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ELTON

HERCULES

THE MAG

50TH ISSUE · 50TH ISSUE · 50TH ISSUE

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Exclusive!
Nigel Olsson talks
to Hercules

New Album News

**Your chance to win
rare T-shirt!**

News & Tour Dates

Aida - show review

PLUS:
YOUR LETTERS,
SMALL ADS,
LYRIC QUIZ,
DAVID FURNISH
AND MORE!



March 2000 Issue No: 50

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MARCH 2000

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Please don't send enquiries or **fan mail** to the Elton John management, but to HERCULES Coordination. Letters will be passed on if necessary.

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FROM THE EDITOR...

Welcome to the 50th issue of the Hercules fanzine! Originally called Rocket Fan back in 1988, and now called The Mag, readership has grown tremendously over the last 12 years. Its a reflection of the fact that Elton himself continues to go from strength to strength.

Elton continues to be really busy, and his hugely successful Solo Tour shows no signs of stopping. Building on the success of last year, EJ kicked off his schedule for 2000 by performing 3 shows in Hawaii, before returning to the USA for more shows throughout the Spring. And more concerts have been announced across Europe for the summer. See the Tour Date listing on page 27 for full details.

In between all of this activity, Elton has also found time to write and perform the soundtrack for another animated movie, Dreamworks The Road to El Dorado. Details of the songs on the resulting album, and when you can get hold of your copy, can be found in the News section.

We are very excited that Nigel Olsson chose to speak exclusively to Hercules from his home in California, giving us an insight into life with EJ in the "early days". The first part of the interview is later in this issue, with part 2 continuing in June. And we were pleased to hear that Nigel has subsequently returned to work with Elton, for the first time in 16 years, providing backing vocals on promotion work for the El Dorado project.

As part of the service which we offer to fans, Hercules have again been able to secure group allocation premium tickets to many of Elton's shows this year. We make NO profit on the tickets which fans buy through Hercules, it's purely a way of ensuring that great seats are available for real fans. In fact Hercules is not about making profit at all - the Team here are all volunteers, and we aren't paid for what we do. Which is what makes it YOUR Elton John Fan Club; it's run by the fans, for the fans.

That's also why your contributions are always welcome. Write and tell us about why you became a fan, and other EJ-related incidents along the way! Photos and pics are always welcome too.

And if you loved the Hercules 2000 Calendar, we want you to share the glory for 2001! We want to emphasise that, not only is it Elton, but also the fans that make Hercules great. Have a look through your pictures of Elton and select photos you have taken over the years; if your pic is used in the 2001 Calendar, you will have your name printed next to the photo, and receive a free calendar as thanks. Please send all contributions to me - address at top of page 2.

All that's left is for us to wish Elton a very Happy Birthday in March. And if you can't make it to any of our "Celebrate EJ's Birthday" Conventions (see page 19 for details), then I'll look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at Elton's Solo shows in the summer!

Tanni



Madison Square Garden - 1998 (Photos: J Keating)

NEWS BULLETS...

Full details of the following news items have appeared on our Hotline and Web-site

NEW ALBUM NEWS

The latest collaboration from the team of Elton, Tim Rice and Hans Zimmer, stems from DreamWorks Pictures' upcoming animated adventure *The Road To El Dorado*, which is in cinemas from March 31. However, the album 'Elton John's *The Road To El Dorado*', scheduled for release on March 14, is more than just the soundtrack.

Elton explained "Instead of just having the usual five songs on a soundtrack album and the rest of it being score, I said, 'Let's make an album out of this and include songs we wrote that didn't make the movie.'" He went on to talk about how the film, and the music, changed along the way, "The plot changes, the jokes change, the songs change scenes, but that's par for the course."

The album features the original, full-length versions of the five songs Elton performs in the film: *El Dorado*; *Without Question*; *Friends Never Say Goodbye*; *The Trail We Blaze*; and *Someday Out Of The Blue* (Theme from *El Dorado*).

In addition, the album has Elton singing a duet with Randy Newman *It's Tough To Be A God* (sung in the film by Kevin Kline

and Kenneth Branagh); *16th Century Man*; *Trust Me*; and *Queen Of Cities* (all written for, but not included, in the film); *The Panic In Me* and *My Heart Dances* (written specifically for the album). The first single, *Someday Out Of The Blue* (Theme from *El Dorado*) will be released April 4.

The album also includes excerpts from the score to the film. Elton says of his partnership with Rice and Zimmer: "Tim likes what I do with the melody, I like what Tim does with the lyric, and we love what Hans does. So it's not a really complicated thing, primarily because we have so much respect for each other." Tim Rice, sole lyricist on the project, remarks: "Hans is one of the great film composers. And Elton, of course, is a legend in every way. So I feel quite privileged."

DreamWorks Records executive Michael Ostin says of the album: "It's so great to be part of a musical event like this. I still can't believe I'm working with Elton John, Tim Rice and Hans Zimmer. These guys are at their creative peaks, and we're really lucky to be able to bring their combined talents to so many people with this amazing record."

ELTON AND TIM ASSIGNED

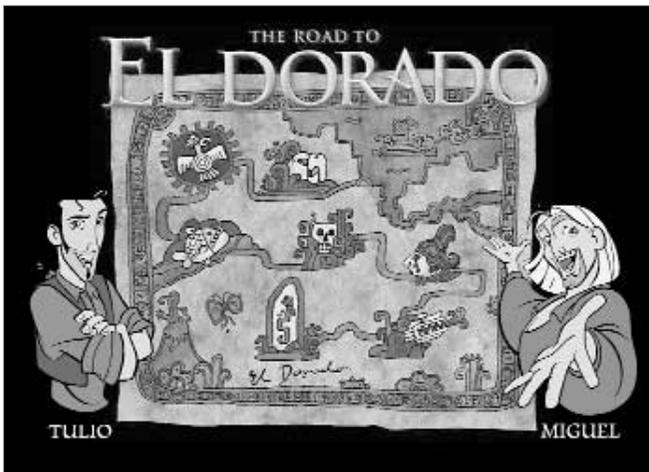
Elton and Tim Rice will sit at Tower Records on 8801 Sunset Blvd., LA, on March 14th 2000 at 7pm, to sign copies of *The Road to El Dorado* when the album hits the street. It's been 5 years since Elton and Bernie Taupin did their last autograph party at Tower Records in LA. After 4 hours and 1,300 fans, the evening became a segment of history for both Elton and Tower. Fans must buy their CD March 13, and receive a special entry bracelet.

HI HAWAII!

EJ kicked off the new year with 3 concerts in Honolulu, Hawaii, January 7, 8, and 9. Although it is a US state, it is very far away from the mainland....about halfway between California and Japan !!!! We have a Hercules member in Honolulu: he was very helpful to some mainland USA and some Japanese members of Hercules on this occasion.....thanks Brian! Elton used basically the same set list as the USA shows from the fall of 1999. He commented that it was a great city, and that he was really enjoying his stay there. EJ got many flowered leis and Hawaiian shirts as gifts from the audience.....the last time he had done a concert in Honolulu was 1982! Over the 3 nights, he dedicated songs to friends in the audience such as "Janet from England", Lulu, and singer Diane Krall. Elton will continue to tour North America until April, bringing the solo tour to Europe in the summer.

CAN I PUT YOU ON?

Many of you will still remember the Elton John postage stamps Hercules commissioned for his 50th birthday in 1997. There are more Elton stamps around, visit www.coolstamps.com Stamps come from Komi, Gagauzia, Buriatia, and Tanzania!



NEWS BULLETS...

WALLACE TRUSTEE

The London-based museum, the Wallace Collection has hired Elton to its board of trustees. "Sir Elton dresses normal when he comes to see us," said one insider. "Nothing outrageous. No spangles. You wouldn't say he was famous at all. He loves this place and has been here several times."

42ND ANNUAL GRAMMY AWARD

Elton was presented with the Grammy Legend Award during the 42nd Annual Grammy Awards. The CBS-televised event was held at the new Staples Center in downtown Los Angeles on February 23, 2000. As well as receiving his award, EJ also performed at the ceremony.

ELTON THANKS HERCULES MEMBERS

During a meeting with Hercules in London Jan 18, the Cheif Executive Officer of Elton's new management company, Frank Presland delivered Elton's thanks for fans' loyalty and support - especially in 1999. Elton was impressed by the number of Christmas cards and gifts, and says he'll not forget the "Get Well Soon" project organised by Hercules following Elton's heart surgery last July.

PRIVATE DANCER

Elton performed a private concert Saturday, Jan 29, in his adopted hometown of Atlanta, Georgia. Elton was singing to benefit Elton John AIDS Foundation, as well as Gridiron Glamour, a travelling fashion show that benefits the HollyRod Foundation, which raises money to fight breast cancer. He played a 2-hour show at the local Fox Theater and dedicated Tiny Dancer to Muhammad Ali and Philadelphia Freedom to Billie Jean King both of whom were in the audience.



JOHN AND DAVEY IN CONCERT

Elton band members John Jorgenson and Davey Johnstone performed a show at McCabe's Guitar Store in Santa Monica on Jan 30, at 7.00 pm. About 150 fans braved the rain. Also in the audience were wives and family members of both Davey and John, as well as band member John Mahon.

