

Costello and Bacharach

ELVIS COSTELLO AND BURT BACHARACH have premiered "This House is Empty Now," a co-composition from their upcoming LP for Mercury Records. The debut of the song took place at a star-studded tribute to Burt Bacharach which took place at New York City's Hammerstein Ballroom on April 8 and was subsequently broadcast on US television on April 15. A full report on the show is on page 10.

After the show, the duo met the following day to plan final work on the LP. Recording is set for June with a tentative release date likely in October with a possible tour to follow. For some comments from both Elvis and Burt about the recording project, turn to page 22.



Photo by Tony Sacchetti



Photo by Sverre Ronny Saetrum

Costello and Nieve

THAT OTHER DUO, ELVIS COSTELLO & STEVE NIEVE, performed together on April 5 at the Vossa Jazz Festival in Norway. Elvis also gave a press conference prior to the show and *Beyond Belief* was among those invited. Full details of both start on page 8. Coverage of February's C&N Italian tour starts on page 4.

Continuing their world travels, the pair is also slated to play August 1 at the Fuji Rock Festival in Tokyo, Japan. In their musical wanderings, the pair continue to give songs such as "London's Brilliant Parade" and "Sulky Girl" their debut C&N arrangements.

Return to the Eclectic Ballroom

Elvis premieres new song - see page 23

Inside This Issue

<i>Lip Service</i> - From/To The Editor	2
Live: Italian Tour	4
Live: C&N in Norway	8
Live: Bacharach Tribute	10
<i>It Was 20 Years Ago Today...</i>	11
<i>Elvis Costello A to Z</i>	13
<i>On The Beat</i> - The Latest EC News	17
<i>Covers Corner</i>	19
<i>Add To Your Collection</i>	20
<i>Return to the Eclectic Ballroom</i>	23
<i>Readers Choice / Framed and Hung Up</i>	24



LIP SERVICE

From The Editor

Just as in 1984, Elvis Costello followed his 1989 solo tour for *Spike* with a band tour later in the year. However, when EC hit the road in August 1989, it was not with the Attractions. Instead we saw the first incarnation of the Rude 5, an ensemble backed by familiar faces in the rhythm section (Pete Thomas, Jerry Scheff and Michael Blair) along with some new faces (Larry Knechtel, Marc Ribot, and Stephen Soles). And while that made for six members, EC told us the name had to do with a "way you might want to touch someone you love." The tour was also a successful one for EC as he was riding the coattails of his first and only US Top 20 hit, "Veronica."

On the home front yours truly had a more pressing concern - a wife about to give birth right in the middle of the tour! I honestly can admit that although I was watchful of the schedule, I was fully prepared to miss my first tour. However, I was to be blessed in two ways: Colin was born on August 21 and 10 days later I was sitting in the 20th row at the Fox Theater in Atlanta. When a co-worker came into my office asking me to pick a date to accompany him on a must meeting in Atlanta - I had no trouble picking the date. We flew to Atlanta that morning, had our meeting and I was later able to secure a nice single seat at the box office just before show time. It was a treat to see and hear this show, unique for Soles' fine backing vocals and Blair's exquisite percussion. Sadly, Elvis did not sing his brief solo rendition of "My Brave Face," a song I then had trouble getting out of my head.

One of my recollections from

this period in my life was how a combination of a new house (more room) and a new child (more time at home) saw me dive head first into collecting live tapes of Costello shows. This was also the first tour where, through new friends and contacts, I actually had tapes pouring in as the shows were happening. It certainly made me feel part of the tour that I was missing until my trip to the Fox.

It is amazing when you think about how much of EC's career has been documented by fans sneaking tape recorders into his concerts. Combine this with FM broadcasts and TV appearances and there is an incredible audio history available to hear. An obvious question is just how does one start oneself down this path. And, taking the opportunity to editorialize, how one should conduct oneself in the world of tape trading.

Getting started might be the most difficult thing. *BB* does not condone the selling of live tapes and until the advent of low cost CDR's, reluctantly accepted live bootlegs out of necessity. So outside of taping an in-demand show yourself, one way is to tempt a friendly tape trader to get you started by giving you some trade bait that you can hopefully spiral into a collection. Outside of this begging, keep an ear on your local FM dial and try to capture something unique to your city such as an in-studio interview or performance or perhaps a local live concert broadcast.

Once in the trading network, the rules are simple. It's tape for tape and don't use cheap ones! Maxell-XLII's or TDK-SA's are usually the standard. Be prompt with service. Although there's no hurry, just be honest and



Beyond Belief correspondent Sverre Ronny Saetrum with Elvis at the press conference prior to the April 5 Costello & Nieve show in Norway.

respect your commitments. Finally, tape is cheap! Don't try to edit live on-air stuff at the risk of cutting something out. Keep a list and be honest about quality - there's nothing worse than a dog of a tape! And finally - it's just a hobby - so enjoy it!



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To The Editor

FLASHBACK COMEBACK

I received my first issue of *BB* (March 1998) and I was greatly impressed! You and the staff do a superb job of covering EC. I have never before read so much on him in one publication. Thank you one and all!

That said, I must fact check on it for you. It regards my "Fan Flashback" article entitled "BRUCE!". In my article, I state that I started my (semi)-conversation with Bruce while they were playing "Waiting for The End of The World" which I claimed was "a couple of songs into the set." Interspersed in the column containing my article was a set list which did not include "WFTEOTW." (Aside to readers: I contacted the editor immediately upon seeing this and asked him if this was indeed the set list from that very night. He confirmed that it was, and that the rigors of publishing did not allow for the set list to be viewed by the proofreaders prior to printing. He also informed me that EC & The A's did perform "WFTEOTW" that night as the first encore.)

Well, 20 years may have fuzzed my memory a bit. After reviewing the set list from that evening I must correct my story. Being so long ago, the only things that I am certain of are: it was within the first five songs; it wasn't "Pump It Up," and I don't even remember them playing "Party Girl" (probably because it was an unreleased song at the time). Therefore it had to have been during "You Belong to Me."

Thank you to the readers who might have looked past this error of memory and thank you to *Beyond Belief* for printing my "Flashback."

Gary M. Vollono, Woodbridge, CT, USA

SATISFIED CUSTOMER

I would like to congratulate you on taking the time to put together a fine magazine. It's easy to see that you put a lot of effort into it and this is much appreciated by me and I'm sure by anyone who reads it. I will continue subscribing as long as you are publishing *BB*.

I've been a fan of Elvis from the very beginning, going to early concerts and buying singles and albums as they were released, buying them a second time on CD, and then a third time on remastered CD! I'm sure that many of your readers have done the same. Keep up the good work. I am one very satisfied customer.

Antony Blute, Croydon, ENGLAND

STAND DOWN MARGARET

Reading the latest issue of *BB*, specifically the analysis/review/retrospective look at his songs in the A-Z format, I came across "Big Sister's Clothes" which I also heard again while listening to and recording some live tapes. (*To trade with me! Ed.*) Here's a tidbit of info for you.

I recall vividly getting backstage (with others) at Maysfield Leisure Centre, Belfast, after EC's concert on June 3, 1983. A guy beside me asked him right out directly while he signed an autograph: "Elvis, just WHO is 'Big Sister's Clothes' about?". Elvis handed back the autograph and looked at the guy with a mischievous smile, and replied: "Margaret Thatcher!". And this was a full six years before "Tramp the Dirt Down." There you go!

Gordon Irwin, Newtownabbey,
NORTHERN IRELAND

'BOUT THIS 'N' THAT

Many fans would have been glad to see some shows of the Costello & Nieve Italian tour. If the opportunity arises, please ask Elvis why we were informed only two or three weeks before the tour began!

Once again, congratulations to Dave Farr. His knowledge and understanding of EC's songs are amazing. I should add that the complete "Black Sails in the Sunset" is now only available on the *Out of Our Idiot* compilation.

As far as "You'll Never Be a Man" (*see On the Beat - BB15*) and "pass" / "last," to my mind: *Trust*: pass (1:05), pass (2:20), last (2:31), pass (2:43). *Costello & Nieve*: last.

Finally, congratulations to Tony Sacchetti on his great "Costello on British TV" article.

Olivier Ridolphi, Strassbourg, FRANCE

VACANT EXPRESSIONS

Thanks very much for issue 15 of *Beyond Belief*. As usual it was just what I needed to satisfy my Costello addiction. I particularly enjoyed reading Tony Sacchetti's British TV article, and I am lucky enough to have quite a few of these clips on video myself. Like Tony, I am also fond of the August 1980 performance on *Alright Now*. However, although I agree that the performance seems to have been fueled by a large alcohol intake, I have always put a different interpretation on the "cool instrumental break" which he mentions. If you take a close look at the audience, although they seem to be dancing wildly, they have what can only be described as vacant expressions to a man. Elvis can be seen gesturing to the band to play more and

more quietly, and, in my opinion, highlighting the fact that the crowd is making almost no noise at all. Elvis remarks that this is live TV, so they had better make some noise or nobody will believe it. All in all a highly memorable performance!

Mark Parsons, Chipping Sodbury,
ENGLAND

BINDER PLUGS

I have really been enjoying your magazine. Enclosed is my renewal check and I have also included the price of the binder. I really DO need one to keep my back issues! Keep up the good work!

Rob Johnston, Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Please send me one of the binders to hold my *Beyond Beliefs*. Thanks for offering this. I look forward to filling it with *BB*'s and getting another for the next seven years!

Gary Wise, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, USA

Well BB-readers, look no further. Here's how you can get yours! Ed.



BB-Binders

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

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Congratulations:

To readers Alison and Michael Munin on the birth of their daughter, Shaina Castro Munin on March 19.

Thanks for your help: Mitch Weinstein, Jesse Ornoz, Bill Brown, Orrin Anderson, Chris Forhan, Peter Gale, Clive Williams, Zenji Nagahata, Dave Weil, Jim Kelley, Bob Heinrich, James O'Keefe, Edward O'Connell, John Everingham, Rozanne Stevens, Richard Arthur, Steven Castan, Andy Anderson and Petera Alfredsson.



**Costello & Nieve
Italian
Tour
February
1998**

"After quite a bit of touring with this concept, I've discovered just how much two people can accomplish on stage. I can build the performance from a quiet starting point and eventually play really loud. Right now I prefer this way of playing to the way I used to with full-blast from the start, as it usually is when you play with a rock band. We recently tried this out in some Italian opera-houses, and it turned out fantastic." - Elvis Costello, *Bergens Arbeiderblad*, April 5

"NEVER BEFORE, NEVER AGAIN" proclaimed the promotional sticker on a boxed set of live EPs which emerged from the acclaimed 1996 Costello & Nieve US tour. Fans of this promising duo will be grateful that, not for the first time, the marketing men lied. Almost two years on from that debut tour an invitation to join the programme of non-classical concerts taking place in Genoa's Teatro Carlo Felice eventually expanded into a full two-week pilgrimage to some of Northern Italy's most beautiful opera houses.

*In view of Billboard's recent report that a Costello/Nieve album is on the agenda for the turn of the century, it was perhaps surprising that more new collaborative compositions by the pair were not unveiled during the tour. An adapted excerpt from Steve's opera Parasite titled "Unfailing Welcome to The Voice" did feature regularly in the set; the remainder of the repertoire comprised songs from all eras of the Costello catalogue, with a few familiar cover versions thrown into the mix for good measure. "Bright Blue Times," a newly composed song for television (see *On the Beat*) was also played in Cremona as was "Miss Mary," written in 1992 with Italian artist Zucchero.*

Although the tour arrangements exhibited a slight air of last minute hurry, with rehearsals and date changes apparently taking place right up to the opening night, great care was taken with the actual choice of theaters. Most were under 1,000 capacity and all were acoustically perfect. Even when not entirely full, as was the case on several evenings, they provided ideally intimate settings for the simple guitar and piano arrangements of the C & N experience . . .

February 3 - Perugia - Teatro Morlacchi

The Treasure of Elvis Costello: Twenty Years of Pop Jewels

By Paolo Russo (translation: Luca Furlani)

WELCOME TO THE ANCIENT COSTELLO INN, where a great musical fireplace warms the sensitive traveller's soul. Welcome to this place out of time, where notes and words outdo each other in the search for truth and beauty, sorrow and depth. Where pop, rock and jazz, blues and folk, Lieder and chamber atmospheres meet naturally, bound together by the voice and interpretative mastery of one of the most formidable living songwriters. It's easy for this curious and severe minstrel to capture the listener's heart: his irresistible voice, whose warm timbre enhances stories and emotions, a sweet guitar, and the top-quality pop support provided by Steve Nieve's magic piano. Both men meander respectfully through twenty years of songs rearranged with a care that imparts fresh beauty. Costello, as we know, is intelligent and sensitive, an unusually passionate wordsmith who makes no distinction between new and old, treating both as a single source from which he extracts jewels without age or commercial design.

Twenty-five songs, from "Almost Blue" to "Accidents Will Happen," from "The Long Honeymoon" to "Man Out of Time," from Bacharach's "I Just Don't Know What to Do With Myself" to "Invisible Man" - just to cite a few - follow one another during the two-hour concert (plus a two-hour rehearsal, just to prove Elvis' devotion to his work and his enormous respect for the audience); the songs call to mind the CD-box released by the duo during the US tour in 1996, the rarefied, sweet Brodsky Quartet experience and the touching memories of *Kojak Variety*. The 43-year-old artist is happy to lay himself bare before his audience; dressed in black and, as usual, hidden behind huge glasses he talks, he jokes, he offers himself with elegant generosity, and the stage becomes tale, theatre, life. "We still have some things to rehearse: the next concerts will be completely different," he confides quietly before dashing from the theatre. There is little doubt that whatever they might be, those concerts will be beautiful.

February 5 - Genoa - Opera Theater

Costello - 10 out of 10

By Giovanni Pompili

DURING 1998, THE RESTORED GENOA OPERA THEATRE, known as the Teatro Carlo Felice, will stage, for the first time, a number of carefully selected "rock" shows. That's why EC was invited here for this special show, booked long before the rest of

the tour. By 9:30pm he was on the stage, still with his coat on, coming in from a cold and windy winter night. Steve had on a smart grey jacket and sported a haircut which gave him the appearance of a famous conductor.

The duo opened with "Shot with His Own Gun" and "a song we were used to playing much louder..." ("Temptation"). Elvis then welcomed his public, excusing himself for his funny (but good!) Italian and launched, surprisingly, into "Talking in The Dark" played as a medley with "Poor Fractured Atlas." He seemed a little intimidated by his surroundings at first but the concert finally took off when he removed his jacket and gave us great versions of "Kid About It" and "The Long Honeymoon."



The crowd really warmed to these performances, encouraging EC to unveil a world premiere which, unfortunately, proved to be the only new song of the evening. "Unfailing Welcome to The Voice" is a nice Steve Nieve composition about a drunk in a theatre who sees the ghosts of his life and the theatre passing before his eyes. The song was reminiscent of some of *The Juliet Letters* and featured excellent work on the Bosoni grand piano by Steve, who temporarily left the stage during the applause.

"So Like Candy" concluded with EC singing "you're no good, you're no good..." before, alone on the big theatre stage, he treated us to very intimate versions of three songs, performed, he said, in the way he was used to composing and singing in his house at the beginning of his musical career, singing low so that no one else could listen, with only the light of a torch. In this poignant manner he sang "Gigi," "Alison" and, in almost complete darkness, "The Invisible Man!"

What followed was one of the highlights of the show as the lights came back and Steve returned to his piano seat to accompany an extremely powerful rendition of "God Give Me Strength." Elvis seemed surprised by the lengthy applause which greeted this song, pausing to talk about the 12 songs he had written with Bacharach - and promising to return to Italy, and Genoa, with Burt and Steve. After continuing the Bacharach theme



with "I Just Don't Know What to Do With Myself" (which he had recorded on the Stiff tour in 1977) Elvis gave a forceful interpretation of "Man Out of Time."

It seemed to be developing into a big *Imperial Bedroom* night, but the best was still to come. The first encore section was really stunning, probably the highlight of the evening. "Almost Blue" (yes, *Imperial Bedroom* again!) and "My Funny Valentine" with Steve doing some great work in the background as Elvis concentrated on the words and singing. Needless to say it produced a standing ovation.

