of singing his own recorded songs. "Gloomy Sunday" was sung by Billie Holliday and as the title suggests, it is a quite morbid piece of music. One can only wonder what kind of mood EC was in to pick these two songs to sing.

Russell Harty Show November 3, 1981

In white and blue spotlights, the color scheme of the *Almost Blue* release, EC & the A's play "Color of The Blues" and "Sweet Dreams" before a live studio audience. The former song features some very tasty rhythm guitar work by Elvis as he utilizes his Fender Telecaster to compliment Steve's piano playing. After "Color of The Blues," Elvis chats for a few minutes with Russell Harty. In addition to the obligatory questions about his name and his start in the music business, we are able to hear Costello's reflections on Nashville, where *Almost Blue* was recorded. He speaks of the music scene, culture, and his desire to record there with legendary Nashville record producer, Billy Sherrill. About half way through the interview, comic Rik Mayall bursts upon the scene from the backstage area and hurls a bevy of insults toward Mr. Harty. The audience roars in approval and Elvis seems mildly amused, stating to Russell, "I guess that pretty much sums you up." After a discussion about EC's future plans, he returns to the stage once again for an excellent rendition of "Sweet Dreams."

South Bank Show November 8, 1981

One of the most interesting profiles and the only one of its kind featuring Costello & Company is aired this evening. "The Making of Almost Blue" under the direction of Peter Carr takes us full circle from rehearsals to recording sessions to live performances. The show opens with Elvis, sitting in what appears to be a living room, singing "A Good Year for The Roses" strumming an acoustic guitar.

This prelude to the rehearsals takes place in May 1981. The viewing audience is then given a profile on what put Costello on the map. Here, we see live footage from Eric's in Liverpool, recorded August 2, 1977, and first aired on the program *So It Goes* on December 3, 1977. *Melody Maker's* Allan Jones lends some insight on Elvis - what he's all about and who he appeals to. From there, rehearsal footage is interspersed with comments from Elvis on his desire to do an album of slow ballads that puts emphasis on the sound of the voice. The band arrives in Nashville on May 18 and Elvis and producer Billy Sherrill meet in his office to talk about the upcoming sessions and what they hope to accomplish. Costello would like to capitalize on Sherrill's "magic touch" that has made him so successful in the past. With the recordings scheduled to begin that day, we are treated to a fair amount of in studio footage of the band running through the songs and listening to the playback. Sherrill often looks disinterested behind the mixing console and the band doesn't quite know what to make of it. We get to hear reflections outside of the studio from Sherrill, as he's sailing on his boat, in which he seems complimentary for the most part. The cameras travel to local watering holes with EC & the A's as we are afforded an opportunity to hear their private recaps on the recording sessions and their strategies going forward. After all is said and done, we return to London and listen to Elvis critique the backing vocals and orchestrations used on "Sweet Dreams." A playback of the finished recording is heard and Costello's facial expressions dictate his excitement with the product. To conclude this 55-minute special, the band performs "Sittin' and Thinkin'," "I'm Your Toy" and "Sweet Dreams" in front of a proper country and western audience in Aberdeen, Scotland on July 30. The quality of this documentary makes it a "must see".

Top of the Pops December 24, 1981

A final bit of promotion for *Almost Blue* occurs Christmas Eve on *TOTP*. "Sweet Dreams," the second *AB* single is presented this evening. The song is lip-synched, but we are at least given a prerecorded alternate take of this number. As the intro begins, Elvis sets the tone, strumming his acoustic guitar in a melancholy way. Although stripped down, without strings, steel guitar and backing vocals, this rendition is still beautifully rich. A debonair Costello has a sincere delivery tonight which builds slowly and reaches its apex as Elvis magnificently and authoritatively utters the line, "I should HATE you girl" near the song's conclusion.

