

HERCULES

THE MAG



*inside this
issue:*

Reviews:
New Album
**Songs from
the West
Coast**
New Video
I Want Love

PLUS:
News, Trivia,
Quizzes,
Your Letters
& more!

Issue No. 56
SEPTEMBER 2001



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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...

Unless you've been in outer space for the last few months you will be aware that Elton's first new studio album, *Songs From The West Coast*, since 1997 is released on 1 October.

We have a review of the album on page 8 and Reggie Zippo tells us about the interesting video for the new single *I Want Love*.

And that's not the only album we review. Nigel Olsson has released *Move The Universe* – read more on page 24.

We bring the best of the entertaining interview with *Uncut* magazine and report on new websites for John Jorgenson and Kiki Dee.

We have a change of American representative as Sharon Kalinoski steps down. She explains why on page 15.

Sharon's is not the only goodbye – this is my fourth and final edition as editor. Work

and family commitments have escalated to the extent it is impossible to devote the time the role demands. I will continue to contribute so you haven't seen the last of me yet. I hope *The Mag* hasn't suffered too badly under my control and that my swansong is a varied and interesting read.

I would like to say thank you to all who have helped me, in particular my predecessor Tammi Law who has provided invaluable help in compiling news and information throughout the past year.

George Matlock takes over for the next issue but feel free to send your articles, letters and photos to the address on page 2.

Cheers,



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Full details of the following news items have appeared on our Website and Hotline

NEW ALBUM

As most of you will know, the big news this season is the imminent release of Elton's new studio album, *Songs From The West Coast*. The first single, *I Want Love*, was released to radio stations on July 30, and hit the stores as a 4 track CD single on September 25.

The single contains the following tracks: *I Want Love*; *The North Star* (previously unreleased); *Tiny Dancer* (live version from *One Night Only*); *The One* (live version from *One Night Only*). The album itself is scheduled for release around the world on October 1 2001.

The tracks are:

- 1 - *The Emperor's New Clothes* (4:28)
- 2 - *Dark Diamond* (4:25)
- 3 - *Look Ma, No Hands* (4:22)
- 4 - *American Triangle* (4:49)
- 5 - *Original Sin* (4:49)
- 6 - *Birds* (3:52)
- 7 - *I Want Love* (4:35)
- 8 - *The Wasteland* (4:21)
- 9 - *Ballad Of The Boy In The Red Shoes* (4:52)
- 10 - *Love Her Like Me* (3:58)
- 11 - *Mansfield* (4:56)
- 12 - *This Train Don't Stop There Anymore* (4:39)

Mercury Records has also released a six track promo CD sampler featuring songs from the album, which was sent to radio stations at the end of July. This item is NOT available in the shops, and contains the following tracks from the album:

I Want Love
This Train Don't Stop There Anymore



Love Her Like Me
Ballad Of The Boy In The Red Shoes
Dark Diamond
Original Sin

All the lyrics on the album were written by Bernie. The album has been produced by Pat Leonard, who has worked with Madonna and Pink Floyd, and mixed by Bill Bottrell.

This Train Don't Stop There Anymore is planned to be the second single, the release date is still unknown.

The video for the single *I Want Love*, released mid August, was directed by Sam Taylor-Wood and shot in one seamless take, and stars Robert Downey Jr. who was

the personal choice of Elton for this project. "I wanted to do something special with the video for *I Want Love*, by having a real artist, Sam Taylor-Wood direct the video and provide her creative input. I thought Robert Downey Jr. would be an amazing choice - he's an incredible actor and lyrically the song would be perfect for him to interpret. I'm very fond of him and was thrilled that he agreed to do it."

Hercules has also learned about a one-hour television documentary on the new album, to be released by UK television company Carlton. At the time of going to press, details of this are still unconfirmed, so keep checking our website for more news on this.



GOOD ROCKIN' TONIGHT

(THE LEGACY OF SUN RECORDS)

A tribute album including Elton's Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On will be released on London-Sire Records on October 16.

ELTON BACK IN VERONA

Elton will be back in Verona, Italy, at the famous Arena (where he taped a live concert in 1989) on September 8, to introduce the new single I Want Love to the Italian audience during the final of Festivalbar. The show will be televised by Canale5 (also available on satellite).

CARTOON VOICE-OVER

More details have emerged of Elton's appearance in the Christmas edition of Bob the Builder, the children's animated TV show. Neil Morrissey, who plays Bob, told the Daily Express newspaper on August 7: "The character Lenny Lazenby, who is played by Chris Evans, loses his voice so Elton has to sing for him instead. Me and Elton do a duet of Crocodile Rock." The track, which is to be released as a single, is being tipped as a favourite for this year's Christmas number one in the UK.

ELTON, THE GARDENER

Elton, Don Henley, Bonnie Raitt, John Hiatt and others will contribute to the film The Country Bears, scheduled for summer 2002 release, and is a makeover of Disney's bluegrass-twangin' Country Bear Jamboree. As with the recent releases Shrek and Cats and Dogs, the live-action film aims at both children and adults and was described by a Disney publicist as "Almost Famous, but with bears." Elton will play a gardener.

CHARITY APPEARANCE

Tickets for the sixth Grand Slam for Children concert to benefit the Andre Agassi Charitable Foundation have gone on sale. Elton will join performers Tim McGraw, Brian McKnight, Don Henley, Rachel Hunter and others, for an evening of music and laughter. David Foster will serve as the musical director for the star-studded gala scheduled for September 29, 2001, at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. Tickets can be purchased through any Ticketmaster outlet.

CONCERT NEWS

Having finished a handful of Solo concerts in Europe in July, Elton will be touring with the band during October and November to promote the new album. Details of concerts in Canada, several US cities (including New York), Mexico and Japan have been confirmed (see page 27, and our website, for details of venues and dates). At the moment, there are no confirmed plans for the tour in Europe, but this could change.

SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS

Elton was determined his fans would not be bugged during an open-air concert in Turkey on 17 July. To save fans from being bitten by mosquitoes, Elton had 200 citronella candles flown out to keep fans' tables bugfree. The managing director of The Wax Workshop at Worthing, UK, which supplied the order, said: "If they are good enough for Elton, they are good enough for anyone."

NEW ELTON BOOK

"His Song: The Musical Journey Of Elton John" will be published in September by Billboard Books and be available in all major bookstores worldwide. The author, Elizabeth J. Rosenthal, is a member of Hercules, and the book promises to be a major biography of Elton, with a complete up-to-date discography.

KIKI DEE UK TOUR

Kiki has announced a number of UK concerts, at various venues around the country, during September and October. The towns Kiki will be visiting are: Bridgenorth, Oxford, Beaumaris Angelsey, Birkenhead, Ashton-under-Lyne, and York. For more details, see the Hercules website. The new Kiki Dee website will be launched within the next few weeks. It is called: www.kikiandcarmelo.com and will detail all planned concerts – see page 15 for more.

ADVANCE AIRING OF NEW ALBUM

Some 40 Elton fans were invited by eltonjohn.com to a pre-release playback session of Elton's new album, Songs From The West Coast, at Town House Studios in London on July 24. See page 5 for more details.

DVD "ONE NIGHT ONLY"

Hercules has been told that the DVD "One Night Only" will be released in time for Christmas 2001. The DVD will feature the complete show recorded at New York's Madison Square Garden in October 2000. There will also be lots of interactive features and backstage footage.

EJ NEWS BULLETS...



Full details of the following news items have appeared on our Website and Hotline

ELTON WEBCAST

Sir Elton made history on July 17, as his once-in-a-lifetime performance in the ancient Greek amphitheatre at Ephesus in Turkey, was broadcast live on the web - for the first time ever. Many fans reported technical problems with the live broadcast of the Ephesus show on July 19, 2001, as well as with streaming the event from archive the week after.

ELTON INCREASES WATFORD

INTEREST

Elton is to invest a further £759,000 in Watford Football Club as part of its flotation on the Alternative Investment Market. Elton will increase his stake from 6.38% to 8.41% by buying almost 76m shares at 1p each. Watford is raising money through the flotation of shares to fans and shareholders, and will have a market capitalisation of £20.4m. The company will use the money from the share sale to buy the freehold of its Vicarage Road ground, strengthen the playing squad and provide working capital. Papers reported that Elton's stake will require him to field questions from investors at the company's annual meeting and be a figurehead at public functions.

ELTON LIVE - FOR FREE!

Russian Elton fans were treated to a free concert in St Petersburg when organisers left the venue's windows open. Few locals could afford £700 tickets to the gig, which was held in the Court Hall of the Ekatherinian Palace. So they gathered outside and listened to the two-hour show for nothing. Paying guests included Queen Sofia of Spain.

ELTON AND MADONNA

Elton, George Michael and Mick Jagger paid £100 each to see Madonna in concert in London in July. Stars usually hand out free tickets to their peers, but Madonna refused and charged £100 plus booking fee for the sold-out shows. But it seems there were no hard feelings...Madonna celebrated her first UK show by having a few quiet drinks with friends Elton and George Michael, according to newspaper reports.

BRIAN WILSON TRIBUTE ON TNT

TNT cable network aired "The All Star Brian Wilson Tribute" in July, featuring Elton, Billy Joel, Heart, and Paul Simon along with a host of others. Elton did a wonderful job on God Only Knows singing it while facing the audience, minus the piano. He obviously amazed the audience with his singing capabilities and resulted in the evening's first standing ovation. Elton later dueted with Brian Wilson on Wouldn't It Be Nice, and joined all the other performers for the closing string of favourite Beach Boys hits.

ELTON TO SING DAN DARE

Elton is set to sing the theme tune of a new £14 million television revival of Dan Dare. The updated Dan stars in a 26-part animated series which will be sold throughout the world. The "pilot of the future" has ditched his smart uniform for a rough and ready flying jacket as well as losing years from his age. It is known that Elton is an avid fan of Dan Dare from the 1950s The Eagle comics. However, it is unclear whether Elton will sing a version of, Dan Dare (Pilot of the Future) which he co-wrote with Bernie in 1975.

"ONE NIGHT ONLY"

NOMINATED AWARD

Nominees in all categories for the 53rd annual Primetime Emmy awards were announced July 12, by the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. The CBS special "Elton John: One Night Only - Greatest Hits Live" has been nominated in the category "Multi-Camera Picture Editing for a Miniseries, Movie or a Special".

NIGEL OLSSON'S NEW ALBUM

Nigel Olsson's new album Move the Universe was released on July 4, in Japan on the Sony Domestic label. No details are available as to when the album will be released in the United States and the rest of the world.

PRINCE CHARLES LISTENS TO ELTON

Prince Charles mentioned that he likes listening to Phil Collins, Elton and rock group Dire Straits in a TV interview in July. He was asked what music he likes to listen to in his spare time.

ELTON'S MARCHING IN MILAN

Elton was spotted in the front row of the Versace show on June 24, as the spring-summer 2002 menswear preview showings began over that weekend in Milan. "Men today are a least as vain as women," said Donatella Versace after her show.

TOMMY ON DVD

Cult 1975 movie Tommy, released by Universal Pictures, is on sale in the UK on DVD format since June 18. Elton famously performs the song Pinball Wizard.



THE SIMPSONS ON VIDEO

Elton's appearance on the Simpsons (Love, Springfield Style) was released on VHS video by Twentieth Century Fox, at the end of June.