"God's Comic" is an excellent song for an English language crowd, but it loses impact before a European audience. The second encore included an average "The Birds Will Still Be Singing" followed by "All This Useless Beauty" with just one refrain sung in Italian (I'm wondering why?). At this point, Elvis proudly revealed a Sampdoria football shirt with "Costello 10" written on the back. He told us it was a personal gift from Mantovani, the president of the team. There was some good-natured jeering at this point from the many fans of Sampdoria's arch-rivals Genoa present!

Then it was the time of "Accidents" which I always appreciate and, to close the show, a great "Couldn't Call It Unexpected No. 4" sung away from the microphone. It concluded a really excellent concert - one of his best ever in Italy - and left me looking forward to the final night of the tour in Milan on the 16th.

Genoa Set List:

SHOT WITH HIS OWN GUN
 TEMPTATION
 TALKING IN THE DARK
 POOR FRACTURED ATLAS
 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
 ALMOST BLUE
 MY FUNNY VALENTINE
 GOD'S COMIC
 THE BIRDS WILL STILL BE SINGING
 ALL THIS USELESS BEAUTY
 ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN
 COULDN'T CALL IT UNEXPECTED NO.4

February 6 - Aosta - Teatro Giacosa

February 7 - Florence - Teatro Verdi

Sorry, but no reports from Aosta or Florence.

February 9 - Turin - Teatro Verdi

Turin Set List:

SHOT WITH HIS OWN GUN
 TEMPTATION
 TALKING IN THE DARK
 POOR FRACTURED ATLAS
 STILL TOO SOON TO KNOW
 THE LONG HONEYMOON
 UNFAILING WELCOME TO THE VOICE
 THE OTHER END OF THE TELESCOPE
 ALISON
 GIGI
 INVISIBLE MAN
 I WANT YOU
 GOD GIVE ME STRENGTH
 LONDON'S BRILLIANT PARADE
 WATCH YOUR STEP
 SHIPBUILDING
 VERONICA
 DEEP DARK TRUTHFUL MIRROR
 ALMOST BLUE
 MY FUNNY VALENTINE
 GOD'S COMIC
 THE BIRDS WILL STILL BE SINGING
 ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN
 ALL THIS USELESS BEAUTY
 SHALLOW GRAVE
 WATCHING THE DETECTIVES
 COULDN'T CALL IT UNEXPECTED NO.4

February 10 - Rome - Santa Cecilia

The Day I Met Elvis Costello

By Simone Cecchetti (trans: Aline Marchi)
In the Beginning

IT ALL STARTED WHEN I FOUND OUT THAT ELVIS COSTELLO was going to be touring in Italy with his Attractions keyboard player Steve Nieve. The itinerary featured many of the country's most beautiful theatres, including a scheduled visit to Rome. On learning this, I suspected that EC might possibly make an appearance on the Italian TV program *Help* since the host, Red Ronnie, had already had him as a guest on another occasion. I decided to send an E-mail to the show, which is filmed in Bologna, hoping to take part in the event (you never know your luck!). In the meantime I bought two tickets (2nd row - 2 meters from EC!) for the concert

at the Vatican theatre's Santa Cecilia Auditorium, still hoping to hear from my friend Red. The day before the concert I discovered that my computer hadn't been working properly and that my E-mail had been blocked. On the morning of the concert I received a phone call from a very nice lady who said "Ciao! Is this Simone? Tomorrow Elvis Costello will be appearing on *Help*, would you like to attend the show? We sent you several e-mails but we never received an answer from you!" Of all the days my #@*# computer had to break down it had to happen when they were trying to reach me! Luckily I had included my phone number in my message. "OF COURSE!" I responded...

The Night of The Concert

The night of the concert was a spectacular event that I will never forget. The atmosphere in the theatre was unbelievable. The only sound to be heard was Elvis's magical voice, his guitar and the very talented Steve Nieve on piano. The concert began with "Shot With His Own Gun" followed by "Temptation," "Poor Fractured Atlas," "Still too Soon to Know," "Long Honeymoon," "Talking in The Dark," "O' Mistress Mine" and "Little Atoms." After this last song, Elvis remains alone on stage, requesting that the house lights be turned down. He sits in a chair, the only light in the theatre now coming from an electric torch by his feet. "It's just like U2's *Popmart* or *Zooropa* tours, or the lasers of Pink Floyd and the Rolling Stones" he tells us. "What would you like me to sing?" A voice from one of the back rows yells "Alison" . . . and so it was. The second song in the dark was "The Invisible Man." Then Steve comes back, the lights go on, and they resume with "Accidents Will Happen," followed by "You Little Fool," a great rendition of "Almost Blue," "Veronica" (different to the recorded version but just as wonderful), "Deep Dark Truthful Mirror," "Shipbuilding," "All This Useless Beauty" (with slightly distorted semi-acoustic guitar), "Shallow Grave" and "Watching the Detectives." The grand finale . . . EC walks away from the microphone, approaches the audience and sings (without the mike) "Couldn't Call It Unexpected No.4" after which there follows a standing ovation!

The Meeting

The morning after the concert I left for the 300-mile trip to Bologna with my friend, the singer in my band. We stopped for gas in Rome and then set off to see Red Ronnie! All of a sudden the car broke down in the middle of the road! It's 9am and we have to be in Bologna by 3pm! We'll never make it! We called a mechanic who quickly fixed my car.

By now it was 11:30. We raced like hell and made it to Florence in two and a half hours, finally reaching Bologna at 3:30! We reached the TV studio a little late - and very tired and hungry! As soon as we arrived a very nice man made us sign some papers and asked that we join the other people in the line. In the meantime I can hear EC inside the studio rehearsing for his mini-show. As I stand outside, listening in frustration, I suddenly hear a girl's voice calling out "Simone Cecchetti? Who is Simone Cecchetti?" "Here I am!" I shout and she ushers us past the rest of the queue and into the studio. Great! We pass through a corridor and then, like magic, we are inside the studio! I see Monica, the person I sent my E-mail message to. "How was the concert last night?" she asks. "If you like, go sit in the front and watch the rehearsal." There were only 7-8 people watching EC (wearing the latest style sunglasses) and Steve. While they were practising they were joking around, watching the monitor and running through "My Funny Valentine." Five minutes later the rehearsal was over and I nervously walked up to Elvis with pen in hand and my *Brutal Youth* songbook. "Mr. Costello?" I said in a very low voice. "Yes?" came the reply. "Congratulations on yesterday's show in Rome." He thanked me and, with a big smile on his face, very kindly autographed the book. Then people started coming into the studio and we took our seats in the front row. The show lasted for around half an hour, featuring an interview and three songs. I didn't have the courage to speak up when questions from the audience were invited during the show. At the end I walked over to Red Ronnie and thanked him. "I didn't think you'd make it here in time," he said. "If I'd known you were here I would have introduced you to Elvis... you could have asked him some questions during the show..." If only I had arrived earlier! Maybe I'll have better luck with computers and cars next time...

Rome Set List:

SHOT WITH HIS OWN GUN
 TEMPTATION
 POOR FRACTURED ATLAS
 STILL TOO SOON TO KNOW
 LONG HONEYMOON
 TALKING IN THE DARK
 O' MISTRESS MINE
 LITTLE ATOMS
 ALISON
 THE INVISIBLE MAN
 ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN
 YOU LITTLE FOOL
 ALMOST BLUE
 VERONICA
 DEEP DARK TRUTHFUL MIRROR
 SHIPBUILDING
 ALL THIS USELESS BEAUTY

SHALLOW GRAVE
 WATCHING THE DETECTIVES
 COULDN'T CALL IT UNEXPECTED NO.4

February 11 - Modena - Teatro Storchi

Modena Set List:

JUST A MEMORY
 TEMPTATION
 TALKING IN THE DARK
 POOR FRACTURED ATLAS
 STILL TOO SOON TO KNOW
 THE LONG HONEYMOON
 O' MISTRESS MINE
 THE OTHER END OF THE TELESCOPE
 KING OF THIEVES
 ALISON
 INVISIBLE MAN
 SO LIKE CANDY
 GOD GIVE ME STRENGTH
 I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF
 MOUTH ALMIGHTY
 VERONICA
 SHIPBUILDING
 DEEP DARK TRUTHFUL MIRROR
 ALMOST BLUE
 MY FUNNY VALENTINE
 GOD'S COMIC
 THE BIRDS WILL STILL BE SINGING
 ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN
 ALL THIS USELESS BEAUTY
 SHALLOW GRAVE
 WATCHING THE DETECTIVES
 COULDN'T CALL IT UNEXPECTED NO.4

February 14 - Venice - Teatro Goldoni

Valentine's Day in Venice

By Luca Furlani

EVERY DAY CAN BE A SPECIAL DAY if you are in Venice. People know Venice as the city of the Carnival and as a romantic place. Well, today is Valentine's Day and the Carnival has just begun. It wasn't an accident. It wasn't a mystery. Elvis Costello has decided to play in Venice today.

The Goldoni Theatre is full of curious people waiting with impatience, many of them British; the stage is almost empty: a piano, two guitars, a chair, some microphones and speakers. You can imagine the style of the show from these particulars. In fact, all the songs have been rearranged, so forget the orchestrations you're used to finding on, say, *Spike* or *Punch the Clock*: the Man sings all his songs tonight with an acoustic guitar, accompanied only by Steve Nieve's piano.

The concert begins at 21.00. Elvis and Steve enter while the audience welcomes them with warm applause. The first song is "Shot With His Own Gun," very well played by Steve. But the surprises start with the next songs: "Temptation" and "Talking in the Dark" are slow and quiet, just as many other songs will be tonight. These pieces seem born again, not suffering time's injury.

During the central part of the show the lights in the theatre are switched off and Elvis is alone on the stage, sitting with his guitar on a chair ("The expensive equipment") lighted

only by an electric torch between his feet. He sings "Alison" as we have never heard it before, then "Clown Strike" and "Invisible Man," playing guitar with one hand and moving the torch with the other. (Elvis switched off even the torch while singing "Now I'm the invisible man . . .").

Elvis talks to the audience very often, mixing English and Italian ("I was in Florence four years ago to learn Italian: my teacher would be crying now . . ."). He's ironic and loveable. People applaud the beloved entertainer. Costello surprises us with an excellent interpretation of "My Funny Valentine" ("A song we have to play today") and "God Give Me Strength," announcing the upcoming Bacharach album.

Steve is particularly superb playing "Shipbuilding," "Deep Dark Truthful Mirror," and "Almost Blue," and he's the co-author of "Unfailing Welcome to The Voice."

The first encore includes "All This Useless Beauty" (Elvis sings the chorus in Italian, just as he did during the May 1, 1996 concert in Rome), "Accidents Will Happen" and a touching version of "Shipbuilding." Acclaimed by long applause, Elvis and Steve come back on the stage. Now Elvis has his green Gibson guitar in his hands, ready to play the involving "Shallow Grave" and "Watching the Detectives." But the unexpected part of the show is beginning now. "I want to see you in your eyes, I want to know you, for the next time we will meet." So Elvis stands on the edge of the stage, right in front of the people and starts singing - without microphone - "Couldn't Call it Unexpected No. 4." The audience rewards them with an ovation, many shake their hands and someone even gets an autograph.

I've noticed that Elvis has selected many songs from the albums *Spike* and *Mighty Like a Rose*. These works were much-discussed when they were released, some critics and some fans lamenting the absence of the true Costello of *This Year's Model* and *Get Happy!!* Elvis himself said in a *Q* magazine interview: "They were experimental albums, and experiments don't always work," but now these songs are here again. Completely different from the original versions, they now sound new and classical (in other words: out of time). It's as if Elvis wanted to revisit this part of his career in a form of artistic revenge. The audiences and newspapers have been enthusiastic about the Italian tour, talking in terms of "jewels of pop" and writing about "artistic maturity." Everyone who attended these concerts knows what a unique experience they have had.

Venice Set List:

SHOT WITH HIS OWN GUN
TEMPTATION
TALKING IN THE DARK
POOR FRACTURED ATLAS
STILL TOO SOON TO KNOW
THE LONG HONEYMOON
UNFAILING WELCOME TO THE VOICE
THE OTHER END OF THE TELESCOPE
YOU LITTLE FOOL
ALISON
CLOWN STRIKE
INVISIBLE MAN
SO LIKE CANDY
I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF
GOD GIVE ME THE STRENGTH
O' MISTRESS MINE
SULKY GIRL
VERONICA
DEEP DARK TRUTHFUL MIRROR
ALMOST BLUE
MY FUNNY VALENTINE
GOD'S COMIC
THE BIRDS WILL STILL BE SINGING
KID ABOUT IT
ALL THIS USELESS BEAUTY
ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN
SHIPBUILDING
SHALLOW GRAVE
WATCHING THE DETECTIVES
COULDN'T CALL IT UNEXPECTED NO.4

February 15 - Cremona - Teatro Ponchielli

Cremona Set List:

ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN
NEW LACE SLEEVES
TALKING IN THE DARK
POOR FRACTURED ATLAS
STILL TOO SOON TO KNOW
THE LONG HONEYMOON
PASSIONATE FIGHT
LITTLE PALACES
BRIGHT BLUE TIMES
ALL THE RAGE
ALISON
MISS MARY
GOD GIVE ME STRENGTH
I'LL WEAR IT PROUDLY
VERONICA
SHIPBUILDING
LONDON'S BRILLIANT PARADE
ALMOST BLUE
DEEP DARK TRUTHFUL MIRROR
MAN OUT OF TIME
ALL THIS USELESS BEAUTY
SHALLOW GRAVE
WATCHING THE DETECTIVES
COULDN'T CALL IT UNEXPECTED NO. 4

February 16 - Milan - Teatro Ponchielli

An Electrifying Night

By Giovanni Pompili

THE FINAL NIGHT OF THE TOUR provoked much discussion in the front rows about the tour so far, and about which songs Elvis would select for the last show. It seemed he had been changing about 4-5 songs each night. The longest show (and the best-attended too) was Turin with its 28 songs including "Detectives" but the most intriguing surprise was "Miss Mary" - a song written a few years ago with Italian rockstar Zucchero - played at the acoustically perfect little Teatro Ponchielli

in Cremona.

In Milano, the theatre was two-thirds full, with the empty seats possibly due to the Midge Ure show taking place in the city on the same night. The show began with "Why Can't a Man?" and the crowd demonstrated early on that they knew the last Costello album well. It was a surprising choice because it had seemed that Elvis was keeping the beginning and the end of his set very similar during the tour, with most of the changes in the middle. At first I was hopeful of a radically revised set list, but Elvis continued with the same songs I had heard in Genova.

"The Long Honeymoon" was dedicated to women (Cait?) who didn't know where their husband was at that moment and were waiting near the phone for a call. He said that the night before, in Cremona a mobile phone rang after this speech (in reality it seems the phone rang at the end of "Almost Blue" and Elvis was very disturbed - even if he minimised the fact in the afternoon during an interview with Milan's Radio Popolare.)

Sadly, some technical problems arose during the "Bacharach" section ("God Give Me Strength" and "I Just Don't Know...") with unwanted noises from the amps forcing Elvis and Steve to stop playing. During this enforced break a tango was played over the PA and Elvis wandered back onto the stage, dancing and talking to the first rows. The concert resumed, naturally, with a beautiful "Accidents Will Happen" (followed by two unexpected songs: "Mouth Almighty" and "I'll Wear It Proudly") but, unfortunately, the night's technical difficulties were not over.

A roar from the public acclaimed the first notes of "ATUB" and the applause almost drowned the song when Elvis sang in Italian "Cosa potremo fare con tutta questa, con tutta questa bellezza inutile." It seemed the show might now be at an end but Elvis now seemed really excited and motioned to Steve to put his hands on the piano before delivering a superb vocal rendition of "Shipbuilding." He then walked off stage, only to return with his electric guitar (not the usual Fender) and launch into "Shallow Grave." As he delivered the opening line, however, a blue flash of electricity shot out of his microphone, forcing a visibly shocked Elvis to step back and sing the rest of the song almost out of range of the offending piece of equipment.

Afterwards, he made some comment about it being "an electrifying night" and, after a change of microphones, said he was going to give us something completely different: the Shakespeare of "O' Mistress Mine." Then it was time for a big surprise: "From a Whisper



to a Scream," a really rare live number these days. This song really encapsulated the whole evening with its contrasting aggressive and gentle sections. The show closed with the customary "Couldn't Call It Unexpected No. 4" sung without a microphone ("so I'm sure I won't die..."). Afterwards Elvis came out on the stage to shake our hands and sign tickets and photos. He was very friendly, even in the cold night of Milan outside the theatre, and I went home pondering how happy I am to be an Elvis nut.