ELTON'S HALF-BROTHER IN COURT

The half-brother of Elton has been banned from driving and convicted of possessing cannabis by magistrates in north Wales. But 33-year-old Geoffrey Dwight, from Ruthin, was late for court in Wrexham after the exhaust fell off his battered Ford Escort car. Mr. Dwight, an unemployed harp maker, told the court he declined a breathalyser test because police officers had seen him driving on a car park, not a public road. He said he had been out drinking and playing the harp in pubs in Llangollen one night in last July when he was arrested. Mr. Dwight told the court the harp, which he had made for his elderly mother, was damaged by a police constable who put his foot on it as he was arrested.

SNOOKEROO

A man described by New York police as a professional party crasher was arrested on fraud charges for allegedly posing as Elton's manager to get into a \$750-a-plate celebrity-studded gala, reported the New York Daily News Jan 16. Peter Gianquinto, 50, called up organisers of the Volunteers of America's annual Christmas gala at the Four Seasons Hotel posing as Elton's manager and asked for 7 tickets. He claimed Elton and Donatella Versace wanted to attend the Dec 12 event to meet with two friends who were leading the event, police said. Party planners were so snookered they changed the seating arrangements at the last minute to accommodate the request.

INTERVIEWING'S NOT MY STRONGEST SUIT

"Victoria's Secrets: Mrs Beckham's Celebrity Odyssey" (Channel 4 Television) shown on UK television early January, was something of an enigma. Posh Spice aka Victoria Adams spent an hour interviewing big names like Elton John. Elton, who was interviewed as he shopped for CDs, suddenly asked her what she thought of former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell's new songs. Posh was speechless. The Hercules refrain: "I'm speechless, and I don't know where to start!"

NEWS BULLETS...

Full details of the following news items have appeared on our Hotline and Web-site

NO STRINGS ON JUDIE

Elton has returned the copyrights of three of Judie Tzuke's early albums from his Rocket Record label back to the UK singer/songwriter. The albums were recorded between 1979 and 1981 and include her worldwide hit Stay With Me Till Dawn, and For You, her first single for Rocket. "As the albums had been deleted for some time, I called Elton's office. Elton kindly called me and said that he would of course be prepared to let me have them back," says Judie. Judie plans a UK tour "Phoenix 2000" in April and May.

'NEW' HIDDEN RECORDINGS

Hercules regularly hears of unearthed hidden Elton recordings. But the latest out of the closet comes from a Scottish radio station, reports the UK Independent newspaper Jan 24. Scottish Radio Holdings, owner of Radio Clyde, plans to raise £75m through a placing and aims to exploit previously unreleased recordings of Elton. "This isn't the usual call for cash for acquisitions," one of the bankers to the placing said. "Some of SRH's stations have some great Elton recordings stuck in the archives, which really ought to be commercialised."

OFFICIAL ELTON JOHN WEBSITE

Following a meeting with Frank Presland, the CEO of Twenty-First Artist (Elton's new management company), in London on January 18, 2000, Hercules can say that the official Elton John website <http://www.eltonjohn.com>, is going to be worth waiting for. The basic website is launched March 1, but might take a few weeks for all features to be operational. Elton is expected to be highly involved in the website project - with personal contributions regularly. Hercules hopes to be involved with this exciting new project. A review of the new web site will follow in June's The Mag.

GREATEST ROCK 'N' ROLL SONGS

The 100 greatest rock 'n' roll songs, as determined by a panel of 700 voters assembled by the music network VH1, have Elton at number 70 with Your Song.

RAYMOND ON TV

Many fans have contacted us to ask when will the show featuring Elton look-a-like Raymond Johnson and the Hercules fan club at Leeds Castle in September 1999 be screened on British TV. The Look-A-Likes Agency, first due out over Christmas 1999, will be shown on ITV, likely early March. It is being screened as a five- or six-part prime-time show, with segments of Hercules in most episodes.

MAYFIELD DIES

Soul legend Curtis Mayfield, whose stylings influenced artists of all musical genres, died on Dec 26. He was 57. Mayfield suffered a serious accident in August 1990. In 1994, Elton, Whitney Houston, The Isley Brothers and Aretha Franklin recorded his compositions in a special tribute called, All Men Are Brothers: A Tribute to Curtis Mayfield. A remake of a Mayfield song will feature as an anthem for the State of Georgia. The record producers want Elton to be included on the recording.

ELTON AT THE MET

New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art is showing exhibition "Rock Style" (runs until March 19) and spotlights classic rock-'n'-roll performers and their pervasive influence on fashion. The exhibition features some of Elton's costumes and shoes.

GERMAN SINGLE CHARTS OF THE 90S

Elton John was present in the German Top 100 Singles Charts for 294 weeks in the Nineties. That makes him number five right behind Michael Jackson (302 weeks), Mariah Carey (309 weeks), Madonna (330 weeks) and Sweden's Roxette with a total of 377 weeks. On average there was an Elton John single listed in the German Top 100 every second week between 1990 and 1999.

CANDY BY THE POUND

Elton was the biggest solo earner in 1999 according to rock account Cliff Dane. Elton, taking £25m, was also number two overall, behind the almost predictable Rolling Stones band which creamed £35m. The figures follow December news from Pollstar about top concert earners in 1999, which placed Elton eighth with \$32.5m. Number one were - again - the Rolling Stones on \$64.7m. But remember, the Stones have to split their earnings between them.

ELTON TO FACE COURT

Elton is to give evidence at London's High Court in his £20m damages claim against a former agent and accountants, reported the Western Daily Press newspaper Dec. 15. Mr Justice Jacob heard the first legal skirmishes between the parties involved at a preliminary hearing in Dec. The judge said it was being claimed that Andrew Haydon, an agent employed by Elton's former manager John Reid's company, JRE Ltd., was negligent in allowing JRE to charge U.S. tour expenses to Elton. The trial in October is expected to last eight weeks.

NEWS BULLETS...

PERFECT DAY

According to unconfirmed sources, Elton has signed up to appear in 'Perfect Day', the finale concert to National Music Day in the UK. The concert takes place at Somerset House, London on June 29, 2000, and will be broadcast live by UK TV BBC 1 and 2, and UK Radio 1 & 2. Elton will break from his German Tour to appear.

NIGEL STRIKES BACK!

According to the Nigel Olsson Fan Club, Nigel provided backing vocals on the upcoming sound-track album *The Road to El Dorado*.

MUSICARES AWARD



Elton and Sting share a joke after Elton was presented with the Musicares Person of the Year Award in Los Angeles, Feb 21.

NEW BOOK

Author Philip Norman has completed writing *Sir Elton: The Definitive Biography of Elton John*. It will be published in March by London publishers Sidgwick & Jackson. Apparently, Elton thinks the book is well-researched and accurate. Norman famously penned *Elton* in 1991, which was an insightful book on Elton and included a fascinating and comprehensive discography, or as our sales manager Alan at *Wrap It Up!* correctly pointed out, "songography" as it didn't detail disc catalogue codes!



Southbend, IN, USA - October 1999 (Photo: L. Sykes)

Elton John and Tim Rice's

Aida

IN CHICAGO

Review by Sharon Kalinoski

Fortunately for me and other Chicago area residents the pre-Broadway run of "Aida" took place at the Cadillac Palace Theater in Chicago from Nov 12 1999 to Jan 9, 2000. The convenient location allowed me to see the musical 7 times. And I would have liked to see more. The music, of course, was written by Elton, with lyrics by Tim Rice.

I had not seen the first incarnation in Atlanta in 1998 ("Elaborate Lives: The Legend of Aida"), so I did not know what to expect. The first Aida performance in Chicago that I was supposed to see was cancelled due to an on-stage accident on the second night of previews. Near the end of the Nov 13 show, the two lead actors, Heather Headley as Aida and Adam Pascal as Radames, fell 15 feet to the stage when the "tomb" plummeted. Both were only slightly injured, and were able to resume their roles for the November 18 show. But there's an old saying that "any publicity is good publicity": the show received more local news coverage due to the mishap.

As it was, a lot of local news reports focused on the grand re-opening of the theater itself. The original vaudeville theater's chandeliers, marble, gold-leaf, and intricate decorative figures have been refurbished throughout, at an estimated \$20 million.

Elton was in Chicago for the final week of Aida rehearsals, and performed 3 solo concerts in the city that week. But he never once mentioned the musical during his concerts! My Aida T-shirt did not even trigger a comment. He did return to the city for the official press opening

night of Aida on December 9, and he made the front page of the Chicago Sun-Times newspaper.

Before discussing the details of the show, a few interesting comparisons of Chicago's "Aida" to the Atlanta version. First, most of the cast was replaced, except for Headley as Aida and Sherie Scott as Amneris and one of the ensemble (background/dancer) actors, Phineas Newborn. Although many of the behind-the-scenes people were replaced, many were also retained.

Three of the "Elaborate Lives" songs were dropped from the revamped "Aida", most notably "The Messenger", which was on the officially released CD and demo CD. "Not Me" was re-inserted into the musical, along with the renamed "Radames' Letter". There are a few songs that were not included on the various artists CD, which were in the musical: "Every Story is a Love Story", "Our Nation Holds Sway", "The Past is Another Land", and "Dance of the Robe." Plus, they are not performed in the order they appear on either Aida CD.