RUFUS WAINWRIGHT SINGS

WITH ELTON

Rufus Wainwright guests on Elton's American Triangle, a tribute to Matthew Shepard, the gay University of Wyoming student who was murdered in 1998 because of his sexual orientation. The song will appear on Elton's new album, Songs From the West Coast (see lead news story). The two singer/pianists never actually met during the recording, as Wainwright was in New York and Elton was in Los Angeles. But after Rufus laid down the backing vocals for the chorus, he did receive a phone call from Elton. "He wanted to let me know that he was honoured that I worked on his record and that years ago he had a terrible, terrible crush on my father," Wainwright said laughing. "He wants to go out for a beer sometime, but more incredible than talking to him was when I was in the studio singing the back-ups, trying to meld with that voice."

SECOND CBS SPECIAL?

According to ABCNEWS.com, Elton will be returning to CBS for a second American TV special during the upcoming season (his first being One Night Only, an amalgam of two live dates at Madison Square Garden in October 2000). No further details have been given.



Photo: Sharon Kalinoski

JUST FOR FUN

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 27)

- 1 She's got a subtle touch
on the silver key to a
clockwork heart
- 2 I'd drift with them
In endless space
- 3 You're taking in the face of a
rifle butt,
While the wardens hold you
down
- 4 Now she rolls like the dice
In a poor gambler's hands
- 5 It's falling on the playground
While the kids get wet playing
the same old games
- 6 Crazy summers that would
never end
When the time was spent
lovin' you
- 7 Is she foreign, legs eleven
Italian girls take me to heaven
- 8 There's a farm in the rain
And a little farmhouse
- 9 My city spread like
cannon fire
In a yellow nervous state
- 10 And the sky explodes
And the moon grows cold
- 11 Just his pen in his pocket and
the price of a room
Where the second-hand sheets
smell of stale perfume
- 12 The world is your oyster
You're a pearl



Songs from the WEST COAST

The London Playback

Compiled by
David Wright

Nearly 40 Elton fans were lucky enough to attend a preview of *Songs From The West Coast* at London's Towerhouse Studios on 24 July, courtesy of eltonjohn.com.

The initial response was very positive from all present, there was even spontaneous applause at the end of the first of two playbacks.

Four of them give their reviews here.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

Stephan Heimbecher: Has a Billy Joel like piano intro, lots of harmonic background choir as well as a groovy instrumental part with Elton going "Yeah!" towards the end.

David Wright: Very American song with references to Bonnie & Clyde. Back to a Tumbleweed Connection feel, nice and bare production so you can hear the instruments.

George Matlock: Pub song intro sits incongruously, but the song that follows rewards our patience. The voice is the highlight here, very fresh like the 1970s Elton! Elton hits high notes, and an interesting, dainty accentuation of the word "clothes".

John Michie: Heavily piano dominated. The lyrics are very strong & Elton delivers them in the same manner. A very promising start.



"The songs I think could have gone back to that Madman/Tumbleweed era ... What have I been doing for the last two and a half years? - I've been playing solo a lot of the time. What are the fans always saying to me? - We need more piano on the album! So the first track on the album, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, just starts off piano and voice - and

there is piano on every track on the album and you can hear it. The only track that doesn't start with piano is *Original Sin* where the piano comes in on the middle eight and the chorus, and it just starts up with acoustic guitar, bass and drums

...
I'm basically a piano player and that's what I do best. To be honest with you the fans have been telling me that for a long time, but you're so tempted to try other different things and as a musician you have to, but I've finally found now, as a result of doing this solo tour, I've found where I am. I've drawn my line in the sand, and you can tell everybody now that at 54, I wanted to make a superb album again".

Elton John 21 June 2001

DARK DIAMOND

SH: Is a reggae-type song that reminds of Durban Deep. The song features Stevie Wonder on harmonica.

GM: Sounds in places like Slow Down Georgie. A weak song with an over-complicated mid-1990s beat that invades. Stevie Wonder's harmonica fails to rescue it.

DW: Echoes of Durban Deep but much better, nice swinging chorus.

JM: A very funky bass - heavy backing complements the return of Stevie Wonder's distinctive harmonica playing to an Elton track.

LOOK MA, NO HANDS

SH: Starts as a very Seventies piano song, but then turns into a "typical" Nineties Elton song with too much drums.

DW: Tumbleweed feel again, a bit more up tempo.

GM: Starts like 1960s piano solo, then fast rhythm aka Bruce Hornsby. Interesting lyrics such as "When the Martians came" a hark back to Bernie's and Elton's childhood interest in Sci-Fi. Soothing guitar solo at end.

JM: Very country and 'organic' sounding. A strong finish to the song.

ORIGINAL SIN

SH: Has been the favourite of the London crowd on July 24, 2001. Funny enough, because it's the song with the least piano! Sounds like a soundtrack, very atmospheric.

DW: Singalong feel to the chorus, very catchy. Love it!

GM: The fans' favourite. The country guitar sound is reminiscent of Conquer the Sun. Lyrics are inspired: "Smells like heaven in this place." Great broad melody, and there is a hint of Did He Shoot Her too at the end of the song in that piano arrangement.

JM: I really like this on first hearing. Unusual to hear an Elton track start with just acoustic guitar. A mournful song in many ways that is the finished article.

AMERICAN TRIANGLE

SH: Seems to be a bit too slow compared to the live version already known to fans. Rufus Wainwright is singing background vocals.

DW: Intro like Skyline Pigeon and could have remained piano and voice only. Clearly a very important song to Elton and very dramatic.

GM: Classical, sad song. Slower than live version. The voice is more like recent Elton's mature tones. Powerful lyrics like: "God hates Fags where we come from." And "Two lives wasted, one life spent." Great backing vocal inflections. Death knell at song's end is poignant. Should have been released as a single a year ago when performed live.