Milan Set List:

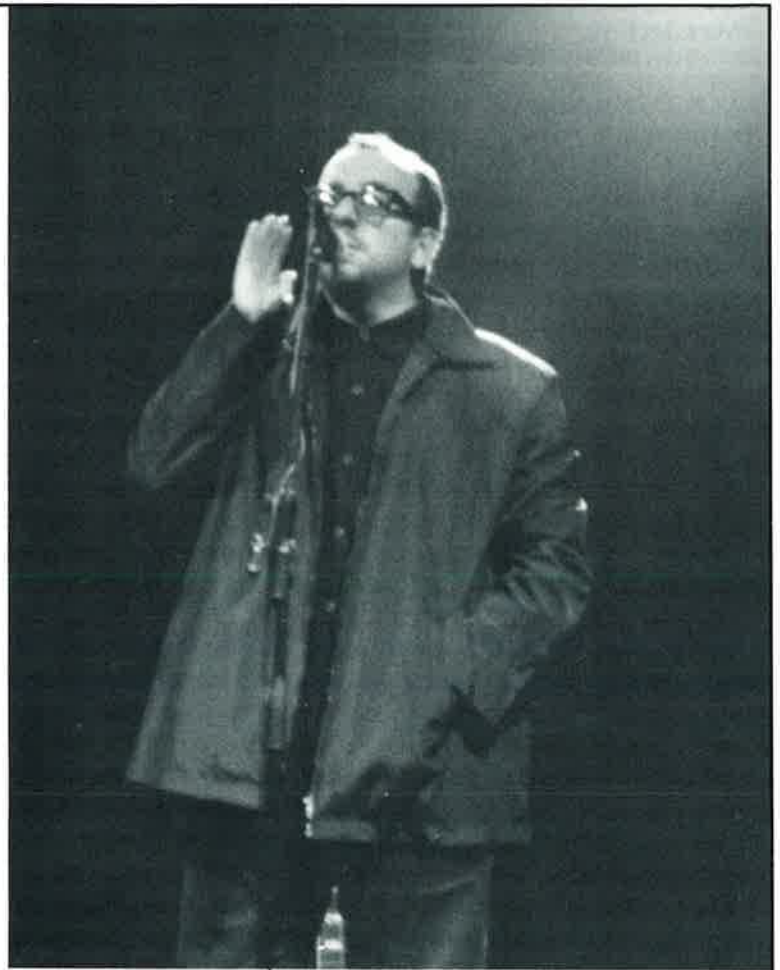
WHY CAN'T A MAN STAND ALONE?
TEMPTATION
TALKING IN THE DARK
POOR FRACTURED ATLAS
STILL TOO SOON TO KNOW
THE LONG HONEYMOON
UNFAILING WELCOME TO THE VOICE
LITTLE PALACES
ALISON
GIGI
I WANT YOU
GOD GIVE ME STRENGTH
I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF
ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN
MOUTH ALMIGHTY
I'LL WEAR IT PROUDLY
VERONICA
DEEP DARK TRUTHFUL MIRROR
ALMOST BLUE
MY FUNNY VALENTINE
GOD'S COMIC
THE BIRDS WILL STILL BE SINGING
MAN OUT OF TIME
ALL THIS USELESS BEAUTY
SHIPBUILDING
SHALLOW GRAVE
O' MISTRESS MINE
FROM A WHISPER TO A SCREAM
COULDN'T CALL IT UNEXPECTED No.4

Thanks to all those who contributed this report including Simone Cechetti for the photos which were taken in Rome.

FLYING PIGS, WHO NEEDS THEM?

ELVIS COSTELLO & STEVE NIEVE

Voss Idrettshall, Norway April 5th, 1998
by Sverre Ronny Saetrum



STROLLING ON STAGE AT PRECISELY 7pm to a packed auditorium and the pre-taped sound of some "light" jazz doodling is Mr. Elvis Costello, looking uncannily like another EC (Eric Clapton) in his shorn-hair, scraggy beard, hip-baggy jacket and horn-rims with yellow-tinted glasses. With Steve Nieve placed at the grand piano it is show time and "Why Can't a Man Stand Alone" is followed by a brief: "Good evening, Voss, this is an old song that we played fast when we were young and ugly, but this is how we think of it now," and it's "Temptation."

Strapping on his guitar, we were treated to a positively fierce version of "Talking in the Dark," followed by a moving "Poor Fractured Atlas." Then an awesome "Red Shoes" which apparently the audience recognized and cheered wildly at and sang along to. Quieting down a bit it's "Still Too Soon to Know" and then the Nieve & Costello co-written "Passionate Fight," introduced by Elvis telling us the story-line, then he's stalking the stage, "wearing out the carpet," as it was. Elvis is doing those dramatic, and hilariously funny opera-gestures while singing it, and afterwards he informs us that he and Steve recently did a tour of Italian opera-houses; "As you can see, we've practiced a lot . . ."

Well, it sure brings a whole new dimension to the term "Dramatic pop-ballads," but whether it's suitable for kicking Celine Dion's ass, I can't really say . . . What's most striking to me at this moment is first of all, what great shape his voice is in. The man's singing just keeps getting better and better. Sitting in the front-row (in the . . . ahem . . . "Press-section") it's also quite amusing to watch his mimicry and the way he "works" the audience. Oh, and lest I forget, the songs, God, those songs . . . Great versions of both "The Long Honeymoon" and "The Other End of the Telescope" follow. Then on to a totally heart wrenching "Little Palaces" at which the place is so still you could hear a needle drop, followed by a roaring applause.

Steve leaves for a while and Elvis sits down for a rendition of "So Like Candy" that is better than I have ever heard. I actually

start to like the song, which is new to me, it's never been one of my faves. Then he asked for all the lights to be dimmed in the house and on stage. He says "the Rolling Stones have inflatable women, Pink Floyd most fittingly have inflatable pigs, and U2 have this McDonald arch, and beautiful it is, too. I, on the other hand . . . have

THIS," at which he turns on a little torchlight. He tells us the story of when he started writing songs, he used to go to the darkest spot in the house and sit down and play. Then he does "Alison" in such a quiet and subdued way he actually manages to breathe new life into a song that I thought had been "done to death." It is an extremely touching moment, and when it's over the audience duly responds by cheering, stamping their feet and clapping wildly.

He goes on to "Radio Sweetheart" and incorporates "Jackie Wilson Said," urging the audience to sing along in the chorus and the packed auditorium gladly sings "Do do do do do do do do do . . ." like there was no tomorrow. The applause nearly brought the house down. I kid you not! This reaction to just one man and his guitar? Speaks volumes about Elvis' artistic abilities, doesn't it? Flying pigs, who needs them?

Steve is back at the Steinway, and we're treated to a great rendition of "God Give Me Strength." By now, the audience seems to be only so much putty in his hands, and the response is a thunderous applause and "Yeeshaws." Elvis is thanking the audience for our response by the following quip: "Burt and I will return later on with 24 new songs like

that one . . ." It's "Veronica" and for me it is something of a let down compared to the ones he has done so far, but it is quickly followed by another awesome rendition of an old "gem," this time "Shipbuilding."

ENCORE NO. 1 Elvis and Steve both bid the audience adieu, but we won't hear of that, of course. After some cheering, clapping and feet-stomping by the 1,500 assembled, they returned with a really renewed and fresh "Everyday I Write the Book," then straight into "Accidents Will Happen." At the end, when he goes "I know . . . I know . . . I know . . ." he suddenly incorporates the first verse of "24 Hours From Tulsa," going "Dearest darling, I have to write to say that I won't be home . . . ever again." Then it's the intro to "All This Useless Beauty," about the woman in the art-gallery, looking at all this great art and then to her "late 20th. century lover . . ." Tonight's rendition of it brings yet another storming applause, not least on account of EC's impeccable Italian, I guess . . . The first encore ends with "Deep, Dark Truthful Mirror" and again they say thanks and goodnight . . .

ENCORE NO. 2 And again the audience, by now being worked into a frenzy by our boy, will simply not hear of it. Elvis and Steve

returned with versions of "Almost Blue" and "My Funny Valentine," the latter sung in such a way as to send shivers down our spines. Truly wonderful. Then it's "God's Comic," and EC's variety of facial expressions would make Marcel Marceau green with envy. He changes "Paradise's endless shores" into "endless fjords" to fit the occasion, and the audience laps it up and hoot and holler. Again, it is sing-a-long time and Elvis beckons us all with "As you Norwegians are such cheerful people, I thought you'd like to join me in the chorus." When they all learn what the chorus is ("Now, I'm dead, now I'm dead" and "I was scared, I was scared . . .") they hoot and holler some more. Now, don't ever let me hear you say we don't have some irony up here!

When they returned at the start of the second encore, I put a note on stage with a request for my all-time fave "I'll Wear it Proudly," and at the end of "God's Comic" he picks it up, tells us he has had a request and plays a beautiful rendition of it. Then it is goodnight Voss once more, but the audience simply refuses to leave the place and let him go. After awhile they both reappear, laughing, and shaking their heads in disbelief. Well, I guess they didn't think Norwegians had it in us . . . how wrong they were!

ENCORE NO. 3 Strapping on an electric Gibson it's a mean "Shallow Grave," the crowd swaying, singing and cheering him along. Then it's "Watching the Detectives," complete with the theme-song for British TV crime series *Bergerac*, and alas, it IS getting very near the end. Elvis tells us that he really has to go, because he's got a train to catch "to Leningrad." Now, the first part is true, 'cause post-show he pops up at the local train-station and both he, Cait and Steve actually board the same train as me, but it's not headed for Leningrad, only for Oslo . . .

Shutting down his mike and turning on all the lights ("so that we can see who you are and recognize you next time we come around"), he ended with a "non-amplified" and impossibly beautiful "Couldn't Call It Unexpected No.4." Walking from one end of the stage to the other he literally sang his heart out, everyone could hear him perfectly, and when he ended with a deep bow the crowd went bananas. At the very end Elvis and Steve stood centre-stage hand in hand and waved to the crowd. They received one red rose each from the arrangers, and then it was all over . . . Oh, and before leaving the building I sneaked on-stage and nicked the set-list . . . *(Which can be found in bold throughout SRV's review Ed.)*

**ELVIS COSTELLO
PRESS CONFERENCE
VOSS IDRETTSHALL, NORWAY
APRIL 5 4:00pm**

Elvis arrived with a cheerful "Hello" to the 8-10 journalists present. The arranger informed us that we had 30 minutes at our disposal, and then it was a go ahead.

COLLABORATIONS: The first question concerned the array of other artists and composers Elvis has worked with (Brodsbies and Macca were mentioned) and the question was whether this was an initial ambition of his when he started out. Elvis answered no, and that it had been a case of one thing leading to another. He said that when he did start his career he was not sure he was going to last for three weeks, and that he would not have been musically "equipped" at that time to work with these artists and musicians.

He went on to say that he approaches every new collaboration in the exact same manner; to get the best out of his collaborators and himself. There is no difference whether it is Paul McCartney, The Brodsky Quartet or Burt Bacharach.

BACHARACH & COSTELLO: Elvis seems very intent to talk about this collaboration, and on several occasions during the conference he expressed both gratitude and pride to be working with Burt. When asked for details about the album he said that it is mostly new songs, though they might include a couple of old EC or BB songs. He would not say which songs he has in mind, but as for the Bacharach songs, it would definitely be slightly more "obscure ones," because the definitive versions of his best known songs have already been recorded, and Elvis sees no point in trying to remake them.

Elvis and Burt will have a meeting in New York the day after the tribute concert, when they will discuss future plans. Among the things they will discuss is what kind of instrumentation there is going to be on the record. He said it is most likely that they will be touring behind the album in the autumn. Elvis certainly wants to and there will be a TV special based on the recording of the album. As for the songs themselves, Elvis said they are some of the best he has ever written, and that the collaboration with BB changed from song to song. On some songs Elvis has only written the lyrics, while on others it has been a 50/50 input.

He said he is really looking forward to doing the BB-tribute in New York City and he was proud and honored to be asked to do two "EC & BB songs," while all the other artists will be doing BB & Hal David songs. Elvis

will sing "GGMS" and a brand new one from the forthcoming album.

ELVIS & STEVE NIEVE: There are definite plans to write more with Steve Nieve. They actually wrote a song in Stockholm the day before arriving in Norway. But Steve is also very occupied with his own opera, and this is a long-term and time-consuming project.

OTHER FUTURE PROJECTS: Elvis says he has had to decline a couple of offers to do collaborations; "because I'm not a superhuman, you know." The projects he does get involved in usually take a lot of time to plan, develop, record, tour, etc., and he'd rather do them properly than just co-write some "slick, crossover song," like say: "Oh, I think I'll do some Gershwin songs for my new album, then all the Gershwin fans will buy it".

He says that a choral-piece is put on the shelf for the time being, but he plans to return to this in a year or two.

There is definitely another EC & Brodsky Quartet collaboration in the cards, and they have started working on it, but it is still in the planning stage. Apparently, Michael Thomas has put some of the Spanish poet Lorca's poems to music, which they have been doing at concerts, and these will probably be included on the album. What is certain is that it will not be another "concept album" like TJJ. Rather, it will be separate songs with no common thread. They have also been discussing the possibility of involving some other soloists, though when asked directly, EC denied that they are asking Anne Sophie von Otter to participate. He says that she is very much an artist in her own right, and that he cannot very well ask her to be a "guest vocalist" on one of his projects. He went on to say that he wrote the song-cycle "Three distracted women" for her, and he would love it if she decides to record them, but it is not something he is going to press her into doing, it has to be her own decision.

NEW SOLO ALBUM: When asked if he is going to do another rock album in the future, he says no, and that he feels this side of him has been "exhausted." He really cannot envision himself going back to the traditional rock band formula again. He said that the last Attractions tour was "Erratic to say the least," and that they will not be reforming ever again. On the other hand, he does have plans to do another "Loud solo album," and instead of doing the traditional rock thing, he wants to explore the possibilities of making music with machines. It is not going to be techno-music, because he feels that techno does not use the full potential electronic music has to offer. He

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

One Amazing Night

ELVIS JOINS TV TRIBUTE TO BURT BACHARACH



ballroom was full of TNT guests and the press. Although Ticketmaster sold out in a matter of minutes, the usual cadre of Costello fans found themselves in possession of the hottest ticket in town. The rest of the world only had to wait a week as TNT aired the show the following Wednesday. Only Burt's instrumental medley of his early hits and Warwick's "A House is Not a Home" were cut from the broadcast.

The star-studded cast had a distinct lean to the young-at-heart. Outside of Wynonna and Luther Vandross (both singing superbly although both seemed a little out of place) and New Wave remnants, Costello and Hynde, the roster was packed with youth (Ben Folds Five, Barenaked Ladies, All Saints and Ms. Crow). For variety's sake, Mike "Austin Powers" Myers was on hand for some topnotch comic

relief and the team of George Duke and David Sanborn provided a touch of jazz. And as expected, the real star of the evening was the centerpiece of Mr. Bacharach's fine career, the lovely and still-superb Ms. Dionne Warwick. Outside of Costello's set, this reviewer was most pleasantly surprised by Crow's performance, most disappointed by Hynde's and the most thrilled by Folds'.

Costello made his entrance early in the evening and the new team were keen on telling the world about their upcoming collaborations. "We've now completed 11 or 12 songs together" said Burt, and the TV audience would also see a brief video clip of them composing their about-to-be premiered song together. After a warm greeting, they introduced the audience to one

of their newest songs titled "This House is Empty Now." Costello gave a chilling vocal on a fine song that some however may find just a little too derivative of the Bacharach/David mold.

Then, after telling the usual tale about working through answering and fax machines, Elvis sang his heart out on "God Give Me Strength," again cutting out the second verse as he did on the *Letterman* show, the duo's only other previous live performance.

Elvis would again appear on stage after Burt's lone vocal of the evening on "Alfie," as the entire cast lined up in tribute to Burt. Mike Myers even got EC to do one of his *Wayne's World* "We are not worthy" bows in tribute to the man of the evening.

After the show, Elvis made only a brief appearance at the after-show party at the China Club. However, he was there long enough to get his picture taken with supermodel Christie Brinkley which appeared in Friday's *New York Post* and later in *People* magazine (April 27 issue).