I can't possibly convey the full story, atmosphere, and emotions of Aida well enough. You need to see it for yourself. I will provide a basic outline of the story, but this does not do it justice. Critics universally agreed that the musical's costumes and scenery were stunning.

One long time theatergoer I know said that it was the best scenery she had ever seen. A big favorite of many was the

geometric patterned silhouette-filled and backlit "prison scene" - awesome. Most others also enjoyed the breathtaking vertical swimming pool scene, complete with mist and "swimmers" in a great illusion. The frequent scenery changes all moved so smoothly that one hardly noticed when it was happening; there were no awkward moments at any time.

Critics all lauded Headley's portrayal of the lead role, and agreed that she is destined to be a big star. But a target of critics were the seemingly "out of place/time" (anachronistic) scenes. For example, one took issue with a painted woman figure wearing a bikini swimsuit, which she felt was not "correct" for ancient Egypt. Unfortunately, someone working on the show heard the comment and agreed.....so the figure got a painted-on towel for the rest of the show's run!

What the reviewers did not understand was that the show's writers were intentionally blending old and new, using modern devices to tell a timeless story in an "ancient" setting. I feel that the story was not intended to be solely about a drama taking place in ancient Egypt: it is a story that could take place anywhere, anytime, with universal themes of power struggles, love, and death.

Critics also dismissed the modern "fashion show" scene, a futuristic runway sequence backed by loud rock music, saying that it caused the show to have a "split personality." They felt it detracted from the

seriousness of the story, and it is rumored that it may be eliminated during the Broadway run. However, it was a very entertaining crowd pleaser. Too bad the detractors could not appreciate the balance that this fun scene provided....they need to realize that real life is not all serious, nor all fun.

Tim Rice, for those of you who don't know, is a veteran lyric writer of many famous musicals such as Jesus Christ Superstar and Evita. He collaborated with Elton for a few songs in the 1980s, and is also well known as co-writer with Elton of the "Lion King" soundtrack. (Hard to believe that was nearly 5 years ago!!!) He has been widely quoted as saying that he does not care what the critics think about Aida, and that they will probably hate it. He says that what matters is that the audience likes it, and I agree. If the average person enjoys it, as entertainment, then it is a success.

A brief summary of the story: An Egyptian captain falls in love with a slave he captured, Aida. Unknown to him, she is a Nubian princess. He, Radames, is engaged to marry Amneris, the Pharaoh's daughter. Against his will he is forced to marry Amneris, but his heart forces him to betray Egypt to help Aida. For this crime, Radames and Aida are sentenced to be buried alive. Although she loves them both, Amneris must, as the future leader of Egypt, allow the death sentence to be carried out.

As the lovers await death, Radames tells Aida that he will

find her again, even if it takes 100 lifetimes. This "future" meeting is portrayed in the show's opening and closing scenes: the show begins and ends in a setting of a modern day museum with ancient Egyptian artifacts in glass cases. The "ancient" lovers, supposedly reincarnated, catch each other's eyes and feel an attraction.

During the nearly 9 week run in Chicago there were frequent minor dialog and song lyric changes. Some made sense, such as Radames' father (Zoser) asking "...what do we do if they take up arms again?" instead of the former ".....what do we do if they take up arms against us?".

One very clever scene right before "Like Father, Like Son" has a humorous little "Lion King" reference. While plotting to kill the pharaoh, Zoser reflects, "first a wedding, then a funeral.....ah, now that's what I call the Circle of Life." The audience chuckles.

There were other minor dialog conflicts I realized after my sixth show; hopefully this will be revised for Broadway, for example Aida asks Mereb not to tell anyone that she is a Nubian princess, because she fears the Egyptians will kill her. But since at the very beginning there were other Nubian women captured along with her, the Nubians would have already known that Aida was enslaved.

Those who have not already seen it, I highly recommend that you go to see Aida in New York if you get the chance. I guarantee that you will enjoy it immensely. 

HEALING HAND'S

nigel olsson

TALKS EXCLUSIVELY TO HERCULES

FROM CALIFORNIA,

13 NOVEMBER 1999

His friends call him the "Drop-Out Drummer", the fans call him a legend. We're talking about Nigel Olsson - one of the first drummers of Elton's remarkable career.

Why drop out? Nigel was asked to leave the Elton John Band - twice - but what's earned him that title? In his own words: "It's what I leave out that makes people appreciate my playing style." Like successor Charlie Morgan, the life-span of an Elton drummer doesn't appear to exceed 13 years. That's what Charlie and Nigel each survived when they were full-time drummers for Elton.

And why is Nigel a legend? Well, for those of you unsure of Nigel's history here's a quick reminder... He's played drums and sung backing vocals on most of Elton's repertoire 1970 through 1984. He was briefly out of the band with colleague and bass guitarist Dee Murray in 1975, and then returned. He was again released - along with Dee - in 1985.

His first successful recording for Elton was "Lady What's Tomorrow" on 1969 album Empty Sky, while Roger Pope provided the fills on all that album's other tracks. Nigel's next appearance was on "Tumbleweed Connection", drumming on "Amoreena" as well as backing vocals with Dee on a number of other tracks. Then came the legendary live radio show "17-11-70", with Elton's sound stripped down to piano, Dee on bass and Nigel on drums.

Nigel's full-time stint started with "Honky Chateau" in 1972, and among his classics are "Rocket Man" and of course our anthem "Hercules". The drums stopped rolling in 1976, when "Blue Moves" was released without Nigel. Nigel and Dee reappeared in 1980 at the biggest crowd-puller of the era...the infamous Central Park, New York show in September. Nigel reappeared on the album "21 at 33", and on the 1981 album The Fox, he was drummer for "Breaking Down The Barriers", "Heels of the Wind", and the title track.

In a further twist of confusion for the record-buying public, Nigel was again off the 1982 album "Jump Up!" but Dee was still on. Jeffrey Porcaro was the drummer. Nigel made a full return on 1983 and 1984 hit albums "Too Low For Zero" and "Breaking Hearts." And despite all the ins-and-outs, Nigel is probably the best remembered Elton drummer.

Nigel was born in Sunderland, north east England and emigrated to California in 1972, before moving to Nashville for 7 years. Old pal Dee was with him there. They did backing vocals for local hero Earl Thomas Connelly. More importantly, Nigel met his wife Schanda in Nashville. Nigel became disillusioned with the music scene for a while, when he took up a hobby in racing cars, which continues. Nigel moved back to California four years ago.

That's the history lesson over with. Now what's Nigel up to?

George Matlock: Thank you very much for participating in this interview. The whole thing snowballed following an interview we did with Charlie Morgan earlier this year. That generated a lot of interest, and here we are. Do you long to come back to the UK for a while?

Nigel Olsson: I'd love to come back to record. Basically, I'd love to record with producers I haven't before, or those I have, on a big record. I'd love to record again with Gus Dudgeon. We have actually discussed many times on the phone. Want to do it the old-fashioned way. With real drums, in a real studio, with a real microphone. These days you just post a disk and you have sounds. Me and Gus were probably the first in and the last out at the studio, perfecting the drums. These days I think it takes away from the energy and the heart of the record.

GM: You mean it's a good thing to suffer a little for your craft.

NO: Absolutely. That's what we did in the old days, and it worked very well.

GM: Is it that your and Gus's time schedules don't permit, or are there any other anxieties?

NO: It costs a lot of money to do it the old-fashioned way. And with the names I'd like, the record company would have to come up with a lot of smackeroos (money).

GM: Ideally, who would you like to bring in? I understand among names are Lee Sklar on bass, with whom you worked in your early California session days. And you are chasing Kiki Dee and Ray Cooper for their collaboration.

NO: Production-wise, Gus, Jeff Lynne. Also David Foster on keyboards, with whom I've been close friends since the mid-70s

when I moved here. Playing-wise, I still love the way Davey Johnstone plays. In fact, there is a project in the air from a small company in Japan who want me to put together an album with Davey, Guy Babylon and Bob Birch.

GM: *We look forward to plugging that at the appropriate time. Is that happening in 2000?*

NO: We're discussing it now, we should know the deal is there in the next couple of weeks. But it's in the 'hurry up and wait' situation [laughter]. We'll cut that (record) probably in Los Angeles. I've been talking to a lot of people about this Internet deal you mentioned. Several people have phoned me to say I should put recording out on the Internet. But being not yet Internet-friendly, it's way above my head. But it would cut the middle man out. In ten years there'll only be one record company who owns everybody, run by lawyers and doctors!

GM: *So do you think this is the way you'll go, down the world wide web?*

NO: It could be. You know, it's still very, very new. I've just got this set of electric drums. After years of swearing at electric drums, I just got sponsored by a drum company in Los Angeles, called Drum Tech. They sent me all these electric drum pads, so that I can rehearse in the house without blowing the neighbours. So the (Internet) is still new. I just want to get into the studio again. I have a 17-year-old son who's into all that Internet.

GM: *Good luck with the record. Hercules keeps in touch with the band members, and I think we feel a big debt to you all. I should ask your age.*

NO: I'm 50 years.