Back Issues

Single issues: \$5/£4 each. Double issues: \$8/£6 each. Deduct \$1/£1 for each issue after third. Australia and Japan inquire about special rates for multiple issues. SPECIAL: Complete set for \$56/£42.

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BB2 (May 95) - Interview with Ryko's Jeff Rougvie. Dylan & "Royal" McCartney concert reports. Costello covers. *Kojak Variety* originals.

BB3 (Aug 95) - Full *Meltdown* report. *Kojak Variety* live from London. *CyberTalk* interview with EC. Roskilde Festival.

BB4 (Nov 95) - Beacon Theater rehearsals. Cambridge & Edmonton Folk Festivals. McCartney & MacManus song writing partnership. Songs covered live by EC.

BB5 (Feb 96) - *Costello Sings Again* - Part 1. Brodskys in Bristol, Nieve in NYC and *Meeting of Masters* in Sweden.

BB6 (May 96) - *Costello Sings Again* - Part 2. EC on US TV. *ATUB* preview. *X-Files*, Bacharach, Ron Sexsmith.

BB7 (Aug 96) - *Costello & Nieve* in the US. Brodskys in Denmark. EC the Producer. Critics look at *ATUB*. VH1 *Storytellers* Special.

BB8/9 (Dec 96) - Double Tour Issue! Concert reports, photos & set lists. Allan Mayes interview on working with young Declan in 1973.

BB10 (Mar 97) - Exclusive Interviews: Costello on GOMH, McGuinn and Pete Thomas. T+M live. Elvis at the Movies.

BB11 (Jun 97) - Warners split. Nashville w/ Skaggs, NYC w/ Jazz Passengers, Bacharach & Mingus Big Band. Elvis on the Bookshelf.

BB12 (Sep 97) - *Tom Thumb* in the Park. 1981 *English Mugs* Tour. Session w/ Sexsmith. Fairfield Four.

BB13/14 (Dec 97) - Double Issue! EC signs to PolyGram. Live w/ the Fairfield Four and Mingus Big Band. Interviews w/ Bruce Thomas and Village Music's John Goddard. *Covers Corner* recap. *BB Index*.

GLITTER

GULCH

Free Classifieds To Readers

WANTED!

1. *The Bridge I Burned* (PRO-CD-9045) 4-track CD single 2. *A Taste of Extreme Honey* (PRO-CD-9076) 5-song promo sampler 3. *A Case for Song* (LaserDisc) Per Aachmann, Aadalvej 7, 7300 Jelling, DENMARK.

TAPE TRADES WANTED

I have a long list of EC live tapes, plus a couple of spare bootleg CDs. If you are interested, send your list or write to me at the following address: Adrian Boddy, 38 Bedford Road, Letchworth, SG6 4DR, ENGLAND.

FOR SALE

50,000,000 Elvis Fans Can't Be Wrong. Also 4-track promo sampler for Taking Liberties with "Clean Money," "Radio Sweetheart," "Getting Mighty Crowded" & "Talking in The Dark." Offers please. Write or phone 01329 318462. Sue Brown, 31 Hillson Drive, Farcham, PO15 6NA, ENGLAND.

COSTELLO SET SALE LIST

US promo posters (*IB*, *Spike*, *MLAR*, *BY*), promo CD's and more. Write for list or call. Mmmm . . . , 8 Park Plaza, Suite 239, Boston, MA 02116 (781) 341-8553.

WANTED: RED-SHOED IMPOSTER

Looking for this bootleg CD (*Dragonman*), *Our Aim Is True* (Handmade/Stiff) and *Paul McCartney, Elvis Costello & Friends: A Royal Command Performance* (Orangisicle). I have more than 30 live CD's to trade. Francois Drouin, 285 Rue de Vaugirard, 75015 Paris, FRANCE (drouin@dassault-aviation.fr).

ORIGINAL CONCERT POSTERS FOR SALE

Elvis Costello, Bob Dylan, Paul McCartney and others. Hans-jürgen Arndt, Falstaffweg 41, 13593, Berlin, GERMANY.