Mike Bodayle

Tony Bennett, Johnny Cash, George Jones and now Burt Bacharach. As Generation X (and the world-at-large) resurrect musical icons from their parents' generation, Elvis Costello has always found himself as part of the welcoming committee. And in the case of Burt Bacharach, he finds himself at the forefront as Burt's newest songwriting partner. So it was no surprise that EC would find himself as a featured guest in TNT's televised tribute to one of the 60s great pop songwriters (actually the musical half of a partnership with lyricist Hal David).

Elvis arrived in New York for a Tuesday afternoon rehearsal, perhaps a bit weary from Sunday's show in Norway with Steve Nieve. The artists arrived one by one in their limos to the Hammerstein Ballroom in the heart of midtown Manhattan for a full day of rehearsals. As he scooted out into his waiting car along with his wife, EC quickly responded to a few fans that he would be performing two songs during Wednesday's show (April 8).

Access to fans was limited as the 2,500 seat

Sheryl Crow - One Less Bell to Answer
All Saints - Always Something There to Remind Me
Burt Bacharach & Orchestra - Magic Moments / The Story of My Life / The Blob / Tower of Strength (medley)
Elvis Costello - This House is Empty Now
Elvis Costello - God Give Me Strength
Chrissie Hynde - Baby It's You / Message to Michael (medley)
Mike Myers - What's New Pussycat?
Wynonna - Anyone Who Had a Heart
Ben Folds Five - Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head
Barenaked Ladies - Close to You
Luther Vandross - Windows of the World / What the World Needs Now (medley)
David Sanborn / George Duke - Wives and Lovers
Dionne Warwick - Walk on By / Say a Little Prayer / Do you Know the Way to San Jose? (medley)
Dionne Warwick - A House is Not a Home
Burt Bacharach - Alfie

It was...

20 YEARS AGO

Part 4: April to June 1978

today...



Mark Perry's latest instalment of our retrospective series opens with *Elvis & The Attractions* - surprise, surprise! - out on the road, halfway through a UK tour in support of their newest album "This Year's Model"...

April 1978

● 1st - Sports Centre, Bracknell. ● 2nd - Town Hall, Middlesbrough. ● 3rd - Tiffany's, Edinburgh. ● 4th - Satellite City, Glasgow. ● 5th - Top Rank, Sheffield. ● 6th - A new song, "Goon Squad," is included in the set at Rafters, Manchester. ● 7th - Session recording for Kid Jensen's Radio 1 show at the BBC Maida Vale Studios in London ("Lip Service," "You Belong to Me," "Pump It Up" & "The Beat"). Back in Manchester, disaster strikes backstage at Rafters when Bruce Thomas ("impersonating Marlon Brando" according to EC) injures himself demonstrating the "barroom method" of how to break a beer bottle. Eighteen stitches in his right hand mean he will play no further part in the tour. ● 9th - Nick Lowe is called up as replacement bassist at the Hemel Hempstead Pavilion and, in his honour, "Heart of The City" is added to the set. ● 11th - Lowe again fills in on bass at the Garden, Penzance but, since he is not certain he can escape other commitments, doubt remains over remaining dates. Audiences are warned to expect future shows "of an experimental nature" and offered a refund if they don't want to take the risk... ● 12th - A memorable night at the Guildhall, Portsmouth where, after waiting in vain for Lowe to arrive from London, EC is forced to take the stage an hour late with his electric guitar for a 6-song solo set (including first public performances of "Big Boys" & "Green Shirt"). As the backstage panic mounts, Steve & Pete appear, continuing the show with five songs as a bassless trio before Nick finally turns up. "Those present were aware that they were attending something special," writes Brian Hinton 20 years later. "The sheer intensity of Elvis's solo set is still burned into my soul." Barbara Charone reports on scenes of audience mayhem: "Down front the kids acted like they were watching Status Quo, or at least a football match, heaving tiers of chairs in the direction of the security guards while cheering their hero on. Elvis just looked at the chairs, and proceeded to play." ● 13th - Lowe

manages to escape prior engagements just in time to save a threatened two-night stand at Barbarellas, Birmingham. ● 14th - Barbarellas, Birmingham. ● 15th - First of two nights at the legendary Roundhouse, London opens with another brief EC solo set. Nick Lowe again plays bass (with Phil Lynott taking over for the "Mystery Dance" encore) and there is a guest appearance by Martin Belmont. "Probably not the best gig Elvis and The Attractions have ever played," notes Neil Peters, "but, considering the circumstances, still worthy of the highest praise and good enough to make monkeys of most other bands." ● 16th - Closing night of the tour at the Roundhouse features another unusual opening as EC performs "Stranger in The House" solo before being joined by Steve Nieve to play two previously-unheard songs destined for greater things: "Accidents Will Happen" and "Oliver's Army." The finale is a rousing "Pump It Up" with Belmont again guesting on guitar. ● 17th to 20th - Kid Jensen's BBC Radio 1 show airs the session tracks recorded earlier in the month. ● With *My Aim Is True* having passed the 300,000 sales mark and *This Year's Model* heading for the *Billboard* Top 40 (it will peak at no.30 in May) EC & The A's fly out for a 7-week North American tour supported by Mink DeVille and Nick Lowe/Rockpile (a CBS/Capitol orange vinyl promo 12" featuring a track by each artist commemorates the event). "I'm here to corrupt America's youth," claims EC, "but my visa will probably run out before I have a chance to do it..." There is a clear air of stakes having been raised, the itinerary revealing a shift away from the small clubs used on previous visits towards 2,000-3,000 capacity halls & theatres. Following some (enforced) experimentation during the British dates, the set list is stripped back to basics, although some newer material will be incorporated as the tour progresses. Pete Thomas recalls the band's openly provocative approach: "It was like, here we are! Wah-hey-hey! Bang-bang-bang-bang! Hammer through the set and then refuse to do encores. Then people would all riot. Proper job!" Jake Riviera: "We didn't do encores. We didn't do interviews. We just came, played the show and left your town." ● 19th - Barely

three days after completing the UK tour, a third US excursion begins at the State Theatre, Minneapolis, MN. With Bruce Thomas still recovering from injury, Clover's John Ciambiotti stands in on bass after just one day's rehearsal. ● 20th - "He finished in under an hour, before the audience was really ready to ease out of the frenzy," complains Charles Hayes of tonight's show in Madison, WI where Ciambotti again deputises. ● 21st - Sighs of relief all round as Bruce Thomas is finally fit to return to action at the Aragon Ballroom, Chicago, IL. ● 22nd - A crew from TV programme *20/20* boards the tour bus, attempting an interview with EC (by none other than Geraldo Rivera wearing some dazzling white flares!) and filming during both sets at the Royal Oak, Detroit, MI. ● 25th - Kleinhans Music Hall, Buffalo, NY. ● 27th - Landmark Theatre, Syracuse, NY. "Straight jacketed in a gabardine sportscoat and black shirt, running through the manual of arms with his guitar as he leaned over it to throttle the mike, dropping to his knees on 'You Belong to Me', Elvis was earning his money," notes critic Fred Schruers. ● 28th - As the tour bus heads across the border into Canada, "Pump It Up" (a third Top 30 hit, reaching no.24 in May) is issued as a single back in the UK. The B-side is "Big Tears," recorded with guest guitarist Mick Jones of The Clash during the *This Year's Model* sessions and later described by EC as "my favourite out-take by some distance." ● 29th - Two shows at the Massey Hall, Toronto. ● 30th - Theatre St. Denis, Montreal.

May 1978

● 2nd - EC & Nick do a brief interview at radio station WMMS ahead of their concert at the Music Hall, Cleveland, OH. ● With studio time booked for the Autumn, EC is still busy writing songs for his next album. "I didn't consciously say I'm going to reflect [experiences on the road] but you can only write what's in your head. And what was in my head was just a series of jumbled images filtered through travel, drink, drugs, whatever." Another new song, "Party Girl", becomes a regular part of the set. Nick Lowe: "He brought his guitar to my room and said 'I've got these couple of tunes - what do you think of this?' One was "Party Girl" and one was "Accidents Will Happen". I couldn't believe that in the midst of this mayhem that was going on - and it really was mayhem on those tours! - he could come up with two such wonderful, soulful songs like that. He just seemed to be getting better and better ..." ● 4th - The *20/20* camera crew are back on the

case, attending a WBCN radio interview and shooting more live footage at the **Orpheum Theatre, Boston, MA.** (Sadly, the planned EC feature is not broadcast.) "Let's see all of you up, you lazy sods," EC harangues the audience. "Too much education in Boston has made you go thick!" Meanwhile, Willy DeVille continues to badmouth Elvis in the press: "I can dance and he can't. I've got it all over him in street moves," he proclaims, oddly, to a local reporter. (DeVille has, it seems, taken exception to the young British upstart's cheeky appropriation of the name "Elvis". Simmering ill will between the pair will culminate in a pitched battle between their road crews.) ● 5th - At the **Capitol Theatre, Passaic, NJ,** Jay Sapouto witnesses EC "ever the poker face on stage, staring straight ahead at the audience, almost daring them to participate." ● 6th - Two sets at the **Palladium, New York City** where the addition of a second midnight show "by unpopular demand" takes combined ticket sales past the 6,700 mark, receipts of \$54,000 placing the evening 4th in *Billboard's* top box office listing for the week. ● 7th - **Leroy Theatre, Pawtucket, RI.** ● 9th - **Shaboo Inn, Willimantic, CT.** ● 10th - **Chrysler Theatre, Norfolk, VA.** ● Back in the UK, *Melody Maker* carries a lengthy appreciation of "the rise & rise of Elvis Costello" which ends with Allan Jones virtually begging for an interview. How Jake must have chuckled... ● 13th - **Seminole Jai-Alai Fronton, Orlando, FL.** ● 14th - A low point of the tour as only 900 attend the 3,300-capacity **Jai-Alai Fronton Arena, Tampa, FL.** ● 16th - **Egyptian Ballroom, Atlanta, GA.** ● 17th - **Wilson Theatre, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH.** ● 18th - **Circle Theatre, Indianapolis, IN.** ● 20th - **Uptown Theatre, Kansas City, MO.** ● 21st - An indication of things to come at **Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa, OK** where EC & The A's open their set with a Hank Williams medley ("Honky Tonkin" & "Honky Tonk Blues"). ● 22nd - EC guests with the Skunks at **Raul's, Austin, TX** performing a couple of his own songs, plus barroom standards such as "Mustang Sally", "Route 66", "I Saw Her Standing There" and Merle Haggard's "The Bottle Let Me Down". ● 23rd - **Municipal Auditorium, Austin, TX.** ● 24th - Interview on Austin radio station KZEN. **Music Hall, Houston, TX.** ● 25th - Still searching for that elusive hit record and the radio airplay required to shift album sales into the big league, Columbia issue "This Year's Girl" as a single in the USA. It fails to chart. ● 26th - Following his concert at the **Convention Center, Dallas, TX,** EC hops

across town to catch a Delbert McClinton gig at the **Old Warehouse,** joining him on stage for a couple of numbers. Relaxing at the bar afterwards, he tells writer Pete Oppel that he is considering an album of "more subdued material" to help counteract his one-dimensional "mad at the world" image. ● 27th - Before leaving Dallas, EC gives a rare interview to journalist Robert Hilburn (unpublished for several years) in which he reveals impatience with the headway made so far in the US: "I'm angry that we're not bigger than the Bee Gees and we're not on AM radio ..I don't see any point in doing this unless we do it all the way, and, at this point, we're still just touching a very small, elite market. I want the whole thing - everything - and I won't be satisfied with less." Then it's back on the tour bus heading for the **Glenn Miller Club, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO.** ● 28th - **Music Hall, Tucson, AZ.** ● 29th - **Symphony Hall, Phoenix, AZ.** ● 30th - An eventful final week in California opens with a gig at the **Civic Auditorium, Santa Monica, CA** where all 3,000 tickets have been snapped up within hours of going on sale. The set includes another new song titled "Busy Bodies" but is more notable for a curious incident, later described by EC as a "freakout". Writer Sylvie Simmons records that Elvis "brandished his instrument above his head ... followed that by kicking the amps in what looked like a fit of petulance and walking off stage without really finishing the show ... when he returned he looked very odd, picked up a stage light and looked like he was going to throw it at someone..." EC: "I just sort of cracked up on stage. A lot of things were going on that left me confused ... We were playing half-empty halls in a lot of cities and radio was ignoring the record. Then we got to LA and the Civic was full. It all looked too easy. I began to worry that it was all phoney - that people had just convinced themselves that we were the thing to see this week." ● 31st - **Civic Center, San Diego, CA.**

June 1978

● 1st - **Miliken High School, Long Beach, CA.** ● 2nd - **Robertson Gym, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA.** ● 4th - **Hollywood High School, Los Angeles, CA.** Recordings for the *Live At Hollywood High* EP are made at this show. "The anticipation was in the air," recalls model Bebe Buell. "Nick Lowe was great that night. Mink DeVille had that junky flamenco chic if you fancy being ravished by a matador. But when the lights first hit Elvis it was extremely provocative. They lit him from underneath, so

that he would look almost frightening - the shadow of his glasses was very pronounced. He was the most handsome thing I had ever seen." Later, Bebe wangles a backstage introduction - and that's how the trouble began ... ● 6th - In good humour despite an "awful hangover" EC visits San Francisco radio station KSAN to chat and play records by the likes of The Clash, Jerry Garcia ("he's got a beard and he's a bit fat, but nobody's perfect"), the Flying Burrito Bros. & David Johansen. Asked by one listener why he doesn't make a country music LP he points out that "some of the Columbia executives have very nervous dispositions..." **Center For The Performing Arts, San Jose, CA** ● 7th - US tour concludes with a scorching set at the **Winterland, San Francisco, CA,** broadcast live on KSAN. ● 12th - Back in England, a hefty cheque secures EC & The A's' services for the May Ball Festival at **Trinity College, Cambridge.** ● 13th - "Pump It Up" filmed at the BBC TV studios for screening two days later on *Top Of The Pops.* ● A week after returning from the US, it's back on the road for a first-ever tour of mainland Europe. Frantic 50-minute *This Year's Model*-based sets are the norm, with further road-testing of newer material as the tour progresses. ● 16th - In Belgium, there's an inauspicious start when tour support act Suicide provokes a riot at the Ancienne Belgique club in Brussels, bringing the evening to a premature close. ● 18th - A nod to the previous evening's events as the set at **L'Olympia, Paris (France)** opens with the Steve Nieve-penned instrumental "Damage". ● 19th - **Volkshaus, Zurich (Switzerland).** ● 20th - **Schwabinger Brau, Munich (West Germany).** ● 21st - Special filmed concert at **WDR Studio L, Cologne (West Germany)** for the *Rockpalast* TV show. ● 22nd - **Carré, Amsterdam (Netherlands).** ● 23rd - EC & The A's open at the **Congresgebouw, The Hague (Netherlands)** with a cover destined to become a cornerstone of the live set for years to come - Nick Lowe's "(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love & Understanding?". The song's sentiments are, apparently, lost on audience members who riot destructively at the end of the gig. Bob Dylan reportedly attends as a guest but his views on the evening's mayhem are unrecorded. ● 25th - **Orpheus, Apeldoorn (Netherlands).** ● 26th - **De Vereniging, Nijmegen (Netherlands).** ● 27th - **Evenementenhal, Groningen (Netherlands).** ● 28th - **Audimax, Hamburg (West Germany).** ● 29th - **Kant Kino, Berlin (West Germany).** ● To EC's relief, the tour bus heads out of Germany ("a country

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

ELVIS COSTELLO

A TO Z by Dave Farr

Part 5 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...



BLUE CHAIR

"Blue Chair" made its debut in 1985, initially played in two one-off performances, first as an Elvis and the Attractions number at the March 9 Miners' Benefit and then as a solo song at the "Pope of Pop" showcase the following month. The Attractions version, as with most of the new material at that point, seemed at odds with its arrangement. A rollicking drum pattern was the defining musical signature, and EC's vocals were mostly shouted, partly due to the fact that

the arrangement was too fast and pitched too high. The bridge sounded particularly awkward (and sported clumsier lyrics as well). Solo, the nature of a one-man acoustic performance prompted a slower and more reflective reading, but the song still was a little too hyped up to work properly. It was improved during the solo tour of the Far East in June and July 1985, and then Elvis set about recording it during the *King of America* sessions. The version that resulted from those sessions has never been released in its original form. Still, Elvis was fond of telling interviewers while promoting *KOA* in early 1986 that he had judiciously edited the song selection for the LP, leaving off some very good songs that just did not fit. In particular, he stated a few times that he had left one song off the album that he felt sure would have been a Top 10 hit. This was most likely "Blue Chair."