GM: *I can't tell that from your voice. You don't sound like Leonard Cohen!* [laughter]

GM: *Now turning to events one year old! Charlie suffered a similar experience to you. At the time of his departure, there was a lot of speculation that Nigel Olsson might come back. It wasn't to be. But would you have come back? And was the invitation made?*

NO: I wasn't invited, but my name was put forward by a couple of people involved with Elton. But I can't tell you by whom. It was put forward to His Majesty [laughter]. They were told by Elton 'no, I don't want to go backwards'. Whatever that means. I'd have loved to have gone back and do small tours. You know when Reidie was involved (John Reid) we'd get a call that we're doing a tour of 32 cities. Then when you get on the tour, it becomes 2 years! So, I'd like to do small tours. And do those early songs, like "Better Off Dead" and "Danny Bailey", and "Tower of Babel". In fact, I'm doing a Drum Clinic tour at the moment where I play in music stores and feature two of the early CDs. I'm playing "Roy Rogers", and it's going down a storm. People are coming up and asking 'where did you find that song?!

Little do they know its buried on "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road".

Nigel says he's hopeful of a return (and since this interview was conducted he's been drafted in to provide backing vocals on new album "The Road to El Dorado")

NO: So I would have loved the invite, and I may be invited back. But to learn he (Elton) would be 'going backwards' was another kick in the face. It would never be the same without Dee, but I just want to play with the lads.

GM: *Well, your enthusiasm is registered loud and clear. This appears to be a gestation period for the band, however. It seems most of the 2000 gigs may well be solo shows anyway. Do you feel Elton's trying to keep overheads low?*

NO: Probably so. You know I don't know how correct the press has been about millions owing by Reidie. But I'm sure (Elton's) got enough money to see him through the weekend [laughter]. The tour's selling out everywhere. And in discussion with many people over the years, they say 'what do you need a band for, when it's selling out anyway?' But



Nigel then...

HEALING HANDS

continued

fans like the band atmosphere. Although Elton's very exciting to watch solo, the band adds an extra attraction, and you can get up to more antics on stage."

GM: *I understand you have a special request Nigel.*

NO: Yes, I'd like you to stick in here. We as a band always took care of our people. We opened the door for a lot of the road crews. We realised that without them we wouldn't be able to do the gig on. I think we were the first band to put washing machines on the truck. The crew would always have clean clothes and clean sheets on their bunk beds. They had three meals a day. They had a full breakfast when they arrived in the morning. We came up with things which nowadays is there in the crew's contracts everywhere. We pioneered this. Now they're making so much money. In old days, you had to have at least two major records and wouldn't make any money until the third record. Likewise, touring you never broke even on the first two tours. It cost the record company or whoever to put you out there. Nowadays, it's mega money, and the ticket prices are unbelievable.

GM: *Well, that's a moot point with Elton fans, who have paid £55 for solo shows recently. But I guess they're paying for an established name. But let's go back to when things were less established. Run us through the CV.*

NO: I was with a band called Plastic Penny since the mid-1960s. They were put together by the record company. Page One Records, which was a subsidiary of Dick James Music, had got this song "Everything I am" and they went into studio with session guys, cut the song, and put it out. And it started going on the charts. So they were madly scrambling to

put a band together to promote that record. And they were auditioning lots of people. And in this business it's all about who you know and where you are. A talent scout guy in Sunderland, where I lived, was looking for a guitar player and drummer for this band. At that stage, I was playing with local bands in Sunderland. He said 'would you guys like to come down to London and audition?' We said 'give us the (train) ticket and we're there.' We went to the studio at Dick James in Oxford Street, and got the gig. The record made position 6 on the UK charts (Jan. 3, 1968). We made two albums, but nothing ever came of them. We were one of the original one-hit wonders [laughter].

GM: *Not so much a Plastic Penny as a bad penny.*

NO: Yes, but it put me in the right circle. We were handled by the Dick James organisation. Elton and Bernie were staff songwriters. On the books were Gerry and the Pacemakers, Spencer Davis Group, and The Beatles. Elton would come in to do demos, and if I was available I'd do drumming on them.

Nigel, who'd met Dee playing in a band called The Mirage, then got a phone call from Dee, who by then had been elevated to Spencer Davis Group. Dee said the band was doing a US tour and would Nigel like to come over. Nigel had no problem uttering 'yes!'

It was the last tour Spencer Davis Group ever did, and a very small tour. "But it was a great chance to get to America, in about 1967," Nigel says.

NO: After eight weeks the tour ended, I returned to England and the band disbanded. Then Elton rang me. He had a friend who



did jingles who was forming a band called Uriah Heep. I auditioned with them, and played about nine dates with them, and two tracks on the record. Elton called again. He said he had this gig to do at the Roundhouse in London. At that stage he was just trying to get his songs cut. He and Bernie were basically writing for the Eurovision Song Contest [laughter]. So he said he had this album produced by Gus Dudgeon and Paul Buckmaster. He asked 'would you come and do this one-off gig with Dee?' And I said, yes, let's go and see what happens.

That's when Nigel found his musical destiny.

NO: We went into Dick James's studio and within the first 16 bars of music, then I knew that's what I wanted to do. It hit me in the heart, in the head, everywhere. It was very original. Before then, I hadn't had any direction. Until then, it had been Keith Moon-ish, get a lot of drums and bash anything in sight!

GM: *Well it worked for Keith Moon [laughter]!*

LYRIC QUIZ

Have a go at our popular lyric quiz.

We give you a line - see if you can name the song!
(Answers on page 26)

NO: Yes it worked very well for Keith. I became quite friendly with Keith in the latter stages of his life.

GM: *So what happened next? Did Elton say 'come on board' or did you say 'I want to come on board'?*

NO: He said 'this is great. Let's call this the band and go out and do a couple of dates.' So we did a couple of college dates. We went to Leeds and York (England). And every time we went on stage it was amazing.

GM: *How about Dee? My biggest disappointment is going to be that we didn't get around to interviewing Dee. As far as you can comment on his behalf, what was going through his mind at that time. Was he similarly struck by all this?*

NO: Exactly the same. There was never a time when we asked are we doing the right thing.

GM: *That's always the sense the fans have had. That you both enjoyed being in the band.*

NO: In those days the money wasn't that good. It was just that surge everytime you went on stage. Amazing. Especially when we went into the studio as a band. The way we recorded was to go away and stay at the studio. We heard the songs being created. There was never a time when Elton would say 'Nigel I want you to play this like this, and Dee I want you to play this like that.' We were on the same wavelength before we sat down to cut the songs. And that's why those early songs sound so fresh. Because we never really did more than three or four takes of any song. If it wasn't there in the first four or five takes, we'd go on to the next song!

GM: *Anyone who's recorded with Elton since 1985 has probably met with a different kind of Elton. By then someone who was in auto-pilot, under the influence of certain vices, drink, drugs. Presumably when you were first recording, none of this was present. Weren't these the Golden Years?*

NO: They were the Golden Years. There were a couple of times when he'd go in and do a vocal and he couldn't quite sing in tune for some reason. I don't know whether the phonos or the monitors were out. There was a time - it's quite funny - when he got so frustrated that he couldn't get this one line, he screamed to Gus Dudgeon 'screw this. Send it to Lulu, and if she doesn't like it, send it to Englebert (Humperdinck)' [laughter]. But five minutes later it was fine. And we had our differences on the long tours, especially when we did those bus tours. They were Greyhound buses, and no telly or catering on board. A bus with seats in, and a long, long drive. We were very worn out, and tempers get frayed. We all travelled together. It was a 'touring circus'! But they were the Golden Years. At the chateau in France, for "Honky Chateau" that's where Davey (Johnstone) came on board for good. He'd always, with Ray Cooper, been on the records as session musicians. But when Davey joined the band, it took off. Elton John was the whole band, it wasn't just one guy. I guess the people in the hierarchy then told Elton 'listen, these guys are sidemen, you've got to be the front man. That's how that changed. ■

(Part 2 of this interview will be featured in the June issue.)

- 1) Take the wheel I hear the timbers creaking
Take the wheel I think this ship is sinking
- 2) Slow down Joe
I'm a rock 'n' roll man
- 3) 'Hey Man
How's about a handout?'
- 4) She's had my children
And she's been my lover
- 5) Insisting that I pay my alimony
Each and every day is the same old scene
- 6) If you want a miracle
Call up a superman
- 7) Just let me be the final word
In the book we haven't written
- 8) Most nights I have to watch my woman cry,
Every day I have to watch the colonel smile,
- 9) I've got Erroll Flynn advances
And it doesn't mean a doggone thing
- 10) I'd let nobody - I'd let nobody
Stand inside my shoes
- 11) Those were the days, we'd lay in the haze,
Forget depressive times
- 12) I feel I'm dry-docked and tongue-tied
Heaven sends a stretcher for the kids to ride.

Elton's partner of
the last 7 years

David Furnish

talks here about
his life and
relationship with
Elton



*Adapted by Tammi Law from an
interview with The Mail on Sunday,
Nov 99.*

Before I met Elton, I had a big career. I was the youngest guy on the board of the ad agency Ogilvy & Mather, but it became so difficult, flying to the States to see Elton at weekends.

Now, I'm primarily a film maker, but I'm also a fund raiser. When you live with someone like Elton it really inspires you, but I can't imagine anything more boring than following him around like a spare part. I need to keep my own identity. Film is my real passion; I studied it at university. I've produced Rocket's first movie, Women Talking Dirty, but haven't dared direct since Tantrums & Tiaras.