JM: Hymn - like (always an Elton Strength) A very strong vocal performance. The lyrics are emotive.

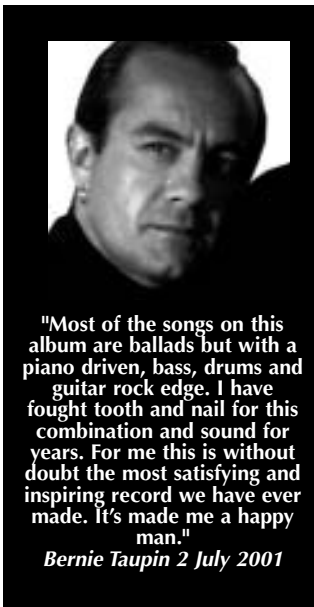
BIRDS

SH: makes you wonder why the album is not called "Songs From The Deep South". It's a Neville Brothers type of song with a great rhythm track.

DW: Country & Western foot-tapper but the production gets too noisy after a nice piano and drum start.

GM: Builds up a strong country beat in the genre of Jack Rabbit. Lyrics include the great line a child might ask: "How come birds don't fall from the sky when they die." It could be a winner for performers like Sheryl Crow.

JM: Elton and Bernie still love the band I see!



I WANT LOVE

SH: is going to be the first single, and it's indeed the only commercial track on the album. Reminds one of ELO/Jeff Lynne, but definitely also has a lot of Beatles influences.

DW: Pleasant enough, reminiscent of Free As A Bird by the three surviving Beatles.

GM: Beatles from the start! Brilliant, perfect! Enough said.

JM: This song has got a real Beatles feel. In particular George Harrison, could have come from his 'Cloud Nine' album.

THE WASTELAND

SH: is the only up-tempo track on the album. It sounds like a very bluesy jam session. Very unusual Elton John song.

DW: So Elton still loves rock'n'roll! Brilliant, riff lifted from Elvis's Trouble from King Creole.

GM: Chatter in the studio as they countdown the song's cue. Rock n roll start. Elton used this shuffle on Hey Papa Legba. Influenced by Elvis.

JM: This is the now obligatory one up - tempo number on the album. However, this one is a real eye - opener. Elton gets down and dirty with some boogie - woogie piano. The drums are very high in the mix.

THE BALLAD OF THE BOY IN THE RED SHOES

SH: is probably the one track that most fans already heard. It's a landmark Elton/Taupin ballad which reminds you of the good old EJ times.

DW: I absolutely adore this song. Bernie's lyrics shine through more than on any other song.

GM: Hum-drum, but it grows on you! Lush orchestrals. The boy in ballet could be Stephen Lubman, the theatre dancer Elton met and who danced in the video to I Guess That's Why they Call it the Blues. Hercules interviewed Stephen's mother after the funeral in 1995. Paul Buckmaster strings appear to be in evidence.

JM: This is another very strong song. It is a perfect marriage of exceptional lyrics and melody. The instrumentation contains a number of mandolin flourishes.



Photo: David Wright

LOVE HER LIKE ME

SH: is a very Nineties Elton song that could have been an outtake from "Made in England". Not one of the highlights of the album.

DW: So, so – can't get excited on first listen, rather over produced.

GM: Very commercial 1960s guitar twang, and lovely, vivid piano ripples. The chorus is powerful. The title could suggest bi-sexuality in the event a male sings this song. Some Hammond organ sound rounds off this delectable ditty.

JM: This song really rolls along in an easy manner. Because the piano is less dominant, this has got a band feel to it.

MANSFIELD

SH: is a very Nineties Elton song that could have been an outtake from "Made in England". Not one of the highlights of the album.

DW: After 2 listens I simply can't get my head round this song. It just doesn't flow and in the context of the album has too much production and too little melody.

GM: Vocals are slurred! Given the worth of clear vocals throughout this well produced album, this song is a real upset. Tries the strings evident in song Madman Across the Water. Simplistic melody.

JM: A summer feel to this song, with very good backing vocals. However, this was the song that failed to grab on first hearing. I did prefer it second time around, so maybe a grower.

THIS TRAIN DON'T STOP THERE ANYMORE

SH: is a very Nineties Elton song that could have been an outtake from "Made in England". Not one of the highlights of the album.

DW: Classic Elton melody and a fitting end to a fine album.

GM: Although performed on tour, this song lack some direction. The rails don't carry it well! It is Commodores-style rhythm, and the song grows on you! The hints of Tumbleweed Connection betray the superb strings of Paul Buckmaster. Too involved to be a hit single, but a great, confident song to be finale to the album with its repetitive ending serving this purpose very well.

JM: The album finishes on a real high with this wonderful song. Not for the first time on the collection, a strong vocal communicates strong lyrics. A triumph.

John Michie & David Wright at the Town House Studio



OVERALL

SH: The new record indeed is a fan album. It has a lot of piano, and it has a lot of great lyrics! It's a very diverse album with a very dominant Elton voice on most of the tracks.

DW: I am very impressed and pleased with this album. It will be interesting to see how it fits into the collection in the long run.

GM: A solid album with only one song that did not register with me. Mostly fresh and clearly pronounced singing, Elton to the fans' desires.

JM: This has been worth waiting for. I doubt if Elton's piano & vocals have ever been as high in the mix. Bernie must be delighted with the lyrics and how well they are put across. The instrumentation is kept simple.

I want love

T H E V I D E O R E V I E W

by Reggie Zippo

On August 23, 2001 at 8:00 PM EST, MTV premiered Elton John's new video, "I Want Love", which was both exciting and disappointing at the same time. The video opened with a long shot of Robert Downey Jr. standing in front of a large window sans curtains in an empty room of a vacant mansion. As the camera closed in on Robert's backside, it moved around to reveal the front of his face just as he began to lip-sync to the song. In a way, it was a bit refreshing to see a young face behind Elton's voice again. Robert's grasp of Elton's original vocal performance was nearly dead on target, which may cause the passive fans to wonder why Elton did not do the video shoot for himself.