In March of 1986 Elvis regrouped with the Attractions for *Blood and Chocolate*, and recorded "Blue Chair" again. The result is one of his most likeable pop songs. The drums recede into a simple backbeat; the guitars and keyboards are also secondary. Steve plays a kind of light drone with an occasional tinkle of the ivories, both very much in the mode of "Manic Monday," the Bangles hit written by Prince which EC cites as an inspiration for this arrangement (along with "Raspberry Beret"). It is a great bass line, again reminiscent of the Bangles song, which serves as the hook. Elvis' vocal is vastly better than the earlier live versions because the new arrangement lets his voice stay in a very natural register, only straining slightly on the bridge (where an interesting lagging echo catches the ear). It is one of his most relaxed vocals ever. Judicious use of backing vocals make for an even frostier pop confection, and the addition of the "oh-oh-oh-oh-oh" at the end of the bridge, straight out of the

Beatles' cover of Arthur Alexander's "Anna," seals the deal. The abrupt ending of the live version is replaced by a refrain and a clever twist ("blue becomes you"), and a pleasant fadeout. In fact, all the abruptness of the live versions is gone, and a smooth pop song results.

"Blue Chair" was a staple of the 1986 set, played during the *Blood and Chocolate* nights as well as being listed at times on the *Spinning Songbook*. Then, as the 1986 tour came to an end, and a short series of dates with the Attractions and the Confederates approached in early 1987, Elvis decided to revisit the outtake from *KOA* and remix it for single release, with a new studio vocal track. Thus, a very strange single: an A-side that was an alternate version of a track from the current album, played with a different band. (It should be pointed out here, however, that according to the sleeve credits for the single and on *Out of Our Idiot*, the organ on the single version is played by Steve Nieve. For some reason, EC's liner notes to the Ryko re-release of *B&C* credit Mitchell Froom!)



UK single for "Blue Chair".

The single version is also a lot of fun to listen to, although not as simple a pop pleasure as the album track. A drum intro that is almost exactly like the one we would hear on "Veronica" on EC's next album jump-starts a very soulful rhythm track played by the Hall and Oates team of Mickey Curry and T Bone Wolk. (Note the similarity of the rhythm track in the "my turn/your turn" sections to the chorus of "Next Time 'Round.") Steve's organ plays a simple but very loud melody. EC's vocal is much more animated than his earlier version, with several overdubbed vocal tracks with inflections that call to mind Al Green or Sly Stone (whom Elvis acknowledges in the Ryko liner notes for this track). But listen to the backing track and imagine the *Blood and Chocolate* vocal over it. It fits. The basic measures are the same. It just has different secondary emphases (the double-time beat, for example). When refurbishing the single, Elvis re-recorded the vocal to make it jump in different directions, rushing some lines, stretching out others, inserting new pauses and beats, and making it more of a soul vocal. The *Blood and Chocolate* version is very smooth and steady; this vocal is unpredictable from line to line.

The bridge, always the song's weak link, takes on new life here, with a lively organ intro, background "wooooo"s and overdubs, and then a great drop back into the steady beat of the verses, with a breathy vocal from EC. The coda starts with a great moment as Elvis hits a falsetto note while all but the drums fall back, then it all goes slightly over the top, with lots of wild singing. The track is much more of a synthetic, studio creation than the album version, but both are great performances.

Live, Elvis played the song a couple of times more with the Attractions after the single had come out, as part of a medley with "Pidgin English." This resulted in a kind of hybrid version, with the

vocals sounding a bit more like the single even though the music was from the album track. Elvis never has played the song with another group, but did return to the solo performance in 1989 when touring the US and the UK. Since then, the song has not been played live.

BLUES KEEP CALLING

This is one of the more obscure covers Elvis essayed for *Almost Blue*. It should be recalled that *Almost Blue* went through some changes before it became an album of country covers. Originally, the album was simply meant to be a collection of more melancholy numbers, in the style of, for example, a Frank Sinatra album like *Only the Lonely*. EC also considered recording at least some original compositions. As late as the preliminary meetings with producer Billy Sherrill, immediately prior to recording, Elvis and the band still had several blues and rock oriented numbers in the bag for consideration. Many of these (for example, "I'll Take Care of You" and "I Need Your Love So Bad") had been in the live set during the 1981 tours, as had most of the straight country numbers. As it turned out, with the exception of "Honey Hush," based on records by Joe Turner and the Burnette Trio, the album came out very much a country record. "Blues Keep Calling" is one of the bluesier numbers attempted. It was tried several times during the sessions, and ultimately was released in April 1982 as one of the remastered B-sides to the orchestral single version of "I'm Your Toy."



Janis Martin

The original version of this number was performed by Janis Martin, a 1950's singer who was once tagged as "the female Elvis Presley." Elvis follows her version very closely, from the strange mix of country/western and blues moods to the adventurous vocals (though Martin's rendition has more luck with the high notes). He even does a little of the other Elvis in the hiccupping "done stole my ba-ba-by from me." EC adds some croaked shouting at the end, much as he would do in "Eisenhower Blues" four years later. Steve mimics the hobbling piano of the original and guest John McFee manages another virtuoso

performance, playing the steel guitar in such a way that it sounds both countrified and bluesy at the same time. McFee plays as Nieve often does, hardly ever doing the same thing twice. He even plays a lick that sounds like a science fiction sound effect before the last refrain. While not a great success, and featuring somewhat strained vocals from EC, the cut makes for an interesting contrast, rather different from any of the other songs released from the Nashville sessions.

"Blues Keep Calling" was never played in the live set. Elvis did air the original Janis Martin version when he chose the records for Stuart Coleman's *Echoes* program in October 1981 while promoting the new album. This track has sunk into relative obscurity, as EC chose not to include it on the expanded Rykodisc reissue of *A B*.

BOY WITH A PROBLEM

Elvis' association with Squeeze flowered in 1980 and 1981, after a long period of his championing their music whenever he found the opportunity. Taking EC's advice to heart regarding the fact that their albums featured great songs hampered by mediocre production, Squeeze began working with Elvis in the studio on the album that many consider their finest, *East Side Story*. Elvis began popping up

as a guest or opening act at a few of Squeeze's concerts, and brought the band along on the 1981 US tour as his opening act. Another result of this new alliance was a song co-written by Elvis and Squeeze's Chris Difford. According to EC, he had the music for the song written for a few months and gave it to Difford for lyrics. He was quite impressed with the song that resulted, and the initial version can be heard on the Ryko reissue of *Trust*. On this demo, EC accompanies himself on piano and does a rough, almost guide, vocal for the track. The lovely little piano figure that opens and closes the demo was unfortunately dropped from the finished track, although Steve Nieve uses it in the second verse of that version. Elvis added some extra lyrics and changed a few words and phrases he did not feel comfortable singing (one speculates whether the awkward rhyme of "staggering words" and "flattered some girls" is evidence of this; Difford's narrator may have used "birds" instead?). The song was then handed over to the Attractions during the sessions for *I B*.

Elvis has said he originally contemplated an orchestral arrangement for the song. *Imperial Bedroom*, of course, featured such arrangements on other tracks and de-emphasized the drum sound significantly. Elvis had planned to leave drums off the track entirely. For whatever reason, things worked out differently. The Attractions took the guide track and recorded the instrumental portion without Elvis present. Hearing the final result, Elvis termed it "perfect" and changed nothing. Still, the track was not slated for the album until the last minute. After all the remaining tracks had been mixed, EC decided to have a go at the vocal again and rediscovered the song in the process. It became the 15th track on the record.

The album version adds a great deal musically to the demo, yet is one of the simpler productions on that LP, with only one audible overdub. All three Attractions feature in equal measure here. Steve's piano, of course, drives the main theme, but the most memorable notes are provided by Bruce Thomas. Bruce plays very heavy meter notes in the verses and high, curled notes in the bridge that, along with an almost jarring repeated sound from Steve, provide vivid color to illustrate the recounting of a hard day's night. The vocal, like many on this LP, seems apart from the music in its clarity and closeness. Elvis sings in a very breathy style, as close to crooning as he had recorded up to that point. He does a wonderful job with the words, which by this point have again been tweaked with minor but very important changes which render the song much more poignant. The track is one of the best ballads EC has ever recorded.

Though its more basic arrangement would seem to make it a good candidate for live renditions, "Boy with a Problem" was only played live once, during the US tour supporting *Imperial Bedroom* in 1982. It seems a great candidate for a Costello/Nieve airing, but to date it has not been played live again.

BRILLIANT DISGUISE

In 1992, Elvis spent some time on a project that has so far failed to reach fruition but has provided some extremely interesting Costello recordings. After interviewing country legend George Jones for *Interview* magazine, EC decided to record an album's worth of non-country songs that he felt Jones might release as evidence of his strength as an interpretive singer. These were recorded as sophisticated demos, often accompanied by other musicians. Elvis sings these songs in a vocal style that differs from his own; it's Elvis singing in a more country style, not really imitating Jones but trying to show Jones how the songs could be done his way. One of the songs he covered and suggested to Jones was this Bruce Springsteen song, which Springsteen had released in 1987.

While the original is a mix of country/folk and rock, EC's cover version strips it down to a very countrified version. The backing track, supplied by Pete Thomas on drums and Paul Riley on bass, with EC on guitar, is very simple. A great overdubbed harmony vocal on the chorus and the bridge dress up the very naked vocal. The title line is particularly fun to hear, as Elvis and his overdubbed harmony meet on a stretched "youuuuu, baaabeh," and then a stretched out "brilliant," just as he had done in "Brilliant Mistake" earlier (see below). This is followed by a great, raspy nine-syllable "disguise." (This is also another in a series of cover versions where Elvis sings the word "baby" a lot in addressing the object of his affection, a word he rarely uses in his own compositions.) It's fun to hear Elvis sing something as country as "I damn sure don't trust myself." It's a wonderful performance, and was a real surprise to hear when finally released in the UK in 1996 as one of the extra tracks on the CD single of "It's Time."

Elvis has played the song live only once, during the last show of the Costello/Nieve tour in May 1996. It is interesting to note, however, that the phrase "brilliant disguise" had found its way into the live set before. EC's interaction with Bruce Springsteen has always been distant but apparently based on mutual admiration. In his early days, EC seemed to disdain Springsteen's work, but then he seemed to disdain just about everyone back then. We know now that as early as 1978, EC was in attendance at a Springsteen concert in Nashville, as a guest of then-mutual label CBS. According to EC, he was by then a big fan and his empathy for the mounting perils of Springsteen's fame even inspired the writing of "Temptation." During the 1980s EC continued to be spotted at Springsteen concerts, and the story goes that the Boss was not only in the audience for EC's 1984 solo performances in San Francisco but was so inspired by them that he started to consider the merits of performing acoustically. The two finally shared a stage together in 1987 when they both were part of the all-star band backing Roy Orbison for the "Black and White Night" concert special. Since then, Elvis has always had positive things to say about Springsteen's shows, and as recently as 1997 praised Springsteen's solo performance in Nice, France as inspiring him to think hard about how best to perform live (and the 1998 Italian shows seem to reflect this).

Springsteen's "Brilliant Disguise," the first single from 1987's *Tunnel of Love* LP, seemed to some EC fans to refer to EC's "Brilliant Mistake," released the year before, in both its title and also the singing of the title phrase. Elvis may have been remarking on this in his 1987 concerts, when he changed the lyrics of the last verse of "Brilliant Mistake" to include the line "but it was just another very brilliant disguise." In the same shows, Elvis sang a bit of "Fire" while doing a bit about the radio. Also, starting in 1989, the live performance of "Brilliant Mistake" took on a Springsteen-like air, with Elvis yelling "Hup!" at the ends of verses.

BRILLIANT MISTAKE

The song that opens an album is a very important one. It should set the tone for the record, draw the listener in, and be indicative of the sound of the record. For *King of America*, Elvis always saw "Brilliant Mistake" as the lead off track, and it is easy to see why, in that the song has a very straight-ahead structure (verse-verse-verse with no bridge), and lyrics that not only include the album's title but also a lot of the lyrical concerns that float through the rest of the tracks. EC had intended, as discussed in earlier issues, to record at least part of *King of America* with the Attractions; and "Brilliant Mistake" was always supposed to be an Attractions song. As it turned out, the song was

recorded with other musicians and was the perfect intro for the record, providing an entrance into its solid, acoustic-based, natural sound. It's important to note that this song, more than any other on the record, sounds like an Attractions song in its structure and form (especially "Man Out of Time"), and even though it was ultimately recorded with new musicians, it retains the older Costello style in its arrangement, and thus is a bridge between the Elvis of 1977-1984 and this new incarnation. Those who loved the Attractions could still hear something familiar in this new grouping of musicians, in this new sound, and this made the song a perfect lead off track for a watershed album.



He thought he was the King of America.

"Brilliant Mistake" was in fact premiered with the Attractions, as part of the Miners' Benefit concert in 1985. As with most of the new songs from that concert, the form and the function seemed to be at odds. The lyrics seemed rushed and the meter awkward, as Elvis tried to fit the song into an arrangement perhaps a bit too uptempo. The chorus featured a kind of samba beat supplied by Steve's keyboards, which dominate throughout. Pete's drums

were also very busy in this version; in fact, the entire accompaniment seemed overly busy. The lyrics contained several differences from the album version, including an entirely different second verse.

Several weeks later, at the "Pope of Pop" concert in April 1985, Elvis closed his solo showcase with a rendition of the song that was much closer to the final version, stripped down and slower. However, here he included a bridge, with lyrics, which was never performed again. As the song evolved over the course of the Far East tour in the summer of 1985, it became much closer to the album version. The second verse with the "ABC News" lyric replaced the earlier version, and the lyrics took their final shape.

The *KOA* sessions were not happy ones for the Attractions. Elvis had recorded much of the record by the time the Attractions were brought in. Still, he remained intent on recording "Brilliant Mistake" with the band, and using it as the album's lead off track. This was not to be, however, as the sessions for the song with the Attractions failed to yield the right take. Co-producer T Bone Burnett brought back Jerry Scheff and Mitchell Froom on bass and keyboards and added the Hall and Oates rhythm section of T Bone Wolk and Mickey Curry on electric guitar/accordion and drums, respectively. Elvis played his acoustic guitar, and the result is a marvelous track.

EC's vocal is actually a bit more treated and less natural-sounding than in most of the *KOA* tracks, not quite as up close, and echoed on the last verse. (In fact, the low-register harmony overdub that comes in on the chorus actually sounds more natural than the lead.) The song's hook, the drawn-out "briiiiiiiiiiiiiiiant" is stretched further with the reduced tempo, and further accented by a harmony vocal which repeats the line in a lower register, setting the main vocal off beautifully. The lyrics, for the most part, arc out over the end of

each bar, giving a lilting effect to a wordy song. The bass, after introducing the song with a great descending series of notes, recedes, and it is the steady, deliberate drumming (Curry using brushes), along with a circle of acoustic guitars flecked with electric, that defines the sound. The hook that Steve Nieve had played live on keyboards now is played by guitars and bass, and is supportive rather than distracting. On the third verse, the backing instruments drop back and Elvis sings almost unaccompanied (a device used in the same verse of "Man Out of Time"). The song is put across in a very straightforward manner. There is hardly any tempo change, no herky-jerky rhythm. A staggered drum and a big drum fill toward the end stand out because of this. The song is allowed to present itself directly. This makes it a grand introduction to Elvis' most direct record up to that point.

Amazingly enough, the next time "Brilliant Mistake" was performed live after the album's release, it was with the Attractions, at the July 1986 Torhout Festival. Although the tempo was more in line with the record, Steve's keyboards were still too busy, and the inappropriate samba beat remained. The Attractions would not try this number again until 1994. Instead, "Brilliant Mistake" became a staple of the non-Attractions concerts from then on, including shows with the Confederates in 1986 and 1987, solo shows in 1987 and 1989, and the Rude Five tour in 1989. The arrangement stayed basically the same, with the players and the coloration changing (backing vocals from T Bone Wolk, Michael Blair, Steve Soles, and Nick Lowe on different occasions). What varied most were the lyrics. Like its cousin, "Man Out of Time," this song was always subject to some lyrical revision. In 1987, Elvis toyed with the ABC News reference, changing it to WTBS in Atlanta, MTV in other cities. The last verse mutated in different tours, sometimes changing to: *He thought he was the king of every compromise / But it was just another very brilliant disguise* or: *He thought he was the master of his own disguise / But it turned out to be another dirty compromise* with the last line changing to: *The words of love are absent and replaced with lies and lies and lies . . .* or variations thereupon.