Tantrums & Tiaras didn't put a strain on our relationship. When Elton watched it he howled with laughter, cried at the scenes of his grandmother's funeral, and went very quiet when his mother talked about his difficult relationship with his father.

Spookily enough, the first LP I ever bought was one of his - Caribou, I think. But then I sort of "checked-out" on his career in the mid-80s.

Elton and I met when a friend of mine was going for dinner at his house and asked me to come along. I was inclined to say no - I just pictured a self-obsessed guy holding court on the sofa. But when we arrived he opened the door himself, took our coats, brought us drinks and was remarkably open. The attraction was pretty quick - we exchanged phone numbers that night - which was surprising for both of us. The next night he invited me over for a Chinese takeaway and it went from there. But, being Elton, it was no ordinary Chinese - it came from Mr Chow's.

In terms of what I can offer him, it's true love, which is hard for someone in Elton's situation to find, plus real stability. And I'm totally honest with him. The hardest adjustment to make has been the fact that sometimes it's like being in a relationship with a corporation. Elton's a massive industry, responsible for many livelihoods, and you have to accept that you're not always the priority.

The celebrity side wasn't difficult because he doesn't enjoy it that much. He craves normality. But that's rather hard to achieve because he is so recognisable. Part of me finds it sweet that people like him so much, part of me wishes they'd leave you alone to push your trolley around the supermarket.

It was a terrifying moment when Elton had his heart scare. He's pacing himself - or rather, his pacemaker's pacing him - a little more than he used to. Both of us have a much greater appreciation for every day of our lives. We don't take anything for granted.

It was hard last Christmas, when I told my parents that not only was I gay, but that I was going out with Elton. I come from a very middle-class Canadian family. They're very much in love - ideal role models for heterosexuality, and I felt I'd let them down. I ended up crying my eyes out, unburdening all the years of guilt. Although their initial response was "Oh God, he's with a rock star", Elton did a lot to assure them.

The most surprising thing that people might learn about me is that I was learning the cello, although I've actually just abandoned it. Now I've turned to horse riding. I gallop through Windsor Great Park every weekend. 

Elton's new single, from the soundtrack album *The Road to El Dorado*

Some Day Out Of The Blue



*Some day out of the blue
In a crowded street
or a deserted square
I'll turn and I'll see you
As if our love were new
Some day we can start again
Some day soon*

*Here comes the night
Here come the memories
Lost in your arms
Down in the foreign fields
Not so long ago
Seems like eternity
Those sweet afternoons
Still capture me*

*Some day out of the blue
In a crowded street
or a deserted square
I'll turn and I'll see you
As if our love were new
Some day we can start again
Some day soon*

*I still believe
I still put faith in us
We had it all and watched it slip away
Where are we now
Not where we want to be
Those hot afternoons
Still follow me*

*Some day out of the blue
Maybe years from now
Or tomorrow night
I'll turn and I'll see you
As if we always knew
Some day we would live again
Some day soon*

*I still believe, I still put faith in us
I still believe, I still put faith in us
I still believe, I still put faith in us*

*Here comes the night
Here come the memories
Lost in your arms
Down in the foreign fields
Not so long ago
Seems like eternity
Those sweet afternoons
Still capture me*

*Some day out of the blue
Maybe years from now
Or tomorrow night
I'll turn and I'll see you
As if we always knew
Some day we would live again
Some day soon*

*Written By Elton John and Tim Rice,
for SKG Dreamworks film Road to El Dorado.
Recorded by Elton John*



Do you REMEMBER THE FRENCH VERSION OF Nobody Wins, which Elton RECORDED AS A DUET WITH FRANCE GALL AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTIES?

Elton gave this interview to promote the song, *J'veux de la Tendresse*. EJ's comments are now twenty years old, but it's interesting to see that some extracts could have been written yesterday!

Original translation supplied by Francoise Linden-Giles.

“

I'll try to speak French, but I'll have to use a little bit of English too, as I only learnt this language at school and haven't used it for 10 years!

Now that I'm trying to speak it again, I realise that I do like to speak French, in fact it's my favourite language. I'm English, but I even prefer your language to mine. It's more difficult to sing, certainly to start off with. The first time I sang in French, it was at the Champs Elysées theatre, where I sang a Charles Trennet song. I know the country quite well too; when I was sixteen I came to France, Saint Tropez to be precise, and I went to sing at the Papagayo. After that things got worse for me! I remember my first show in France at the Champs Elysées theatre. I was singing in front of Sergio Mendes and right from the beginning of the show the public threw coins and fruit at us, ...a lot of fruit!

Things have changed a bit since then, and that's why I really wanted to sing in that theatre again. The idea to work with French people isn't a new one, I have already recorded in your country. Last summer when I was on holiday in Saint Tropez, I listened to the France Gall song "Il jouait du piano debout" and immediately bought the album. After that a friend of mine lent me all her records. I then thought it would be a good idea to record something with her, as I love duets, especially with women. I'm really pleased with the two French songs (lyrics by Bernie Taupin and Michel Berger, music by Elton), Paul Robinson has adapted the lyrics of the song "Les aveux" in English. I had some problems pronouncing the words, but it's only the very first time, and next time it will get better.

Europe, and France, are important especially when it

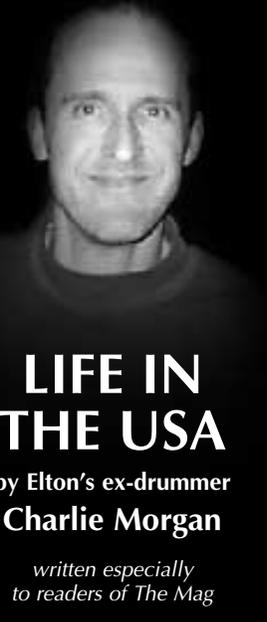
comes to music. For the last three years, music has got a lot better. In the States disco and soul music are very popular, but nothing new happens; they haven't invented anything. It's the same with radio stations there too. People always love the same singers, there is a uniformity in radio. With me, for example, they always play "Your Song" which is now ten years old! As far as I'm concerned I prefer to listen to new records. I believe more and more in melodies, in classic music. Chopin is always very strong! It's also a matter of age. I don't think I'll be able to sing rock 'n' roll for ever. I'll have to do something else. When I'm older, I'll compose some classical music. I'll always use my piano, because I don't have the ability to play lots of other instruments.

I'd be interested to make a record on my own, like Stevie Wonder's done, but I'm too lazy. If I generally do two albums a year, it's because I don't like to let things lag behind. I always compose at the last moment in studios. I always find that the lyrics are more important than the music, because they come first. I'm suffering a bit at the moment, not having a piano with me, but it's not always easy to carry a piano in a hotel room!

Talking about The Fox, Elton went on to say "My next album will have a classical feel - I've been working with the London Symphony Orchestra. We can do a superb mixture using classical instruments and a rock band. For this album we have mixed French, English and American musicians; it's very international. I think this record is very successful, I don't know if the public will react in the same way, but I had a great pleasure in doing it.

”

A personal account of



LIFE IN THE USA

by Elton's ex-drummer
Charlie Morgan

*written especially
to readers of The Mag*

THERE ARE THINGS I MISS ABOUT EUROPE

Being "in between" two stools, so to speak, for the past year or so has allowed me a unique vantage point on the UK and US societies. I have to say first of all that there are wonderful things about BOTH sides of the Atlantic, and while I am (and always will be) a "Limey-Brit" at heart, I do not find it hard to settle into the American way of life. I suppose that has everything to do with the amount of touring I have done here.

But there are things I miss about Europe. The one tangible thing that has not been created in the USA is history. I am talking about real depth to the history. After all, the only race that HAD any real history on the North American continent was sadly all

but wiped out by the first settlers. But I digress. It is the sheer depth of history in Europe that is amazing. For example, where in the USA can you leave your house and drive 5 miles to an aqueduct that was built by the Romans in the first century AD?

In some respects, I believe it is this lack of "roots" that drives many Americans to seek their origins in Europe. In addition, America has become a country of restless travellers: forever moving on, looking for something, never happy to stay in one place. It seems that if things don't go right in one town, you move on and try elsewhere, leaving your past behind you. I suppose if your roots aren't deep, it is easier to pull them up and replant them.

As for my own existence here, it has certainly taken on a nomadic flavour. Having bought a house in Central Florida, I have driven the 700 miles between there and Nashville, in search of work, at least a dozen times in the past 8 months. I can honestly say that I know the routes I-75 and I-24 like the back of my hand! I know most of the speed traps, and a large number of the gas stations, where to buy the cheapest fuel (Georgia has the best prices), and I have now honed the trip into a little over 10 hours, with 2 fuel stops.

Why Nashville, you may ask? Well, I have tasted the madness that is LA, and I have some small experience of New York's hectic music scene, and I found Nashville's "small-town" feel to be more to my liking. This doesn't mean I don't work elsewhere - in fact I have been to the West Coast no fewer than 3 times this past year, to work for John Jorgenson, promoting his latest solo album: Emotional Savant.

Dear Hercules Members, by the time you read this, we will have all survived whatever "glitches" the Y2K bug felt inclined to throw at us, so I would like to take this opportunity to wish you ALL a happy Year 2000. I will NOT succumb to wishing you a Happy New Millennium YET... as that will not be until the 1st January 2001 (George Matlock and I have talked about this topic, and being perfectionists, came to the same conclusion - Arthur C. Clarke is right!). We still have the last year of the old millennium to survive yet!! I would also like to thank you all for your continuing support during the past 18 months.