It is widely known amongst die-hard fans that Elton simply detests making music videos, but there may be more to it than simple loathing of video production. The use of this young actor in place of Elton may have been to appeal to the younger MTV generation who are not familiar with his body of work outside of *The Lion King*. A young person with disposable income will be

more likely to show interest in a music video and the subsequent CD release if someone who doesn't look like their father is singing the song. But, without Elton doing the actual lip-synching himself it seemed *Just Like Strange Rain* to this reviewer (please forgive the pun). Given that Mr.

Downey is quite well known in cinema and television, though, perhaps an unknown teen actor would have been better suited to "fool" the general audience.

As the video progressed, Robert began to roam around to different areas of the mansion that proved to be as empty as the first room. It was quite apparent from the onset that the camera's function was to follow Robert around, and this was accomplished without one single cut from beginning to end, but after about a minute of this monotony it got extremely tiresome to view. Perhaps some type of fantasy dream sequences could have been interjected into a few of the spots where Robert was not lip-synching in order to hold the viewer over to the end.

At just about half way through, there was a sense that Elton might appear out of nowhere to take over the reigns of lip-synching or at least just to show his presence, but that anticipated hope never materialized. One idea that would have been quite effective would show Elton playing a white piano in the same room with Robert at the beginning. Then, as Robert ventures around, Elton could already be in each different room with the same white piano. Instead, we were subjected to just Mr. Downey and the mansion to carry the video alone.

As the song came to a close, Robert ended up back in the same position that he started in with the camera pulling away from behind (just the opposite of the beginning). It is a safe bet to say that very little budget was expended on this video shoot, but there is no doubt that the song will prevail despite the video's shortcomings!

I highly recommend buying the CD single and the album. Especially the single since there will be 3 bonus tracks to whet our appetite!



Robert Downey Jr.'s performance in the I Want Love video was his first job since his drug arrest in April. There is a poignancy to lyrics such as "I want love but it's impossible / A man like me so irresponsible / A man like me is dead in places". Elton says he picked Downey because "He's an incredible actor, and lyrically the song would be perfect for him to interpret. I'm very fond of him." Referring to his own addictions, Elton said that if he hadn't reformed, "I'd be dead by now or a fruitcake like Michael Jackson or Prince."



Photo: www.gilmarc.com/uordf

Photo: Sharon Kalinoski

membership matters

DEAR HERCULES MEMBERS,

I have served as manager of the USA/ Canada department for nearly seven years. It has been an interesting volunteer position. Sometimes fun, sometimes highly aggravating.....but always interesting. I have enjoyed meeting many fine people along the way.

A few months ago I decided to use my spare time to attend graduate school, to earn my master's degree in Accounting. This commitment made it necessary for me to resign from my part time job, and I am taking a leave of absence from Hercules.

Our eltonchat team member, Barb Crowley, has graciously agreed to take over my Hercules duties. As of September 1, 2001, USA and Canada members should please contact Barb for questions about or changes to your membership. Also, send renewals and membership pass requests to her. Barb's address is:
Barb Crowley,
P O Box 692392,
Orlando,
FL 32869-2392

I am sure that she will do a great job.

Best of luck to all, Sharon

Editor's note: On behalf of the Hercules Team and members I would like to record our thanks for her hard work over the years, not to mention excellent photographic contributions.

VIDEO SPECIAL OFFER

YOUR CHANCE TO RE-VISIT OR GATE CRASH THE CAVERN GIG!

Hercules Television proudly presents the video of the Elton-Lennon Fan Convention at Cavern Club, Liverpool in March 2001.

With the first outing for Elton's first band Bluesology in 33 years, this is your chance to own a piece of history!

The video includes never-before-seen backstage footage, as well as Bluesology's landmark concert and their rehearsals the night before on Merseyside!

Elton guitarist John Jorgenson's question-and-answer session is included, and ex-Elton drummer Roger Pope makes a guest appearance to jam with Bluesology!

Hercules Television used two cameras to capture all the action!

The video is as limited edition as the great show itself.

You can order it for just one month. We will accept orders from October 1, 2001 to November 1, 2001. After that, too late!

The first 40 orders for the video, available in both PAL Secam and NTSC formats, will also come complete with a rare Hercules Cavern Convention poster signed by ALL the special guests, including Freddy Gandy who

was unable to perform on the night! The posters are restricted to one per household. The videos will make great Christmas gifts. And at £15 (US\$23, or 21 euros) anywhere in the world, postage and packing included, they are great value for money!

For the NTSC video version (USA/Japan VCRs), send orders to Sharon Kalinoski at:

PO Box 398, La Grange, IL 60525, USA.

Make US\$ checks/US Money Orders payable to "Sharon Kalinoski". Sorry, no foreign checks or money orders will be accepted.

For the PAL Secam video version (UK/Europe VCRs), send orders to George Matlock at:

Hercules UK, PO Box 315, Richmond, TW9 3QX, UK.

Make sterling or euro currency cheques or sterling postal orders payable to "Hercules UK".

You can also pay by VISA or Mastercard credit card. Send your applications to the two listed addresses above, as appropriate.





Photo: Sharon Kalinoski

ELTON JOHN

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH THE WORLD'S MOST OUTRAGEOUS STAR

Elton's capacity for excess is legendary. Here, as he prepares to release his new album, Songs From The West Coast, he gives his most revealing interview yet. In a wide-ranging, question-and-answer session, Sir Elton talks candidly about his rollercoaster existence. As Elton himself says: "One thing you can safely say about my life is that it's never been boring."

Q: Would you describe yourself as naturally self-destructive?