Other performances added parts of the Kinks' "Tired of Waiting" or Bob Dylan's "Tangled Up in Blue" to the song, giving clues to the song's musical roots. Or, the song's coda might have the title lines of "Home is Anywhere You Hang Your Head" added on.

"Brilliant Mistake" dropped off the set list for the 1991 tour, but came back once or twice during the 1994 reunion tour with the Attractions, and then was performed more frequently in 1996, usually during the section featuring Steve on accordion and Pete on his "toy drum kit." (And again, the lyrics were rewritten, this time to make the attack on the interviewer in the second verse even more vitriolic). At last, the song seemed to fit the Attractions' style; but it was the band that had been made to fit the song.

BROKEN

Written by Cait O'Riordan, this track from *Mighty Like a Rose* features some very good lyrics overwhelmed by the melodrama of the central idea. In the same way, the musical setting is overly dramatic and turgid and overwhelms the melody and color. Accompaniment by artists like Marc Ribot and Rob Wasserman is largely painted over. Most of the accompaniment is provided by various types of keyboard instruments, creating a fog of electronic hum, with the occasional guitar lick or piano key thrown in. This hum becomes downright unpleasant at times, with a mechanical sound of gears rubbing together. A more tranquil drone would have served the song better. Elvis' vocal is affecting at times, particularly in the wordless "aahhh"s at the end of each chorus, but the overall mood of the

singing and the instrumentation is a very weary one. The lyrics have several inspired couplets (along with some clumsy ones like "my imaginary friend," which pops out of the meter completely, which is a bad idea in a song that has the air of an air). Still, the overdramatic chorus, with its major chords on the word "death," leaves one with an unfavorable impression.

During the 1991 US tour supporting the release of *Mighty Like a Rose*, "Broken" was the only song not performed live. Only in the last few weeks of the 1991 live shows, in Japan, did Elvis perform "Broken." It has not been played since.

BROWN TO BLUE

Another cover for the *Almost Blue* album, this was an obscure George Jones number from Jones' early days. The original is not a very inspired performance, and is nearly ruined by top-heavy production that includes backing singers who drown out a lead vocal that lacks Jones' characteristic flair. So what did Elvis hear in this record that made it a covers candidate? A great lyrical theme, an extremely clever conceit. EC's version, with the Attractions joined by John McFee on pedal steel guitar, is one of the best tracks on the record.

The pedal steel/piano duet figure which opens the song is not from the original version, it is new to this rendition, and it's a beautiful little bit, one of the best pieces of music on the record. Elvis' vocal, while pinched in places, is pinched in the right places, to express anguish. He glides through the lyrics and shows significant range, more so than in most songs prior to this record. In many ways it's his most relaxed vocal here. Steve Nieve's piano and McFee's guitar dance together throughout the track, Steve playing clear, sharp notes and McFee's notes chiming beside them and then trailing behind like vapor trails. This gives the illusion of strings on the track, but I don't think strings were added to this cut. McFee performs a perfect bridge solo, a kind of James Burton-style spiral on pedal steel, while Pete slows his drums to a heartbeat. Elvis obviously enjoys singing the lachrymose but clever lyrics, even adding to the pathos by changing "by law" to "my love" in the chorus. (And of course, having someone named anything other than Jones certainly makes the title lyric make more sense.)

With one exception, *Brown to Blue* was only played live during the *Almost Blue-Almost 1982* tour to promote the country album. The music was faithfully recreated, with the intro and coda sections, and McFee's bridge, perfectly each time. An orchestral version was also performed in the famous Royal Philharmonic show during the tour, with strings and woodwinds joining the melody. The only other live performance was an unexpected solo acoustic rendition in Dekalb, Illinois during EC's first solo tour in 1984.

It was 20 Years Ago Today - FROM PAGE 12

I can't stand") and on towards Scandinavia. With a new LP to record, plus trips to Canada, Japan & Australia scheduled before another UK tour starting mid-December, there's little sign of the insane pace slackening. Bruce Thomas: "The physical workload of the tours we did was pretty debilitating, plus I don't know whether it helped to drink or not! ... I think Jake went over the top with the old gig list. We'd be in the middle of a 138-day tour or something, and he'd be wheeling in the gigs for about 4 months in front ... I'll never forgive him for that. Never!"

Sources: *BBC Radio 1, New Musical Express, Melody Maker, Sounds, Mojo, Rolling Stone, Circus, Wet, Newsweek, Dallas Morning News, Boston Globe, LA Times, Going Through The Motions (Richard Groothuizen & Kees den Heyer), Let Them All Talk: The Art of Elvis Costello (Brian Hinton)*



The Latest EC News



F-Beat / Demon Sale Final

As first reported in our last issue, UK retail group Kingfisher has now confirmed its expected purchase of F-Beat Records (parent company of Costello's Demon Records label) for 2 million pounds (\$3.26 million). The deal was announced April 6 and was reported in the April 18 edition of *Billboard*.

What has now come to surface is the fact that the sale does in fact include the rights outside of North America to Costello's pre-Warner Music catalog along with the label's vast catalog of other licensed material (various rights to recordings by the likes of T. Rex, Al Green, Graham Parker and T Bone Burnett). Demon's current roster, which includes Nick Lowe, is also part of the deal as is the successful Blackmail direct-mail unit.

Three of Demon's current directors, Costello, former manager Jake Riviera and finance director Lew Difford (brother of Squeeze's Chris) will resign their posts. According to *Billboard*, Demon's estimated annual revenues are in the region of \$4 million with about 20% coming from Costello's repertoire.

Soft Sand, Blue Sea

On May 25, the UK's Channel 4 TV screened a new feature-length film by award-winning young writer Stephen Butchard. Filmed in Ireland, the Alan Bleasdale production *Soft Sand, Blue Sea* features original music composed by Elvis with Paul Pritchard, as well as "I Want To Vanish" (also present in instrumental form as part of the score) and a new EC song, "Bright Blue Times". The hard-hitting drama centres on the inhabitants of a children's home and was described by Channel 4 as a "warm and breathtaking new film about two delightful but lost children who dream of escape to *Soft Sand, Blue Sea*, but find themselves trapped

not in a fantasy but a nightmare." Premiered during the February C&N Italian tour, "Bright Blue Times" was also aired during a visit to Irish radio station Today FM in March, EC describing it as "a little song I wrote for them that comes in one of the sequences - just a little thing". The sequence in question is, in fact, a rather harrowing one where one of the young runaways imagines the murderous campaign against street-children in Brazil. Elvis hopes to find a suitable opportunity to release the song at some point in the future: "It's not out on record yet, but it'll turn up somewhere - I don't really know where...."

VH1 Poll

Here's one poll that musical artists can't complain about. VH1 went straight to more than 100 musicians (including EC, Johnny Cash, Michael Stipe, the Bee Gees, Jewel, the Wallflowers, Foo Fighters, Hootie & the Blowfish and George Harrison) to compile the *100 Greatest Artists of Rock & Roll*. Voters submitted their "top 10" and were guaranteed that their choices would not be made public. The poll also served as the basis for a five-hour television special broadcast over as many nights in which each artist was allotted between 2-3 minutes of video clips and comments from their peers.

Elvis ranked a very respectable No. 38 (right between Al Green and Miles Davis) and of course The Beatles and The Rolling Stones were No. 1 and 2. Overall the poll results were somewhat agreeable but they were not without a few shockers (The Police at No.10 and Devo at No. 82 both seemed overrated) and some notable exclusions (Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis).

The television show itself however was disappointing in that VH1 scoured its archives for many mundane and out-of-context quotes about artists rather than soliciting much new material. Some old EC footage from 1996 was used for comments from him about No. 56 The Kinks ("We listened to The Kinks. I had all these records memorized when I was thirteen.") and No. 54 The Grateful Dead ("I loved The Grateful Dead just because they were weirder looking than anyone else."). Commenting on Elvis were Sir Paul McCartney ("Elvis is a great acoustic guitar man.") and the late Jerry Garcia ("He's a good strong singer. He's one of those guys that has a sense of what music should be like.").

VH1 editorial director Bill Flanagan summed it all up by saying "Musicians are also big music fans and I think the survey

results show who their biggest influences are." On the other hand, British DJ John Peel noted "The people who contribute to these polls are a bunch of boring old twerps."

Elvis Sings Joni

Reprise Records' Bill Bentley has told *BB* that Elvis will record "Edith and the Kingpin" for the label's Joni Mitchell tribute LP, now destined for release in 1999. The track is from her 1975 LP *The Hissing of Summer Lawns*.

Norwich Festival Premiere

The February 25th edition of UK newspaper the *Daily Mail* carried a brief gossip column item headed "Elvis Wins Lottery" stating that EC had been commissioned to write a choral work for the Norfolk & Norwich Festival. Although the paper claimed, oddly, that the work - funded with the assistance of a grant from National Lottery proceeds - would be premiered "in March 1998", *BB* understands that it will actually have its first performance at a future Norfolk & Norwich Festival (an annual October event).

No Doubt to Record New Costello Song

According to *Rolling Stone*, popular American band No Doubt will be recording "I Throw My Toys Around," a newly composed Elvis Costello song, for the soundtrack to a new movie based on the animated children's program *Rugrats*. Music for the movie is being overseen by Devo's Mark Mothersbaugh and the record is due by year's end on Interscope. (See *Covers Corner* for other news about No Doubt lead singer Gwen Stefani.)

Tribute to Ol' Blue Eyes

Elvis Costello once again demonstrated his literary talents by penning a touching and insightful tribute to the late Frank Sinatra. Published May 18 in UK newspaper *The Guardian*, EC tells how his mom tells him that one of his first words was "skin", a request to hear Sinatra's "I've Got You Under My Skin" on the family record player.

Elvis recalls hearing a rare early-80s London performance of "I Can't Get Started". Special since it was one of his favorites, he said "That's when you go peculiar and begin to feel a weird sense of connection. Sinatra had that ability to make it feel as if a song was for you, even though you knew that two-thirds of the audience felt the same." Now if he had just recorded "Almost Blue!"

Elvis Sightings: Ron & Paul

Elvis attended Ron Sexsmith's February 26 show in EC's hometown of Dublin. *BB* would also like to congratulate Ron on winning a Juno Award (the Canadian version of the Grammys) in the Best Roots/Traditional Album category for his *Other Songs* LP.

On March 11, Elvis was spotted sitting in the front row alongside friends Paul and Linda McCartney at the presentation of their 26-year-old daughter Stella's first fashion collection in Paris. Miss McCartney is the head designer at the French fashion-house Chloé. Surprised US viewers caught a glance of EC in news reports on the showing and Elvis also commented on the presentation to a Norwegian journalist. Costello thought that Stella's clothes actually looked like something someone could wear - not like the clothes most other designers make, the sole purpose of which is to look sensational.

*BB would like to offer its condolences to the McCartney family on Linda's untimely passing. The editors would also like to pass on Paul's request in lieu of flowers:
"Go Veggie!"*

I Want You - The Movie

A new British film directed by Michael Winterbottom (*Welcome to Sarajevo*) and starring Rachel Weisz, entitled *I Want You*, recently opened at the Berlin Film Festival. *Daily Variety* had the following to say about the film, inspired by the song of the same name from Costello's 1986 *Blood & Chocolate* LP.

"A dark, fragmented Euro-noir crime drama set in a crumbling English beach resort. Costello's well-known 1986 song of obsessive love and erotic attraction was the jumping-off point for the whole project, and is heard at several points in the movie, very effectively. In a steamy, highly realistic scene played out to Elvis Costello's "I Want You," Martin and Helen finally get it on, before darker clouds gather and history threatens to repeat itself, with a few twists."

Jazz Passengers' Project

The Jazz Passengers' Roy Nathanson told the *Boston Globe* "I'm working with Elvis Costello and a bunch of people on a concept album." *BB* has learned Roy is working on a project called "The Fire at Keating's Bar & Grill" and is trying to line up the likes of Costello and Bjork as collaborators.

The story revolves around a Charleston,

South Carolina bar that Roy played in as the only white musician touring with Charles Earland many years ago. Expecting a racist reception, the show turned out to be a "dream gig" with a very enthusiastic audience. Roy has thus conceived a story about a fire at the bar and wants to create a cycle of songs told from the vantage point of people and stories associated with the bar. Reportedly, Roy has three or four songs that he has already spoken to Elvis about.

NewsBits: According to the *New Yorker*, Elvis is a candidate to write the liner notes for Stravinski's *The Rite of Spring* which is planned for release by Penguin Classic CD's, a line of archival classical recordings that Penguin is releasing in a new venture with Polygram. This new offshoot of Penguin Books will offer album notes written by Penguin authors and other cultural luminaries.✱ The March 28 issue of *NME* mentioned that EC would be contributing a track to a benefit album for some fired dockers in Liverpool, along with Noel Gallagher and some others.✱ The Chieftains, on tour in the US this spring, performed Costello's "Long Journey Home." Band member Kevin Conniff was heard taking over EC's lead vocals in Chicago and the band employed a local high school's choir in Hartford.✱ *The Big Lebowski* hit the screens and EC's "My Mood Swings" was heard twice in the film. First it was playing softly in the background while the three lead characters sat in the bowling alley and then again briefly a few minutes later through actor Jeff Bridges tinny Walkman headphones while he is waiting in a doctor's office. What happened to that critical bowling scene?

Tiny Steps

Trainspotting: Seen hanging on the walls of the Hard Rock Cafe in Atlantic City, NJ are a Fender Bronco guitar autographed by Elvis & the Attractions and a copy of *MLAR* signed by EC. ■ **Quotable:** In May's *Alternative Press*, actress Molly Ringwald stresses the importance of a mix tape in testing compatibility with someone by remarking "I mean, what if they hate Elvis Costello?" The *Pretty in Pink* star then adds "I've always loved Elvis Costello. I remember my age by which Elvis Costello record I was listening to at the time." ■ **Attractions:** According to the May issue of *ICE: The CD News Authority*, Pete and Bruce, the Thomas rhythm section, appear on *Dopamine*, a May 19 release on Atlantic by sometime Costello producer and

Confederate, Mitchell Froom. The disk will include several featured guest vocalists including Ron Sexsmith. ■ **Events:** Harvard University radio station WHRB-FM will broadcast an "Elvis Costello Orgy" starting at 10pm May 21 and running for 35 hours! The show will include songs from live tapes and bootlegs and is part of a regular "orgy" series.

Elvis Costello's Lost Songs

Although the reissue program has narrowed the list down, here's an update on all the known EC songs that have yet to be officially released. All have been heard live except for the McCartney co-compositions and the song written for Ms. Hynde.

w/ Attractions/Solo:

Baby Pictures (1982)
Lifeboat (1983)
We Don't Even Try Anymore (1986 w/
John Doe of X)
Having It All (1986)
The Last Time You Were Leaving Me
(1986)
Daddy Can I Turn This? (1996)
Far From the Prize (1996)
Bright Blue Times (1998)

w/ Paul McCartney:

I Don't Want To Confess
Tommy's Coming Home

w/ Brodksy Quartet:

King of the Unknown Sea

w/ Mingus Big Band:

This Subdues My Passion

w/ Burt Bacharach:

This House is Empty Now

w/ Steve Nieve:

Lesson In Cruelty
Passionate Fight
Unfailing Welcome to the Voice

for Aimee Mann:

World's Great Optimist

for Chrissie Hynde:

Twisted Love

classical:

The Trouble with Dreams (Mary
Wiegold)
Malicious Observer (Mary Wiegold)
Three Distracted Women (Anne
Sophie von Otter)
Edge of Ugly (London Philharmonic)
Songs and Broken Music (John
Woolrich)

Covers Corner

Entertainment Weekly Senior Writer and friend of *Beyond Belief*, Chris Willman, went to the April 16 "Stormy Weather 98" benefit at the Wiltern Theater in Los Angeles, which consisted of well-known female vocalists covering old standards with a jazz combo and full orchestra (Joni Mitchell, Bjork, Sheryl Crow, Stevie Nicks, Shawn Colvin and others). Chris reports: "There were just a couple of exceptions to the 'standards' format (or at least the 'old' part): someone had the good sense to choose



'Almost Blue.' Unfortunately, it was the one singer on the bill I wouldn't want to hear cover it: No Doubt's **Gwen**

Stefani. Surely, this would have had EC pinning for the good old days of Linda Ronstadt. Nonetheless, it is nice to know that folks are thinking of this one as in the same ballpark as Gershwin, Berlin, etc. The show was recorded for a possible album, but no decision has been made on whether it'll bear fruit." (In a May 1997 story in *Rolling Stone*, Stefani admits that during a break up with a band member she used to listen to the Costello song over and over. *Ed.*)

In April, British folk singer **Christine Collister** released a version of "I Want to Vanish" on her new LP, *The Dark Gift of Time* on Fledg'ling Records. Ms. Collister often records and performs with Clive Gregson, former leader

of *Stiff* recording artists Any Trouble.