Having uprooted my homebase midway through 1999, and moved to the USA, the past 8 months have certainly been eventful. Despite having toured the USA extensively since my first visit in 1979 (with Tom Robinson), actually LIVING in the USA is quite different from touring here. On tour, much of the more mundane, everyday things are taken care of. We only have to concern ourselves with the immediate job at hand: performing. Not that life is easy. Living out of a suitcase from one hotel to the next, via buses, planes and taxis has its own drawbacks. Believe me, I always relished the chance to get back home and lead a relatively normal life for a while! While this might sound like a case of "the grass is always greener", I have always accepted the negative side of my job wholeheartedly! Such are the potential rewards from doing what I do, that they far outweigh the less palatable aspects.

A personal
account of



LIFE IN
THE USA
..continued

WORKING BEHIND POSSIBLY THE GREATEST SINGER-SONGWRITER OF THE CENTURY

I also have a large number of friends here. Some of them Ex-Pat Brits themselves, but mostly of American origin. I have been steadily letting people know I am here, willing and able. This is not as easy as I first thought, and it has certainly been a lesson in humility. Having been at the top of my profession in the UK for over 15 years, it has come as something of a shock to start again over here. I must say straight away, though, that I have unceasing support from fans everywhere, and I was most gratified to discover the esteem in which I was held. Maybe it was a result of being protected by the the Elton John organisation for so long, but

certainly coming out into the harsh reality taught me a tremendous amount.

I am ready for less touring, and more studio work. When I first met Elton, I was probably one of the top 3 studio musicians in the UK. I was working all the hours that I wanted, I had recorded extensively, and my discography included such people as Nik Kershaw, Gary Moore, Tina Turner, Tom Robinson, Tracey Ullman, Matt Bianco & Air Supply - quite apart from the endless list of movie soundtracks and advertising jingles. I had also composed and recorded several albums of theme tune music (one of which became the theme for the British TV series, *The Bill*). It was a huge decision to burn my bridges and go on the road with Elton. As it turns out, it was a decision that I have never regretted. Working behind possibly the greatest singer-songwriter of the century (and beyond) has been an honour and a privilege. I was already a huge fan of his music, and I shall remain so. Since our first meeting I have become a fan of his magnetic personality, his seemingly never ending wit, his

compassion, generosity and dedication. This is genius material I am talking about. Sure, he had his (well documented) ups and downs, but this has only made him more human in my eyes. Well, no doubt this will make Elton squirm with embarrassment, as he has never been one to take praise well. I learnt that early on!

In my dreams, I have a hope that he also came out of our collaboration having gained from it. I would like to think that he regarded me as more than just a hired hand. But many people have come and gone during Elton's 30-year career, and Elton is the only one who can judge their effect on him personally. Certainly he wrote of me in glowing terms to the US Immigration & Naturalization Service - for which I am forever grateful.

Onwards and Upwards... to new horizons and new challenges (with, perhaps, a few old ones thrown in for good measure). That just about wraps up my "Letter from America". A Happy and prosperous New Year to you all!

Charlie Morgan

BETWEEN 17 AND 20 · BETWEEN 17 AND 20

ANOTHER VERSE OF OUR REGULAR COLUMN FEATURING TRIVIA AND

HERCULES

Before his membership into the Bluesology group, Reggie and Bluesology member Stuart Brown had previously formed a group called *Corvettes*, which played at local Boy Scout gatherings.

HERCULES

While in Bluesology, his band mates nicknamed him "Little Bunter", after a comic strip character named *Billy Bunter*.

HERCULES

Before teaming up with Reggie Dwight, Bernie Taupin earned a living chasing and crating chickens on a farm.

conventionally speaking...

As previously announced in our December issue of **The Mag**, here's a quick reminder of the forthcoming fan conventions we have organised:



EJ's Birthday Conventions:
Hercules UK and Hercules USA/Canada are both hosting fan conventions on March 25th to celebrate

Elton's birthday. The UK convention is at ANNA HOTEL, Queensborough Terrace, London, noon to 5 pm as always. Special guests are expected.



In the US, the convention will take place in Chicago. For those who cannot attend our 5th annual EJ fan party in Chicago, Hercules is also hosting a birthday party in Orlando, Florida, for the first time, also on March 25. If you would like an invitation or more information, e-mail Barb Meadows-Crowley at eltonchat@yahoo.com



And to celebrate the fact that EJ will be performing in front of the Hercules Statue when he brings his Solo Tour to Germany in the summer, there will be a

convention on the day of the concert, 23 June 2000, from 12 to 6pm, at the Hotel Schweizer Hof, Wilhelmshofer Allee 288, in Kassel, Germany.

All fans are welcome to any of the events. If you require further information, please refer to December issue of The Mag, or contact the relevant department. We look forward to seeing you!

idol

You can be a super rock star like Elton John if you want to, but first clean up that mess in your bedroom before your next world tour begins!



BETWEEN 17 AND 20 · BETWEEN 17 AND 20

GOSSIP ABOUT ELTON - FOUND OF COURSE, BETWEEN PAGES 17 AND 20!!

HERCULES

Bernie did not meet Reggie until after Reggie had already composed the music for ten of Bernie's poetic lyrics.

Elton and Bernie signed with Dick James Music on November 7, 1967.

HERCULES

If it not had been for Caleb Quaye, Elton's career at Dick James Music would have never been a reality. It was Caleb who persuaded Dick James to listen to the now famous Dick James Demos.

HERCULES

Did you know that...
...When Rod Stewart married Rachel Hunter, Elton John teased the singer by sending the couple a 10 pounds (\$16) gift voucher with the instruction to "buy something nice for the home."

Southbend, IN, USA - October 1999 (Photo: L Sykes)





VIDEO SINGLES (contd.)

Videos made for promotion of a single, continuing where we left the list in The Mag issue 48.

1996:

Believe
Made in England
Blessed
Please
You Can Make History
Young Again
Live Like Horses
Perfect Day

1997:

Something About The Way
You Look Tonight
(DIRECTOR:
TIM ROYES)
Candle in The Wind 1997

1998:

Recover Your Soul -
(DIRECTOR:
MARCUS NISPEL)
If the River Can Bend

1999:

Written in the Stars
(DIRECTOR:
THE NEW RENAISSANCE)

Should you be able to add the missing Directors of the video-singles, or know of other video-singles or TV appearances by Elton during the 70s, please email:

HerculesUK@aol.com

or write to:

*Hercules UK,
PO Box 315, Richmond,
Surrey TW9 4JF, England.*

Thanks to Wayne Martin for his invaluable contribution to this series.

TV SHOWS etc.

Interviews, TV specials, concerts, news clips, commercials featuring Elton

The 70s

1970

Midnight Special
Andy Williams Show
BBC:The sounds of Elton
John & Bernie Taupin

1971

"Your Song" on BBC TV
"Top of the Pops", in
January
Madman Across the Water
Album played live
"Get It On" [T. Rex] Elton
on Keyboards, BBC TV
"Top of the Pops"
BBC Sounds For Saturday
(8 Live Songs)

1972

London with Orchestra
BBC: interview, "Tiny
Dancer", "All the Nasties"
"Holiday Inn" from BBC

1973

In the Hot Seat
Movie: "Born to Boogie"
with Marc Bolan. Elton on
keyboards on "Get It On"
and "Children of the
Revolution"
Goodbye Norma Jean and
Other Things. AKA "The
Elton John Story". Also a
laserdisc release

1974

BBC "Old Grey Whistle
Test": Ticking, Grimsby
Hammersmith Odeon
Christmas Show, 24
December
Elton with John Lennon at
Caribou Ranch (Brief)

1975

"Soul Train" (Bennie and
the Jets, Philadelpia
Freedom.)
"Cher Show" (Lucy in the
Sky, Bennie, medley)
Dodger Stadium from 8mm
camera, private recording,
no sound
"Pinball Wizard" From the
Movie "Tommy"
"Midnight Special" tribute
"Tommy" Movie Premiere
TV Special, hosted by
David Frost

1976

Elton John Live in
Edinburgh Playhouse,
Scotland, 17 September
BBC TV "Top of The Pops"
"Tom Snyder Show"
"Morecome and Wise",
BBC TV. Plays "Sorry
Seems...Hardest Word"
solo

1977

"The Muppets": Croc'Rock,
Bennie, GBYBrRd, Don't
Go Breaking.. w Miss
Piggy
"The Thom Bell Sessions"
London, UK (Wembley-
Empire Pool), concert,
November
"Morecome & Wise". Plays
"Shine on Through" solo
"Mike Douglas Show"
"David Frost Show"

1978

"Parkinson Show" BBC TV:
Live duet w. Dame Edna
Everidge & "Song For Guy"
Merv Griffin Interview

1979

"Top of the Pops" BBC TV,
live "Part Time Love"

THE NEW HERCULES WEBSITE

eltonfan.net

Admittedly, we had planned to launch the new Hercules website a lot earlier, but keeping in mind that all Hercules work is done in the so-called spare time of the Hercules team members, things have taken a little longer than we planned.