A: Yeah, but you can say that about any major performer. They're all nightmares to deal with, self-destructive with a desperate need to be loved. For me, it started young. I'd be made to perform at weddings and such and got used to being the centre of attention. It escalated when I got famous - you get addicted to it.

Q: Do you still have tantrums?

A: I don't let things build up now. When I lose my temper, it's because I'm too tired and it's over something stupid. But yeah, I still can be very unreasonable. A lot of it is to do with the same things: Low self-esteem, body image - all that stuff.

Q: What about those infamous shopping sprees? What was your most outlandish purchase?

A: I saw this tram in Melbourne and thought: "I'll have that." It didn't cost much to ship to Southampton but getting it to my house was a nightmare. It's in the back garden now - my partner David uses it for an office. I'm still impulsive but tend to buy beautiful things like art. I'm no longer so miserable that I need to cheer myself up.

Q: What major difference did being famous make to your life?

A: It made the extremes even more extreme. I'd play before huge crowds, then the tour would end and I'd find it difficult to walk into a room

without panicking. It was like I had all this experience of performing, but none of life. I was a virgin at 23, you know.

Q: What difference would it have made if you'd moved to the US in the mid-70s?

A: I'd be dead by now. Or a fruitcake like Michael Jackson or Prince. At least in Britain we don't have much tolerance for showbiz b***s.**

Q: How much did it bother you that you were never seen as a sex icon?

A: Let's face it, it's hard to be a sex icon sitting behind a piano. Yet David bought the Caribou album because he liked me in a tigerskin shirt. Actually, I was having sex all the time just after that - a lot of it with my own fans.

Q: What is the most ludicrous outfit that you've worn?

A: The Minnie Mouse costume. I once met Sting wearing that and felt like a complete prat. I also look back on some of the stuff I'd wear walking down the street and think: "Christ! What were you thinking?"

Q: How often do you dance to your own records?

A: F*** never! Are you kidding? I don't play my records at all.**

Q: How do the fortunes of Watford FC mirror your music career?



A: I've had a few relegation seasons but with this new album, I feel I'm back in the Premiership. I'll never be Man Utd but I'll settle for being a pop version of Watford: Serious contenders playing attractive, sexy football.

Q: In the 1970s and 1980s, did it bother you that people just wanted to have sex with you because you were Elton John?

A: It didn't bother me at all because I was looking for a quick fix. Being famous was very advantageous. I could use it to get people into my bed. I didn't have a problem with casual sex, at least at the start.

Q: Do you ever feel guilty about casual sex?

A: Sure, it gets depressing. Not only for you. But you feel guilty about using the other person. Nothing is worse than waking up in the morning and thinking: "How am I going to get rid of this person without hurting their feelings". Hopefully, I have never been a complete bastard like that. I've never said to anyone: "Pick up your clothes and f*** off."

Q: David Furnish is your long-term partner, but have you ever been tempted to stray?

A: I still fancy other people, even though I'm with David. We'll be walking down the street and I'll say: "Cor, I wouldn't mind s***** him." I tend to go for younger people. David tends to go for mature types. But casual sex is not an option for either of us.

Q: How's the famous libido these days?

A: Not as great as it used to be. But in the past, my libido was tied into drinking and drugs. But it's in fair fettle, up there with the national average.

Q: Four times a day then? With double helpings on weekends?

A: Not sure about four times a day. Maybe twice a week, which is fine by me.

Q: Do you ever look at a woman and think: "Blimey, I could do her a favour?"

A: Erm, not exactly. I can look at a woman and find her really stunning. Someone like Christina Ricci, who I think is just amazing. But, on the whole, I've never fancied famous people. I don't think I've ever been to bed with a famous person. I've always fancied people I see on a building site or walking down the street.

Q: Would you recommend a full-on orgy?

A: These days. I'm not sure. I think sexual experimentation is great. Because sex can be so boring. So I was all for experimenting. Until the early Eighties when people started talking about Aids.

Q: Waiting for your first Aids test result. How tortuous was that?

A: Let's just say I was incredibly relieved when it came up negative. Yeah, I was relieved. I was lucky.

Q: What were your strangest party experiences?

A: There was one in LA. We invited George Harrison and lord knows who else. Then Bob Dylan turned up. I'd had quite a few Martinis and f*** knows how much cocaine. So I start babbling on about how he has to come up to my room and try on my clothes. He's recoiling from me with this look of horror. And George is telling me: "You'd better watch that powder - you're doing far too much." He was right, of course. Dope just made me very silly. I remember going to Barry Gibb's house, and he went off to play tennis and someone handed a joint around. It was f***ing lethal. On the wall there was a photo of the Bee Gees and one of the O'Jays. I was so stoned I couldn't tell the difference. Barry came back and I said to him: "That's f***ing clever that. Two groups in one. The Bee Gees and the O'Jays are the same group." I had to ring up the next day and apologise - that happened quite a lot.

Q: Did anyone keep up with you?

A: Freddie Mercury could party harder than most. We'd be up for nights, sitting at 11 in the morning. Queen were supposed to be catching a plane and Freddie would be like: "Oh f***, another line, dear?" John Lennon was another one. We'd get so stoned together. One time, we were so f***ing paranoid, there was a knock on the hotel door and we thought it was the police. We stared through the keyhole, and it was Andy Warhol. So we were trying to work out how Andy got to be a policeman. He stood there for what seemed like hours. We couldn't work it out.

Q: When did drugs really start to affect your music?

A: Doing the Leather Jackets album in 1986. It was in Holland, at a very low ebb in my life. I was not a well budgee at that time. You can hear it on the album. It sounds like a dead person in there.

Q: What's the worst song you've ever recorded?

A: I'd have to say 'Heartache All Over The World' from the Leather Jackets album. Or 'Part Time Love' from A Single Man. They're both pretty insubstantial.