Reader David Pyndus from Austin, Texas tells us that several Decembers ago, at local radio station KGSR-FM's annual Christmas concert, singer **Syd Straw** performed a



lovely rendition of "Indoor Fireworks." The show was broadcast and David recalls that she forgot some lyrics a little bit into the song and had to restart. She urged the audience to help her by saying "C'mon you know the words to this."

Old friend Howard Kramer tells of two live concert versions of "Riot Act" that he



has heard. One was by Aimee Mann and her old band 'Til Tuesday (circa 1989-90) and the other is by **Jeffrey Gaines**. Gaines's version was in Johnston, VT in the winter of 1992-93 when Howard

was his tour manager. Jeff has recorded two albums for EMI, the first of which received some good reviews and the second of which went nowhere. He has recently signed with Ryko and is a big EC fan. His voice is very distinctive but according to Howard there is some EC influence apparent.

Olivier Ridolphi reports a version of "Oliver's Army" by the **Brisbane**, Australia band **Screamfeeder** released as the B-side to their 1993 7-inch and CD single for "Finger and Toes" on Survival Records. Lead singer Tim Steward told *BB*: "The music that really gives me a buzz is a lot of stuff from the early 80s, punky, new wavy stuff that was about when I was growing up."



The May issue of *ICE: The CD News Authority* mentions that **The Knack** (three original members plus Terry Bozzio on drums) have recorded four new tracks as part of an upcoming 16-track retrospective on Rhino called *The Very Best of the Knack*. In addition to Nick Lowe's "I Knew the Bride" and "Teacher Teacher," which was covered by Rockpile, Costello's "Girl's Talk" was also recorded. Sadly, *BB* has learned from Rhino that the EC track has been cut from the compilation but may turn up on a future Knack reissue.

A tasty Lounge version of "Pump It Up" can be heard on *Prozak for Lovers*, a self-released CD by Chicago's **Bruce Lash**. To hear this song amongst the likes of "Proud Mary,"



"Aqualung," "London Calling" and "I Want to be Sedated," contact Bruce c/o Optimus, 161 E. Grand, Chicago, IL, 60611 or at

<http://home.att.net/~bblash/page6.html>. It's \$10 (US) per CD.

From the lounge to the bathroom as covers connoisseur Flee Courtney tells us of a version of "Pump It Up" recorded by **The Soytown Maryland Flatulence Ensemble**. Reported to be composed entirely of farting noises, their LP *Rock & Roll All Night* is available from Phew Records in Maryland. (*We're still trying to sniff this one out. Ed.*)

Finally, we close out this section with two unusual items. The first story comes from Oklahoma where on March 7, **The Imposters** performed the entire *This Year's Model* album live, plus some other Elvis Costello songs, in Norman, Oklahoma at Tip's Tavern (and again in April at VZD's in Oklahoma City). The band features the rhythm section of the Chainsaw Kittens, and a member of Barnyard Slut.

And last but not least, a cassette dropped through the *Beyond Belief* mailbox recently, courtesy of one of our Dutch subscribers. "An English singer, **Mark Foggo**, lives here in Eindhoven," writes Rein Zijlstra, "and he and his band play ska music. A few years back, I saw them and they were playing only Costello songs, but in ska arrangements of course. I met Mark a few weeks ago and he told me that there was a tape of them playing EC material. He promised to look it out and send it to me . . ." Sadly, the live recording appears to predate Mr. Foggo's ska incarnation, featuring him with a 4-piece backing band running through fairly straightforward cover versions of the following EC classics: "Accidents Will Happen," "New Lace Sleeves," "Two Little Hitlers," "Temptation," "Watching the Detectives," "Oliver's Army," "Hand in Hand," "Secondary Modern," "American Without Tears," "Shot With His Own Gun," "Shipbuilding," "New Amsterdam," "Big Sister's Clothes," "Green Shirt," "Human Touch," "You Belong to Me," "Pump It Up," "Chelsea," "No Action" and "Oliver's Army" (reprise).

Visit Covers Corner on the *BB* web page for an up-to-date listing of all known EC covers.



Rhino Covers Comp: Our friends at Rhino Records have done their usual first-class job with the May 19 issue of the planned Costello covers compilation with great sound quality and packaging. (See **BB15** for more details and track info.) The CD can be ordered by credit card toll free at 1-800-432-0020 or by fax at 1-813-979-6685.

Bespoke Songs, Lost Dogs, Detours & Rendezvous: Songs of Elvis Costello

Rhino CD R2 75273

Compilation of previously recorded songs written by EC which includes detailed liner notes by Elvis.

God Give Me Strength

Single: Reprise Records has issued a promo CD single of "GGMS" from the *Live on Letterman* CD, edited to delete the applause. Co-producer and Reprise exec. Bill Bentley is a big fan of the track and got EC's approval to release the single to radio.

"God Give Me Strength"

Elvis Costello & Burt Bacharach

Reprise PRO-CD-9299-R

CD single (edit w/o applause) from the Live on Letterman: Music from the Late Show CD.

Uncut/Demon CD: In the UK these days, one is not sure whether it's the CD or the magazine that's free! The April issue of *Uncut* came with a free 20-track sampler from Demon Records where EC is found amongst the likes of former Stiffs,

Nick Lowe, Wreckless Eric and Ian Dury as well as Dave Alvin, Nils Lofgren and others.

Unknown Pleasures: Rare and classic tracks from the archives of Demon Records

Uncut/Demon UN-CUT UP 3

Free CD includes "Tokyo Storm Warning" by Elvis Costello and the Attractions.

Metroland: On May 11, Mark Knopfler's soundtrack for the film *Metroland* was released in the UK. This film, based on the novel by Julian Barnes also includes music by Django Reinhardt plus several appropriate period pieces by the likes of Hot Chocolate, The Stranglers, Dire Straits alongside "Alison" by EC.

Music From the Film "Metroland"

Vertigo CD 536 912-2

MC 536 912-4

UK soundtrack includes "Alison" by EC.

More Compilations: Found while browsing the CD bins were two compilations promoting the Ryko reissues.

New Country: December 1994

WEA NC1294D

Free CD with a subscription to New Country monthly magazine includes "A Good Year for the Roses" by Elvis Costello.

The Rykodisc Fall Mixer '95

Ryko/Gramavision RCD9509

Promo CD includes "Brilliant Mistake" by Elvis Costello.

Long Journey Home: The LJH soundtrack featuring Costello's title track was released in Japan on March 21 (BMG Japan BVCF1574). In addition identical promo cardboard sleeve singles were issued both in Europe and in Spain (distributed by BMG Espana and with credits in Spanish).

1. Long Journey Home (radio edit) 3:19

2. Long Journey Home (album version) 4:16

Unisphere/BMG 09026 63150 2

Promo CD single of The Chieftains with the Irish Film Orchestra and Elvis Costello.

Updates & Tidbits: Our congratulations to Elvis in the royalties department! The 80s-laced soundtrack to *The Wedding Singer* (which included EC's 1983-hit "Everyday I Write the Book") struck a nostalgic nerve with the American record-buying public. At last glance, the disk had gone platinum (a million units shipped) and had spent nine weeks on *The Billboard 200*,

peaking at number 5. The CD was also released in the UK through Warners on June 8 (CD 9362468402). ■ Both an advance cassette (Mercury Records 8180) and an advance CD (Mercury Records MEAD 148) were issued for *The Big Lebowski* soundtrack which included EC's "My Mood Swings." ■ The April 25 edition of the *Guardian* (London only) came with a free *Big Lebowski* collector's edition CD that included "My Mood Swings" as well as some CD-ROM multimedia film info. ■ Reportedly, a 5-CD Burt Bacharach box set was pressed for TNT execs and handed out at the NYC tribute concert. It was said to include two Costello recordings, presumably "GGMS" and "I Just Don't Know" (from *Livestiffs*).



Help! (February 11 - Bologna, Italy) Elvis & Steve play "God Give Me Strength", "My Funny Valentine" and "I'll Wear It Proudly" and are interviewed by host Red Ronnie.

100 Greatest Artists of Rock & Roll (March 31-April 4 - VH1) EC clocks in at No. 38 and is seen commenting about The Kinks and The Grateful Dead in the show hosted by actor Kevin Bacon. (see *On the Beat*)

Inside Europe (April 4 - CNN International) Feature on why the 70s are back in fashion (yawn) includes a brief interview with EC who thinks it's "because people can only remember about 20 years back at a time and then the time before that gets forgotten ... people say 'oh, I like that jacket. Those flares look good and the next thing you know they're listening to Led Zeppelin records again'." Tying the programme's subject matter in neatly with the Bacharach collaboration, he notes that Burt "has been going through a period where people have been reassessing his music. People have been discovering him. It happens. I figure if I stick around long enough, it'll happen to me too!" He adds that the work the pair have done is not "the 'Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head' side of Burt Bacharach - I want to go into the more twisted ones ..." and says that he is looking forward to hearing another of their co-compositions with a band for the first time at the upcoming Bacharach tribute show.

Kirsty (April 11 - Sky Scottish, UK) Sky are currently rerunning Kirsty Young's old STV chat show *Kirsty*, including this notable November 1994 appearance by EC, in town for a two-night stint with The Attractions at

Glasgow's Barrowlands. Despite a sore throat, Elvis (captioned 'Elvis Costello - Rock Legend') happily spends half an hour answering questions from host, audience and phone-in callers, pausing to perform two songs accompanied by only his acoustic guitar. He refuses to be drawn on the reasons for his first parting with The A's ("somebody ate all the sausage rolls or something") and is forced to dig himself out of a hole after telling one caller who asks about his choice of a stage name that "there was only ever one Elvis." ("Aye, that's true," confirms Karen from Paisley with no discernible trace of irony!) Best of all though are the songs, both solo acoustic rarities: "Rocking Horse Road" from the then-current *Brutal Youth*, and - apparently at the request of a visibly moved host - a heartfelt performance of "Shipbuilding" which, despite EC's mumbled introductory claim that "it's really a piano song," proves absolutely spellbinding.

Good Morning America (April 15 - ABC) EC briefly sings but does not speak in an interview segment recorded the day of the Bacharach tribute concert and broadcast the day of its television debut. He and Wynnona stand behind a piano, Burt at the keyboard. The segment opens with a few seconds of EC singing "This House is Empty Now" and also includes a brief clip from the TNT special of EC performing "God Give Me Strength." Memorable moment: Wynnona says, "What are the chances of getting Wynnona and Elvis in the same room?" and then pulls her jacket open to reveal a T-shirt emblazoned with the name "Elvis."

Bacharach: One Amazing Night (April 15 - TNT) Elvis performs the world premiere of "This House is Empty Now" and "God Give Me Strength" (second time live) with Burt Bacharach. Filmed April 8 at New York City's Hammerstein Ballroom. (See page 10)

Storytellers: The Lost Songs (May 16 - VH1) Special featuring tracks left on the cutting room floor. Included is Costello & Nieve's take at "Temptation" as recorded on May 29, 1996. The track was preceded by a lengthy intro from Elvis in which he discussed the song's inspiration: seeing a 1978 Bruce Springsteen concert in Nashville as the guest of Columbia Records during his recording of "Stranger in the House" with George Jones for the *My Special Guests* LP.

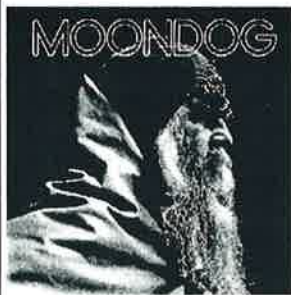
Update: Sorry to report that neither US TV appearance mentioned in *BB15* came to pass. Both "My Mood Swings" on *Letterman* and "Long Journey Home" with The Chieftains on *Leno* were canceled.

Radio Radio

Dranouter Festival (August 3, 1996 - Belgium) Just surfacing is a tape of an FM broadcast of seven songs recorded during one of the Costello & Nieve diversions during the *ATUB* tour: Pills & Soap, Why Can't a Man Stand Alone, Veronica, Poor Fractured Atlas, Shipbuilding, Oliver's Army, and Telescope.

Radio Popolare (February 16 - Milan, Italy) Elvis is interviewed.

All Things Considered (February 26 - NPR)



Dean Olsher's profile of the legendary Moon Dog includes an overseas call to EC in Dublin. Costello had these comments about the tall, blind, 80-year-old musician who gained fame in the 50's and 60's while living and playing on the streets of New York and was a guest of Costello's at 1995's *Meltdown*. "We heard his afternoon concert, which was scheduled to run I suppose an hour and a half, like most concerts. And I think it ran for two and a half hours because Moon Dog was absolutely unstoppable once he got on stage, much to everybody's surprise, because another thing that's very hard to judge is his age. I mean, people would -- would assume that a person of his chronological age would just not have the stamina for such a long concert. And here he was, basically exhausting these brass players. When you get very individual people who have gone their own way for so many numbers of years, I think you -- it's probably best to pay some attention to what they say and then listen to the music and see whether it takes you to any of those places, you know."

The Eclectic Ballroom (March 24 - Today FM) See full report on page 23.

In Print

Magazines:

Sound on Sound (March) UK music recording magazine chats briefly with Pete Thomas in a continuing series on musical

arrangements. Says PT: "Working with Elvis Costello on over a dozen albums and a million tours, I'm used to a singer singing at full tilt every time he opens his mouth, whether it's the first time through a song, or at a sound-check, or at a live TV performance in front of an audience of billions. So when I'm recording I like to have the singer doing a guide with all their emotion coming out. That way I can feel where something might need a little push, or alternatively where something needs a bit of space."

Stereo Review (March) US mag selects *This Year's Model* as the popular (versus classical) LP "that mattered - and still do(es)" for 1978. The Elvis Costello produced *East Side Story* by Squeeze was 1981's choice.

Q (March) *Armed Forces* clocked in at number 7 in a listing of "The 50 Best Albums of the '70s." "Costello's mentors were The Beatles, Burt Bacharach and Abba, and their lessons were not lost on him: the melodies, from "Oliver's Army" to "Chemistry Class" are still bright and hard as diamonds." Things get a little tacky in their selection of the 90s act most likely to record it: "Elvis Costello, we wish."

Mark Schnitzius's Elvis Costello Home Page also gets some strong praise in the magazine's regular Internet column. (<http://east.isx.com/~schnitzi/elvis.html>)

Best wishes go out to Australian subscriber John Everingham who will be taking over for Mark as manager of the web page. Also, our thanks go out to Mark for his fine work on the page in the past. Ed.

Gramophone (April) Elvis, Paul McCartney and John Harle are included amongst several classical composers, critics, conductors and the like, in discussing the current and future state of classical music. Some Costello comments. **Musical Pluralism:** "I try to think of myself as a musician but I do get slightly queasy at the phrase 'My music'. After a while the music doesn't really belong to you. The phrase 'My music' is as idiotic as saying 'I own the letter Z'." **Future:** "Music is more like water than a rhinoceros - it runs away in all different directions if dropped on the floor, it doesn't charge madly in one direction."

Uncut (April) In addition to the free Demon CD, Costello again shows up on the *Dr. Know* question page. This time it's about EC writing a song for Patsy Kensit (Mrs. Liam Gallagher). We all of course know that the song is question was "Having It All," which was dropped from the Julian Temple film *Absolute Beginners*. (PS They actually do ask

readers to beg off EC questions for a while!)

Q (May) *The Juliet Letters* makes a list of "The Best Dinner Party Albums of All Time" along with the likes of Tom Waits *Closing Time*, Marvin Gaye's *Midnight Love*, Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue* and others by Nick Drake, Brian Eno and Portishead. *Q* calls it "a splendid compromise for your guest who 'can't manage that foreign muck' - i.e. classical music proper."