And even now that the new Hercules website will soon be officially launched at <http://www.eltonfan.net>, there are still a few construction areas that hopefully will disappear in the very near future. Still we think that there are already lots of great features and services for every Elton fan on the web.

The basic idea of the new Hercules website is for it to be your Elton John portal on the world wide web. As such, the basic navigation of the new site is very similar to Yahoo! for example, or other internet portals. However, in contrast to the big search engines, the Hercules website only features Elton John related content.

If you are familiar with Hercules' current website at <http://www.eltonfan.com> you will notice that all of it's features have been transferred to the new site, such as the Elton Trivia, the Hercules

Message Board, the Hercules Chat Room, and of course the news pages and archives. However, all of these services have been re-designed and improved in speed and performance, bringing you an even better service.

In addition, there are lots of new services such as the Hercules Online Shop, an Online Auction Room, Virtual Hercules eCards, and the new Hercules eNewsletter. As already stated above, even more features will be added shortly. So make sure to come back often to check it all out. There will also be new services for Hercules Web Members, such as your own personal e-mail address yourname@eltonfan.net (coming soon), the news archive, and multimedia library. And again, more Web Member services will be added over the months to come.

So don't wait, but bookmark the new page today. At the time this issue went to press, we were still planning to launch the new website by the end of March. Don't shoot us if it takes a little longer ... we are only the webmasters.

THE NEW HERCULES WEBSITE

Send your letters to
Tammi Law, Editor
 (address on page 2) or
 e.mail her at
HerculesEd@aol.com.

I first became an Elton John fan when the 'Elton John' album was released, I was about 15 years old then and myself and a group of four friends used to listen to the album and were completely bowled over by it. My boyfriend at the time got tickets to see Elton singing at "The Country Club" in Hampstead, I believe in 1969 or 1970, and it was the first pop concert I had ever been to. The Club was full and heaving when we arrived - I remember that Elton was very exciting - we all had a great evening. The next time I saw him live was at the Shaw Theatre about 1 year later, and this concert is still one of the most memorable for me. I believe Roger Moore and Princess Margaret were in the audience and Elton was just electrifying. I was in a daze for days afterwards, and after that I was completely hooked on seeing Elton live.

The next concert after that was the one at the Royal Festival Hall in 1974 when Princess Margaret was again in the audience - I remember her dancing in the Royal Box! It was a fantastic concert; I had queued for hours early one morning outside the Royal Festival Hall - the queue went round and round the outside!

By this time of course, Tumbleweed Connection was out and this same group of friends used to listen to it together in someone's bedroom.

After that I saw Elton perform whenever he was in London, and of course, bought all his LPs. When he decided to stop touring (was it around 1978?), I was devastated - I remember phoning Brian Hayes on LBC one morning when the announcement had been made - Brian Hayes was saying "Did anyone care?", and of course I phoned in to say plenty of us did!

I feel I've been so lucky to have been able to enjoy Elton's music for so long - I play The One, Made in England and of course The Big Picture all the time, and continue to see him live whenever I can, with children in tow now. I have never met Elton personally although my husband Colin met him in 1969, just after Elton had made his first album. Colin was at a pub in Surrey and was sitting next to Elton at the bar. Elton was very shy, and proudly told Colin about the album he had just made. Of course Colin loves telling me this story, as he has met Elton, and I haven't!

Jane Bradley, Herts, UK

To Hercules, I hope I speak on behalf of all Elton fans... We thank the Lord, there's people out there like you!!

I hope the 21st century is Hercules', and of course, EJ's best time yet!

Best wishes,
Adam Buckley, UK

I was reading the December fanzine and realized a very good point was made in the Summer of Fun article. I also felt for a very long time that no one could possibly understand my love and affection for our dear Sir Elton. And then I discovered the fan club. I may not be in the group that goes to just about every concert possible, but I do get a sense of connection from reading about others' love and appreciation for him. Thank God for both the man and you people that care as much about him as I do and enough to do such a wonderful job paying him tribute the way you do. I greatly appreciate not feeling like an outcast.

Keep up the great work!

Wendy Rohn, Greenfield, WI, USA

When I opened my heart to Elton and his music in 1997, nothing about his previous drug and alcohol addictions - which he had suffered for so long - could be felt. So, it is even harder for me to understand that he had once fallen to these addictions. Since I am quite a recent fan - as you can see - I cannot say anything about the past, what concerts were like in those times. I experienced my first concert in June 1999, and I was absolutely fascinated by his piano artistry and his voice. We are lucky that you are here Elton!

Ines Diefl, Germany



Madison Square Garden - 1999 (Photo: L Sykes)

strangers we haven't been

(A poem to
Elton & Bernie)

by Hercules Members
George & Ellen Pappas,
Cherry Hill, NJ, USA



It was nineteen seventy two
When I heard you on AM radio
Strutting with my friends along Grand Avenue
Just a kid, silly little city boy
Manhattan's castles sparkled just ahead
I recall that first song
A soft melancholy whispered "Daniel my brother"

From that moment and infinite more
Your pain gripped me
Your tears filled me
Your rhythm raised me

Let me tell you how I feel
Your music spiked like a gypsy tapestry
Dancing wild like cool Kentucky gin
Holy Moses that ain't no sin
Your words a prism, hues of life's
harmony
Your music tap dancing along concert
hall balconies

Twenty seven years I've sung back
In the car on a two lane motorway
Round Norfolks Byway
Alone in London Town
Walking down the Old Kent Road
Your music great company at three a.m.
As I found my way back to my flat

Listening to your sound
I thought then like I do now
What grace between your lines
Your fingers gliding
Your harmony so alive
Your voice like a high blue note
Deep from the Delta
Not bad for a "Sheffield Man"

Just a fan no way
Soul mates in time and space
Though never face to face
Your notes fantastic left their grace

Still today
The songs you sing
The lyrics you weave
My heart lifts
Old friends thank you!
You two so gifted.

If my message finds you
Know my soul has cherished your art
Like a diamond in the rough
"Between a Father & Son" and "Candle in the Wind"
You made England proud
Your compassion with no bounds
Bernie's eyes glisten
He knows you well

We've travelled far
From Cities, Commons to Hills
When you sing we come together
Your music, your lyrics
Roll Elton, Roll on like the mighty Mississippi
Bernie spin that magic without kin
All together now
Strangers we haven't been

exclusive...

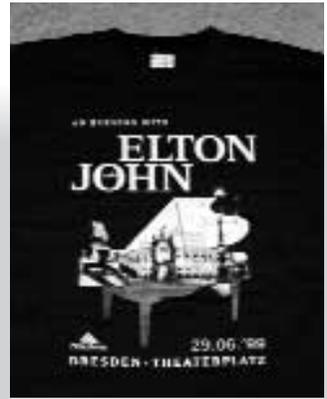
TOUR T-SHIRT FREE PRIZE-DRAW!

To celebrate our 50th issue of the Hercules Fanzine, we are giving away two rare Elton Tour T-Shirts! These shirts were produced as a very limited edition by the German Tour Promoter of EJ's shows in 1999, exclusively for the crew. They are NOT available in the shops, and here's YOUR chance to own one.

Two lucky readers of The Mag will each receive one of these shirts for free! All you have to do to enter the draw, is send a postcard with your name,

address, and membership number to: Tammi Law, Chief Editor, Hercules Elton John Fan Club, 49 Horseshoe Crescent, Peatmoor, Swindon, SN5 5AX, UK. Mark your cards "Tour shirt Prize-Draw". Winners will be notified by post, and names will be published in the next issue.

And don't worry if you aren't successful with this free prize-draw. We will be holding an auction in the forthcoming June issue, giving you a chance to bid for 2 more shirts, with all proceeds benefiting The Elton



John Aids Foundation. There will also be chance to bid for two of these rare shirts on the Auction section of the new Hercules Web-site, with proceeds also benefiting EJAF.

a wedding in *east anglia*

A poem by Bernie Taupin

*I went to a wedding
The wedding of an old friend
I was a long gone lad
We drank brown ale
Brown ale from the bottle
He seemed very happy
I recall I was sad*

*It was a promise I made
He had been a good pal
He was glad that I came
We drank straight gin
Straight gin with no ice
His bride was a blonde
I don't remember her name*

*They got several toasters
He always liked toast
His mother didn't cry
His Auntie Rose drank stout
She talked about babies
He wore a purple shirt
A purple shirt with a green tie*

*He said it was a grand day
She giggled and thumped him
She worked at 'Boots'
Everyone smoked cigarettes
The girls wore white lipstick
Their frocks had red spots
The lads smelled of 'Brut'*

*The Gents was crowded
Everyone told dirty jokes
There was one about the Pope
The vicar wasn't listening
The sausage rolls were good
Everyone had babies
The kids all drank warm coke*

*There was a girl called Sylv
She had tall hair
She asked me for a fag
All she said was 'Yea'
'Yea' and 'Like ya know'
She spilled her Babycham
Someone called her a slag*

*The reception was fab
That's what his sister said
I tried hard to fit
His dad sang 'Edelwies'
He sang the wrong words
Everybody laughed at him
He said he felt a right tit*

*My friend had a brother
His brother was a policeman
He wore hot pink socks
I don't think he liked me
He ate little sausages
He pinched them in his fingers
He made jokes about cocks*