Q: How many albums between 1976 and the present do you wish you'd never released?

A: Well, I can't remember half of them! Even when they were below par, they still sold reasonably well. Even the really mediocre ones. It's odd. A lot of the time, the record sales were a lot better than the albums were. I was coasting for a long time, knowing that anything I made would sell two million or whatever. But I don't want to do that any more. I don't want to be known just as someone who made some great albums in the Seventies. I want to feel like I've got a good career again, that I'm making great records.

Q: How bad was your drug habit?

A: Around the late 70s and early 80s, bands like Spandau Ballet and Def Leppard would join us at a party for a rip-snorting night, then come back the next night and still be partying from the night before. It was fun for a while. I loved it for sex - it enabled me to be very promiscuous. But the after-effects got worse and worse. The thing about cocaine was that it enabled me to talk to people. Even if it meant talking complete bulls**t. But towards the end, I'd do it on my own. I'd stay in for

two weeks and do a line every four minutes. By that time, it was closing me down. For the last four years I did it, I didn't enjoy it at all. It was pure habit.

Q: What about other drugs?

A: I tried heroin just once. Horrible drug, Acid? Never went near it. I didn't want to do anything I didn't have to control over. Of course, I convinced myself I was completely in control of coke. One time I was in LA and I rang my office in London and asked if they could do anything about the wind outside my window because it was too loud. Anyone who does that is obviously barking. And no relationship can survive drug abuse. My marriage couldn't. If you bring drugs into the equation, the strain's going to be huge."

Q: What sort of drunk were you?

A: I'd behave disgracefully and could never remember most of it. I had about six Martinis in half an hour, woke up the next morning, my room was completely destroyed. I'd beaten up John [Reid, Elton's former manager] and he'd driven off with a black eye, wearing full clown make-up. Quite often Bernie would ring me up and say: "You were so disgusting last night. I'm ashamed to know you." And I wouldn't remember a thing.

Extracts of interview from UK's Uncut magazine, September 2001 issue. Hercules regrets that it cannot supply copies of the full interview. Edited by Tammi Law.

www.johnjorgenson.com

John Jorgenson

John Jorgenson has an excellent new website to be found at www.johnjorgenson.com

"Finally I have a place that I can let everyone who is interested know what is going on with my music: past, present, and future. I will be updating the site on a regular basis, and the success of the site really depends on the participation of you, the

visitors. Please feel welcome to use the bulletin board and discussion pages; it will be a great way for us to all get to know each other a little bit better. From time to time I will also post some samples of new music that I am working on, so check in often!"

He has also announced the following tour dates:

US 2001 DATES...

- Thu Oct 4 BIJOU THEATRE, Knoxville, TN
with Tommy Emmanuel at 8:00pm
803 South Gay Street
Tel: (865) 523-4211 1-800-738-0832
Tickets: \$20.00 Orchestra,
\$17.50 Balcony
Tickets Unlimited -
Tel: (865)656 4444
- Sun Oct 7 THE BIRCHMERE, Alexandria, VA
with the Twangbangers
3701 Mt. Vernon Ave
Tel: (703)549-7500
Email: birchmere@birchmere.com
- Tue Oct 9 THE BOTTOM LINE (TENTATIVE),
New York, NY
15 West 4th Street
Tel: (212) 228-6300



up close and personal

In the first of our series, Up Close and Personal, Elton fan and Hercules member, Pam Quier, shares with us her favourite memories of seeing EJ in concert.

My name is Pam, I live in California and I would love to share my story.

I started out in 1992 seeing Elton in concert. It took a few concerts for Elton to "grow on me"...as I was a Billy Joel fan! Elton at that time was someone else to listen to when I got tired of listening to Billy!

The next few years found me at Elton's concerts in 1992, 1994, 1995, 1998...ok...let's stop at 1998 for a bit. The local radio station I listened to, K101, was running a contest to go see Elton and Billy in Europe! From the minute I heard that commercial on the radio, I was determined I would be the one to win. And win I did! I was the winner of a trip for 2 to see Elton and Billy, Face to Face in Vienna, Austria on June 16, 1998...but as it turned out, Billy took ill and Elton went on alone.

The radio station started qualifying people Friday, May 22. To qualify, you had to be the 9th caller when you heard the "touch tones", then you would win the "Big Picture" CD and get your name into the draw for the Grand Prize.

When I first heard about the radio contest I thought here's my chance! I've got to get speed dial installed on my phone...it's the only way I'll get through! Speed dial was connected on Friday morning...I went home at lunch and programmed the radio station's phone number into it. I was armed and ready! The very 1st time they played the touch tones I was caller #1, ...well...speed dial works, but I need to be caller #9! I got though several times over the weekend, but was not caller #9. Finally I heard "Hi, K101, who's this?" Oh my God, am I caller #9?" "Yes!" I was screaming then! I had

qualified, and was later notified that I had won.

My daughter and I arrived in Vienna; the ride from the airport to our hotel was provided...a white, stretch Mercedes limousine! I was impressed! Vienna is big on posters/billboards and it didn't take us long to find one with Elton and Billy promoting their concert. The next morning, we boarded a train into Stephansplatz, for a lot of shopping. My treasure for the day was being able to buy Elton's "Tantrums and Tiaras" which was currently NOT AVAILABLE in the US.

That evening, we arranged a taxi to take us to Ernst Happel Stadium for the concert. We had received a fax at our Hotel from Island Records (who were making all the arrangements) that we would be on "Elton John's Guest List" and would need to pick up our tickets at the box office. If there was any problem, they were to contact Keith Bradley, Elton's Tour Manager. We finally got our tickets after having talked to several different people, including some local radio station people. They had asked to interview us on the air...She asked if I was terribly disappointed that Billy Joel would not be there performing with Elton? I said that I was somewhat disappointed, that this was something I wanted to see for a long time, my two favourite guys performing in concert together, but that I knew Elton would put on a great show.