Newspapers:

The Irish Times (April 4) Interview by John Kelly (yes - him again!) in which EC offers some interesting thoughts on his career to date:

"I don't think I have a style. I think a style is the ability to be instantly recognisable and yet have very few variations in what you do. And I don't think I've got a style in that sense because there isn't one thing that I always defer to. There are people with a very definite style and it's like a thread. I think of Van Morrison as someone with a definite style. He can cast a song in the ballad mode and you know the contours of it and yet it's still an original song ... There are several different tributaries of the one main thing that he does. He's like Muddy Waters. The great blues players had very few variations and yet they were so emphatic. I think there's one or two people in rock 'n' roll with a definite style and I think Van's one of them, Lennon was maybe another one but I don't think I'm like that."

"I'm part of a different tradition of popular songwriting that is not governed by the history of rock 'n' roll. I've never really wholly cast my lot in with rock 'n' roll and I never really developed that side of it. Even before I had started, I had already abandoned a whole lot of songs that were quite sophisticated. I quite rightly anticipated that I would get very little distance if I tried to put over very sophisticated songs. Of course they probably weren't really that sophisticated at all - they were precocious really and when I listen to them now I'm rather glad that they didn't manage to get a hearing. And so it came down to narrowing my musical options to the thing that allowed me to get peoples' attention. Once I had their attention and then I started to diversify and explore all the different things that interest me."

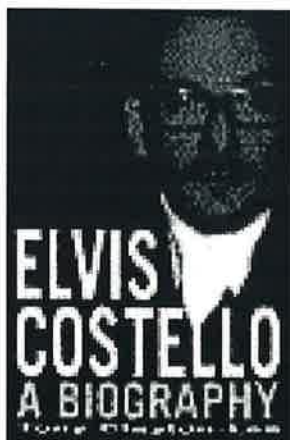
"I always had a good ear but I didn't develop the ability to convey my ideas accurately until comparatively recently. I'm still learning and I hope I go on learning. It's one of the advantages of not learning everything from the start. I know plenty of

people who are trained to the fingernails but can't write a note of music because they know all the options ... I'm sort of half-schooled which I'm finding is a very interesting place to be. I'm in two minds as to whether to become much more learned or whether that's going to shut me off from the more instinctive thing. I don't really agree with Paul McCartney's view that learning the notation is an inhibition to the melodic gift. Certainly it might be true for him. He's too good a melodist to run the risk of losing the thread. But I've gone the other way and I now have limited skills to be able to write it down."

"I have a different relationship to words now than I did just a couple of years ago. And I've been more troubled by the relationship between word and thought and what use it is to me, than by anything else. I am troubled by that. I'm troubled by what the point is in saying anything else - you just have to look at a library full of books, all of them full of thoughts that somebody thought was important at some stage. It might sound like a justification for indolence but why add a single wasted word to the stack of wasted words? I'd like to become good enough to become as expressive with music as I may ever have been with words - not that I think I've written many words of consequence. But I do feel that tunes are much more open to a longer life and greater sense of universal good. I'd like to think that someday, it might be when I'm 80, I might write something where everybody could say, yes I know what he means but there were no words involved. It's a very distant horizon but I can say it optimistically. My ambition is to write no words at all."

Books:

Elvis Costello: A Biography Tony Clayton-Lea (Andre Deutsch) ISBN: 0233992952



Published on May 21 in the UK was a new *Costello* biography by Irish journalist, Tony Clayton-Lea. The book is described as "tracing the life and career of Elvis Costello, from his birth in 1950's London, through his early success in the punk era, to his continuing popularity twenty years on." At press time no

copies could be located so watch for a review in *BB17*. However, orders were being accepted at www.bookshop.co.uk.

Elvis & Burt

Some quotes by EC on the Eclectic Ballroom radio show on March 24:

"We've moved on now. We've been writing a while. He's a very busy man, he's writing all the time, I'm working on things. We've tried to get together and being so far apart geographically makes it difficult to get it done. We've been working away independently and we get together and do intense writing sessions. And now we've got about a dozen songs, maybe a few more than that if we get them all finished. We've got one more writing session at the end of April and we've got the studio booked for June. All being well, we'll come out with a record by the middle of July at the latest. It should be delivered then and come out in the middle of September. I've learned a tremendous amount. He's a very exacting person to work with. I've had to really think about what I wanted to say in the lyrics, maybe get rid of some of the superfluous words, and really let the music do the talking a lot of the time in the tunes. We've tried to write more in the musical language that he works in. There's not much rock 'n' roll on this record. There's a few that are faster than ["God Give Me Strength"] but they're all of a similar kind of intensity, I hope, but only time will tell. We've written different ratios of each song. Some of the songs - if you put them under the microscope and analyse where the joins are - you forget where the joins are after a while. You start to exchange different things you do. I might start a song and he'll complete the thought. Sometimes we'll write in a dialogue of different sections musically. Some songs I'm just the lyricist - there's a few where he's written all of the music. But on most of them I've had something to do with the music as well, which makes it more of a dialogue."

Some comments Burt made to Robert Hilburn of the LA Times published April 12:

"I look forward to this project with Elvis. It's a very collaborative effort. He's so careful about his work. He's someone who lives like I live, someone who can be writing a tune at 4:00 in the morning. I bet I could call at whatever hotel he is in on any given night and the chances are he'll be up, poring over some word for a song. It's something in your blood, something that keeps you going."



RETURN TO THE ECLECTIC BALLROOM

"RADIO WAS GREAT but now it's out of date," asserts Dinah Washington on "TV Is the Thing This Year." Let's hope not. Elvis Costello certainly helped to provide an eloquent argument to the contrary when he paid a return visit to John Kelly's *Eclectic Ballroom* show on 24th March. Since his visit last year (see BB13-14) the struggling Dublin-based radio station has undergone a major revamp, including a name change to *Today FM*, but Mr. Kelly's nightly musical feast ("a rare island of good taste amid the oceans of pap" according to one critic) has, thankfully, survived largely unscathed. As before, EC just rolled up with a big cardboard box filled with CDs ("There are some gems in there - and some odd ones as well," noted Kelly, smacking his lips in anticipation) and sat in for some good-natured chat while his host happily cued up the discs.

Inveterate compilation tape creators (see Nick Hornby's book *High Fidelity*) will appreciate the thought which had clearly gone into programming the selections. The show was neatly bookended by masterly slices of Noel Coward sarcasm ("for all the Divine Comedy fans") EC revealing incidentally that, had he been asked, he would have been happy to contribute to the recent AIDS charity Coward tribute show in London. ("I'll never speak to Neil Tennant again," he joked, referring to the event's musical director). Other moments to savour included the construction of a Betty Wright "soap opera" in which the soul songstress follows up her *faux pas* with the clean up woman by hiring a singularly inappropriate babysitter: "This 16-year-old chick walked in with a skirt up to her waist / She had a truckload of you-know-what and all of it in place..." Another inspired link saw Betty Davis's raunchy declaration that "I'm gonna wiggle my fanny" apparently failing to dent the Chairman of the Board's composure. "One of the most unexpected cross-fades of all time there," cackled EC. "You thought of it, but I carried it off," countered "mix-master" Kelly.

The highlight for Costello trainspotters

came when the giggling twosome followed up an attempt to have Raymond Scott drown out the news and weather by unexpectedly unveiling a new EC recording "Bright Blue Times" (see *On the Beat*) a short, evocative song which the composer had brought along on a CD-R. "Alone in the crowd simply taking up space / You will never admit to tears until they're rolling down your face..." runs the lyric as Elvis sings tenderly over a simple acoustic backing punctuated by some unusual percussive effects.

The recent trip to Italy had also borne fruit: modern dance/rap from Napoli fused with a strong Arabic influence in Alma Magretta's "Gramigna" ("it translates loosely as 'weed'," noted EC); infectious reggae-ragga sung in a Salento dialect from Bologna-based Sud Sound System; two girls from Brindisi "inventing Bruce Springsteen's whole musical style" in a tarantella piece possibly titled "Arcana Mediteranea" (sadly your correspondent was unable to discern either song title or group name with any confidence - it sounded like Tapietz Cow when EC said it!). Best of all, though, were the two tracks by Zambalarama, the first a swaggering trombone-heavy piece from Corsica (via New Orleans, presumably). EC took time to read a translation of the lyric: "Turn, Aunt Maria, turn / Throw these overripe fruit away / Spare not the olive trees in bloom / The September mosquito spares not the olive trees in bloom..." ("It's what the kids want to hear," claimed Elvis!). Even better was the heart-stopping beauty of "Ventu." (*Please help us find a copy of the Zambalarama album!*)

More predictable were the inclusion of tracks by old favourites the Beatles and the Louvins, a Gershwin-flavoured cut from Nick Lowe's magnificent *Dig My Mood* ("serious grown-up music") and boxed set treasures from Dusty Springfield (a "mighty tune" from a 1966 film soundtrack) and The Beach Boys. "It just peters out there," exclaimed EC in disbelief as "Wonderful" from the *Smile* sessions halted poignantly and prematurely. He went on to say that this song is one of two Brian Wilson compositions under consideration for an album which he is producing "in a couple of years." "They're beautiful the way you hear them now, but I'd like to hear them done some other ways as well. The same way as those people playing the Burt Bacharach music ["Promises, Promises"] on clarinets and things. It stands up to that sort of thing. If people want to play it like that it's got a lot of substance to it."

There was time to answer a few questions from listeners. Yes, he'd like to do a follow-

up to *Kojak Variety* with more up-to-date songs. No, he wouldn't be playing with The Attractions again ("that day is done"). Yes, he insisted (despite Kelly's obvious disbelief!) he would be playing in Sligo sometime soon.

Irish *Sunday Times* critic Liam Fay was impressed. In his column on 29th March he noted that Elvis had "chopped and spliced his selections like a deranged sushi chef," adding that "for the entire two hours I curled up in front of the radio like the dog on the HMV label: rapt, attentive and not a little puzzled. Unfortunately, HMV is the last place you're gonna find any of this music. Megastores only sell what gets played on the radio."

Play list:

- ① "The Stately Homes of England" - Noel Coward *The Master* (Hallmark) 1996
- ② "Gramigna" - Alma Magretta *Lingo* (RCA/BMG) 1988
- ③ "The Corrupt Ones" - Dusty Springfield *The Dusty Springfield Anthology* (Mercury) 1997
- ④ "Clean Up Woman" - Betty Wright
- ⑤ "Baby Sitter" - Betty Wright *The Best of Betty Wright* (Rhino) 1992
- ⑥ "Image" - T Bone Burnett *The Talking Animals* (Columbia) 1988
- ⑦ "My Mood Swings" - Elvis Costello *The Big Lebowski - Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* (Mercury) 1998
- ⑧ "Zia Maria" - Zambalarama [unknown source]
- ⑨ "Drown" - Son Volt *Trace* (Warner Bros) 1995
- ⑩ "Faithless Lover" - Nick Lowe *Dig My Mood* (Demon) 1998
- ⑪ "Arcana Mediteranea" - Tapietz Kow [unknown source]
- ⑫ "TV Is the Thing This Year" - Dinah Washington *The Best in Blues* (Verve) 1997
- ⑬ "Powerhouse" - Raymond Scott Quintet *The Music of Raymond Scott: Reckless Nights & Turkish Twilights* (Columbia) 1992
- ⑭ "Bright Blue Times" - Elvis Costello Private CD-R 1998
- ⑮ "If I'm in Luck I Might Get Picked Up" - Betty Davis *Betty Davis* (UFO Music) 1993 reissue of 1973 LP
- ⑯ "(Love Is) The Tender Trap" - Frank Sinatra *The Complete Capitol Singles* (Capitol/EMI) 1996
- ⑰ "Urba Urba" - Sud Sound System *Comu Na Petra* (Ultrasuoni) 1997
- ⑱ "Hey Bulldog" - The Beatles *Yellow Submarine* (Parlophone) 1969
- ⑲ "I Don't Believe You've Met My Baby" - The Louvin Brothers *When I Stop Dreaming: The Best of the Louvin Brothers* (Razor & Tie) 1995
- ⑳ "Promises, Promises" - Erik Friedlander & Chimera *Great Jewish Music: Burt Bacharach* (Tzadik) 1997
- ㉑ "God Give Me Strength" - Elvis Costello & Burt Bacharach *Grace of My Heart - Original Soundtrack* (MCA) 1996
- ㉒ "Wonderful" - The Beach Boys *Good Vibrations: Thirty Years of the Beach Boys* (Capitol/EMI) 1993
- ㉓ "Ventu" - Zambalarama [unknown source]
- ㉔ "Te Recuerdo Amanda" - Victor Jara *Vientos Del Pueblo* (Monitor) 1983
- ㉕ "It's Not My Time to Go" - Dan Hicks & His Hot Licks *Last Train to Hicksville* (MCA) 1987 reissue of 1973 LP
- ㉖ "Don't Let's Be Beastly to The Germans" - Noel Coward *The Master* (Hallmark) 1996

Norway Press Conference - FROM PAGE 9

said he wanted to create the same kind of energy as in rock, but with other instruments.

I asked whether "The Bridge I Burned" is an indication of where he is going, and if he plans to work with his son Matthew and Danny Goffey again. He answered that although his son was "Kind enough to help his old Dad out," there are no plans for working together, 'cause Matthew has his own musical agenda.

POLYGRAM / VERVE DEAL: Elvis said he thinks his new record company is "bold and adventurous." He said that when he and Burt have made their album, Verve will do some jazz-arrangements of the songs and release them. When asked which artists will be playing on those versions he would not give it away, but that he has a couple of favorite musicians in mind.

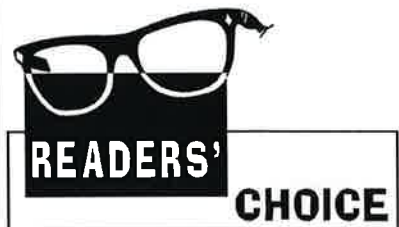
I told him that a local Norwegian paper actually had written that THE Verve was going to do the jazz versions of the EC & BB songs (slight mistake, to say the least . . .) and that really made him laugh and say "Oh, they're very welcome to participate if they want to . . ."

RHINO COMPILATION: On the subject of the new Rhino compilation he said that he had not actually chosen the songs on it, he had just made a couple of suggestions, and he has also written liner notes for each song. He thinks it is a very representative collection of EC cover versions, from the really obscure to the more well known. He said he was really glad when McCartney agreed to let them use "My Brave Face," because he does not usually licence his songs to others. Elvis went on to say that the collaborations with Macca have been great help to his own career.

He said that Rhino recently had sent him a fax with the cover art for the compilation, and Elvis thought it was hilarious. There is a picture of a stack of sheet music and on the top there's this "bust of the composer." "They've tried to make it look like me, but instead it looks like Henry Kissinger." He wanted to show us the fax, and searched his jacket pocket, but alas, it was not there.

ON TONIGHT'S SHOW: Elvis said that the set list is usually very flexible, and changes from place to place. Since they have never played Voss before, and rarely in Norway at all, he is somewhat uncertain which songs people know, so they would be doing a variation of old and new ones.

With that the arranger called "Time's up," at which point I got Elvis to pose for a snapshot with me, we shook hands and bid adieu . . .



Last issue, in honor of the release of Bespoke Songs by Rhino, we asked you to vote for your three (3) favorite recorded Costello cover versions. Here's your picks. Note the interesting tie for the second spot!

1. The Comedians
- Roy Orbison
2. Girls Talk
- Dave Edmunds
2. Indoor Fireworks
- Nick Lowe
4. Shipbuilding
- Robert Wyatt
5. My Brave Face
- Paul McCartney



Voters Pat Mundy from San Diego, CA and Andrew Moorhouse from Rochdale, England were selected at random to receive a free copy of the CD courtesy of our friends at Rhino Records.

For next issue make some suggestions as to artists you'd like to see cover Costello and even be as so bold as to suggest the song!

Framed and Hung Up



The above portrait of EC was submitted by Jim Angelina from Brooklyn, NY. Congrats Jim on such a fine job.

Kojak Variety

Here's a photo of the Parrishtown, Barbados store/bar that inspired the title of Costello's covers LP. Thanks to Giuliano Valenti for the photo.



Available Again: Costello interview picture disk album (baktabak 2001) \$12 (pluspost.). Other Costello Imports available!

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