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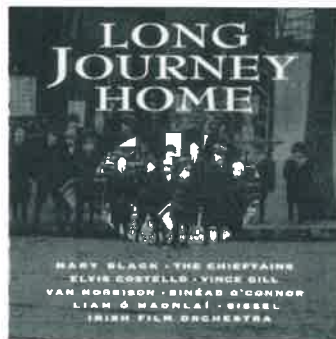
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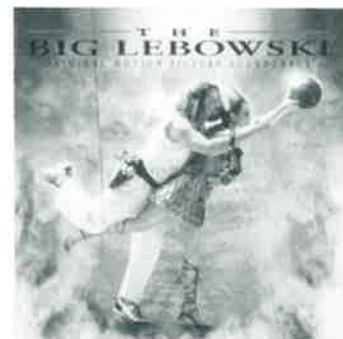


**Your Source for
 Costello import items!**



Almost Free Stuff

Mercury Records has provided us with a big fat roll of movie posters for *The Big Lebowski* and BMG Classics has given us a handful of posters for *The Long Journey*



Home. Although neither shows Elvis Costello, both are attractive remembrances of his soundtrack work and are suitable for framing. To get one (or both), simply send us \$6 (US) or £8 (UK) to cover the cost of postage and a mailing tube. Elsewhere please inquire first about postage rates. Overseas requests will be sent surface mail.



READERS' CHOICE

Last issue we felt it was time for an update of our original Readers' Choice poll. We asked for your 5 favorite Costello LP's and your 5 favorite Costello songs. The results of our last poll (BB4) are in parentheses.

TOP TEN SONGS

1. *All the Rage* (9)
2. *Riot Act* (-)
3. *New Lace Sleeves* (4)
4. *Brilliant Mistake* (-)
5. *Man Out of Time* (-)
6. *Watch Your Step* (-)
7. *Jack of All Parades* (-)
8. *Poor Napoleon* (-)
9. *Indoor Fireworks*
10. *Beyond Belief* (1)

TOP FIVE ALBUMS

1. *King of America* (1)
2. *This Year's Model* (-)
3. *Get Happy!!* (4)
4. *Imperial Bedroom* (2)
5. *Blood & Chocolate* (-)

For next issue, in honor of the release of *Bespoke Songs* by Rhino, vote for your three (3) favorite recorded Costello cover versions. One random entry from each side of the Atlantic will receive a free copy of the CD.

Competition

Last issue we asked you to identify three songs that Elvis & the A's played over the PA to accompany themselves on stage. We had no winners nor any submissions. Here's what we were looking for:

1997 ATUB Tour: "Queer Notions" - Coleman Hawkins (from *Kansas City*: original motion picture soundtrack)

1994 BY Tour: "Suck My Left One" Bikini Kill

1991 Rude 5 Tour: "Death's Black Train Is Coming" Rev. J.M. Gates

Framed and Hung Up

This issue's entry comes from George Zajkowski from Detroit, MI.

ELVIS



ing: First Version of the Wheel

Those talented *Beyond Belief* readers keep them coming. *First Version of the Wheel* is the debut release by *BB* subscriber Mark Smotroff and his musical partner Sean Mylett who call themselves "ing." Their effort is a very tasty self-produced set of home demos that has gotten ing radio airplay in the Bay Area. Fans of the REM-flavored sound will find this disk of original material satisfying. The CD is available to *BB*-readers for the special price of \$8. Send to: ing, PO Box 391, Sausalito, CA 94966 or E-mail at inghead@aol.com for more info.

P.S. Mark wrote the cover story on EC for the August 1992 issue of *DISCOVERIES* magazine!

BLACK & WHITE WORLD

*A shot by an unknown
photographer during Elvis
Costello's July 13, 1985 "Live
Aid" performance of The
Beatles' "All You Need Is Love"
at London's Wembley Stadium.*