*My friend was on the dole
He talked about Australia
They lived with his mum
Long ago he had a dream
We all dreamt long ago
I asked him if he remembered
He asked me if I was having fun*

*She wanted lots of babies
He'd be a great dad
I pretended not to hear
The sausage rolls were all gone
There was lots of cake left
Nobody ate much cake
They just sent out for more beer*

*His brother impersonated Elvis
He had a pee stain on his crotch
He was drinking white rum
There were lots more babies
Some people threw up
My friend passed out
What's-her-name chewed gum*

*I got very drunk
Drunk it all looked better
Sylv looked better drunk
I wanted to hear 'Danny Boy'
Bagpipes and 'Danny Boy'
Sad bitter songs
Yea! Sylv looked better drunk*

*I stood outside the Workin' Mans
Inside everyone was singing
I was thinking about sex
Saturday felt like Sunday
Sunday when you have school Monday
I went to a wedding
The christening comes next.*

Taken from the book 'The Devil at High Noon'. Written by Bernie Taupin. Supplied by Jimmie Collins

the lost lyric

By Reggie Zippo

While listening to the album version of "Holiday Inn", I often wonder how many fans know that they are only listening to about 75% of the original lyrics. After nearly 30 years of hearing a song that sounds so complete as is, it may surprise even the most avid of EJ's fans that "Holiday Inn" once had a third verse, a slightly different chorus, and a meaning that painted a much darker picture about life on the road.

Most of us have heard Elton and Bernie tell the tale of how the song "Daniel" was originally written with a third verse and how it had to be deleted before the final recording was made. Time and time again, they have said that the missing verse had explained the whole meaning of the song, but it would have been too long to be a pop tune. This was, however, not the first incident in which one of Bernie's lyrics had had the third verse removed and the meaning changed before the master recording was made.

In all of the interviews I have encountered, EJ and BT have never mentioned how or why "Holiday Inn" was reduced to a syrupy tribute to a motel chain, rather than the dark confines of a prison that Bernie had originally envisioned. Did the company that owned the Holiday Inn motel chain threaten to sue? Or did they simply feel that the public would enjoy a much shorter happier version in the long run? Listening to the original demo recording, I honestly feel that it would have stood the test of time.

The first notable change came during the chorus. Everything was the same between the demo and the final master. All except one little word. The final version



of the chorus reads in part:

"You ain't seen nothing till you been in a motel, baby, like a Holiday Inn."

That sounds all well and fine, but the replacement of just one word changed the whole tone and meaning of the song. The word "baby" replaced the word "prison"!

"You ain't seen nothing till you been in a motel prison, like a Holiday Inn."

With "prison" now deleted and "baby" inserted, the song ended up sounding like a commercial advertisement for the Holiday Inn. For those of you who do not know, Holiday Inn is a motel chain in the USA. I am quite surprised that the company has not yet tried to use this song to their advantage. Once the word "prison" was eliminated and "baby" penciled in, verse one and two seemed to fit better with the chorus. Verse three, however, was now terribly out of place. If it had been left intact, it would not have worked well with the rest of the lyrics. "Prison" supported that third verse.

Without it, there would have been no connection to the chorus. Consider the words:

"Don't even know if it's Cleveland or Maine."

Well, the building's as big and the room's just the same.

Oh, the TV don't work and the French fries are cold, and room service closed about an hour ago."

It must have been a last minute choice to dramatically alter the lyrics because I have heard EJ perform it live in 1971 with the third verse intact, but without "prison" in the chorus. There was a great story to be told here, just imagine performing for several hours then traveling to the next destination for an overnight stay in a motel room that seemed unacceptable for human comfort. With nowhere to go, the countless number of motel rooms begins to feel like a sort of prison. Solution? Write about it. Why we were deprived of this original thought may never be known. Perhaps Elton will one day reinstate the original lyrics and perhaps he won't. For now, I can only rely on the unreleased demo version to capture my imagination about staying "in a motel prison, like a Holiday Inn".

(Please note: Feelings expressed in this article about the Holiday Inns of the early 1970s are in no way a reflection of their current reputation of quality and good service) [smiley face]

SMALL ADS

These are free to Hercules members. Send yours to Tammi Law, Editor, 49 Horseshoe Crescent, Swindon SN5 5AX, UK., or e-mail her at HerculesEd@eltonfan.net

WANTED

I am looking for the following Elton John music videos: "Something About The Way You Look Tonight", "Recover Your Soul", "If The River Can Bend" and "Written In The Stars". Please write to: *Jochen Loh, Hammerweg 29, D - 52074 Aachen, Germany.*

FOR SALE OR TRADE

Updated 7 page list includes, 7", 12" vinyl, CDs, Videos, Books, Photos, T- Shirts and more. *Please write to Steven Betts 75A Coillesdene Avenue, Edinburgh EH15 2LN, Scotland U.K. or e-mail stevenbetts@btinternet.com*

HERCULES MEMBER

DISCOUNTS AT WRAP IT UP!

Hercules has negotiated a permanent discount package for Club Members buying goods from our retail outlet Wrap It Up! *Quote your member number (on your passes) to Wrap It Up!, PO Box 220, Lincoln, LN1 2RZ, England. Tel/fax +44-1522-529275 or email: eltonwrap@aol.com*

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Arise Sir Elton! The moment EJ was knighted by the Queen.

PLEASE REMEMBER...

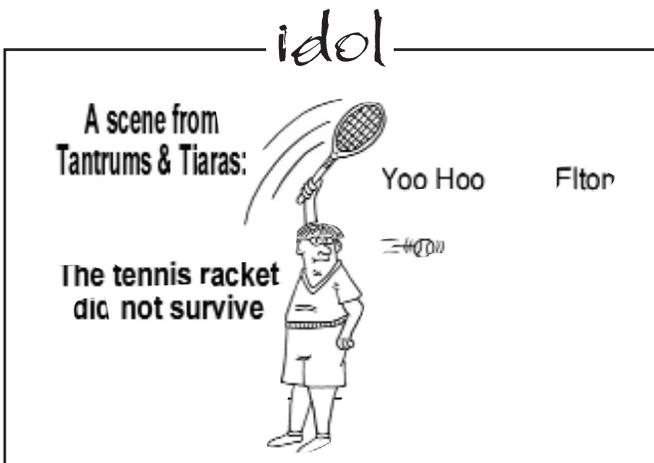
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ALWAYS let us know the expiry date of the card, and the cardholders name.

Please note that if you have paid your Membership Fee by Credit Card, your card will automatically be charged again for the renewal fee, at the end of your membership year. If your card has expired in the meantime, or if you have switched companies, please forward your new Credit Card details to Hercules Coordination in time for your next renewal.

LYRIC QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1) Billy Bones and the White Bird
- 2) Holiday Inn
- 3) Sick City
- 4) Where's the Shoorah?
- 5) Honey Roll
- 6) Satellite
- 7) Understanding Women
- 8) Slave
- 9) Teacher I Need You
- 10) Someone's Final Song
- 11) Elderberry Wine
- 12) White Lady White Powder



TOUR DATES PLANS & RUMOURS

US SOLO TOUR 2000

- 17-March-2000Lakeland, FL Lakeland Civic Center
18-March-2000Albany, GA Albany Civic Center
05-April-2000Binghamton, NY Broome County Veterans Memorial Arena
07-April-2000Portland, ME Cumberland County Civic Center
08-April-2000Bingintom, NY t.b.a.
09-April-2000Erie, PA Erie Civic Center
14-April-2000Evainville, IN Roberts Stadium
15-April-2000Indianapolis, IN Consecro
18-April-2000Syracuse, NY War Memorial
19-April-2000Trenton, NJ Sovereign Bank Arena
21-April-2000Wilkes-Barre, PA First Union Arena
22-April-2000Hershey, PA Hershey Arena

MISCELLANEOUS

- 13-April-2000New York, NY Carnegie Hall Rainforest Benefit show

EUROPEAN SOLO TOUR 2000

- 03-June-2000.....Derbyshire, UK Chatsworth House
06-June-2000.....Hampshire, UK Broadlands
13-June-2000.....Lincolnshire, UK Burghley Park
17-June-2000.....Loeben, Austria t.b.a
18-June-2000.....Bad Ischl, Austria Kaiserpark
23-June-2000.....Kassel, Germany Wilhelmshöhe (open air)
24-June-2000.....Hamburg, Germany Derbypark (open air)
27-June-2000.....Cologne, Germany KölnArena
28-June-2000.....Coburg, Germany Schlossplatz (open air)
30-June-2000.....Leipzig, Germany Völkerschlachtdenkmal (open air)
01-July-2000Stuttgart, Germany Schlossplatz (open air)
04-July-2000Mannheim, Germany Schloss Ehrenhof
05-July-2000Koblenz, Germany Schlosshof (open air)
07-July-2000Künzelsau, Germany Schlosspark (open air)
08-July-2000Munich, Germany Königsplatz (open air)
19-July-2000S. Wales, UK Margam Park
22-July-2000Northants, UK Castle Ashby

2000

*This is not an official tour schedule,
as it also includes rumoured and unconfirmed dates.*





For up-to-the-minute news about Elton,
callers in the UK can phone the

HERCULES Hotline on 0906 888 20 20

Calls cost 60p per minute anytime