Elton put on a 3 hour show and was as fabulous as ever! He opened with Funeral for a Friend/Love Lies Bleeding. Our seats were in the 28th row on the main floor. About 2/3 of the way through the concert, I managed

If you would like to share your stories of being close to the stage at an Elton concert, please send your letters to Up Close and Personal, David Wright, (address on page 2), or email HerculesEd@eltonfan.net

to move up to about the 10th row and spent the rest of the time standing on a chair! No one ever wants an Elton John concert to end and this was no exception! He came out for 2 encores ending up wearing a Nike jogging suit closing the concert with Billy Joel's "Piano Man". I went through 3 rolls of film just at the concert, my better pictures being taken off the video screen.

It was a fast and crazy trip, but you know, I wouldn't have traded it for anything, except of course the chance to meet Elton in person! This will be one trip I will always remember, and guess what, regular people really do win those contests with unbelievable prizes!

Well, little did I know then, that my future would include meeting Elton in person. In Feb/2000 I saw Elton in Reno at the Lawlor Centre on his solo tour...my first. It was the first time he had knowingly acknowledged me in the audience. I had made a sign to hold up so he could see...."SEE YOU IN LA"...because I would be going down to Los Angeles just a few weeks later to

meet him at Tower Records for his El Dorado CD signing. March 14th found me in Los Angeles, at Tower Records. This was my first face to face encounter with the legendary Sir Elton John. I got my "limit" of 2 cds signed, and memories of a FANTASTIC sleepless weekend!

April found me flying off to yet another destination to see my favourite artist perform in Maine and Massachusetts! Little did I know I would once again be face to face with Elton, this time at the stage...both nights! We ended up with 2nd row seats, right in front of Elton...the perfect spot. On Elton's website, I had read he loved the Beach Boys, and was looking for the "Surf's Up" album. Well, before I went to Massachusetts, I went to ebay, and managed a successful bid for a copy. I wanted to present it to Elton at the stage!

In Maine, when I did get to the stage, rather than seeking an autograph like many others, I just wanted Elton to have this record! When I handed it to him, he looked at it...a big smile came across his face. I made sure he

knew it was for him, he took it and shook my hand! At the designated times, we managed to get to the stage again, and of course stayed there for the remainder of the concert! A place I ALWAYS wanted to be, had always wondered how those people down front got there...and now I was! IT WAS FANTASTIC!

The next night in Massachusetts was the same...we had the same seats...2nd row...right in front...and made our way to the stage at the appropriate times. Life just didn't get any better than this...I thought!!

October, 2000...Elton is coming to Madison Square Gardens for 2 nights for a Greatest Hits Live Tour...to be recorded live for TV, video and a CD! Was it possible...could I go there? You bet! But that's another story. Well, I guess that's about it for now! I hope you enjoyed it...I truly have lived my dream!

Pam Quier
California, USA



Photo: Sharon Kalinoski

A Right Turkey

I was a little sceptical when it was announced that Elton's concert from Ephesus was to be broadcast on the internet. Whilst this may be the future, it is not the present – most people don't have the technology to receive these things. I live near London but ADSL is not available to us yet.

I was also dubious as to whether MSN could get it right as my experience is that websites frequently fail under pressure with ordinary data, let alone the volume that would be required here.

I paid in advance to receive the show but as I have 56k modem access I first enquired whether it was worth it. I was told I would see intermittent pictures and hear good quality sound. On the night of the live webcast I received nothing but a string of error messages for 50 minutes. I then had the pleasure of hearing nearly three songs before the error messages were back. By then I had had enough and gave up. Subsequently I tried the archive version which was to be available for a week. Needless to say it took numerous attempts and eventually I was in and listened to most of the show, but I never did get the last 20 minutes. In all attempts I did not see so much as one frame of picture.

Worth \$9.99? Not in a million years.

Judging by the messages on the newsgroup I am not the only fan to suffer like this.

I have twice e-mailed MSN requesting a refund but have not had so much as a reply.

Elton should not be involved with a company who show such bad business practice and manners, not to mention ineptitude. Please stick to TV in the future.

I sincerely hope that Elton and his management take note. In the meantime, what are the chances I get my refund?

Name and address withheld



Ain't Nothing Like The Real Thing

I always look forward to receiving *The Mag*, but the June 2001 issue, with several pages on Elton impersonators, was shallow and disappointing. They may wear glasses and have the right hairdo but there is no resemblance to the attractive charismatic star.

Cheryl Herman, USA

Ed: Cheryl, I think your criticism is rather harsh. The June issue had two pages on Dieter Graham, a professional Elton 'soundalike'.

There were a couple of photos of lookalike Ray Johnson within the highly relevant context of the Liverpool Convention report. That's all, hardly several pages and hardly 'shallow and disappointing' in my view.

With the internet becoming ever more widespread most readers are more up to date with the real Elton's news than ever before. This is why we at Hercules seek to offer interesting original content by seeking people who presently or in the past have known or worked with Elton and occasionally impersonators.

There is an open invitation to all members to provide contributions. There can be no better way of improving the content, if you feel it needs improving, by submitting your own work for publication.

A Happier Fan

I have been a fan since 1994 after hearing a classic years tape of Elton's.

A chance of a lifetime came for me last February 5, 2000 when I was able to attend one of his Medusa Solo Tour concerts. For me, that was the first time ever seeing him in concert and needless to say I wasn't disappointed. During my "fan" years I have been inspired by him to do many wonderful new things that I might never have taken the time or felt competent to complete. One wonderful result is my very first quilt, completed just this past May. It is a miniatur variation of the Union Flag. I was also inspired to create a poster celebrating my wonderful memories from the Medusa solo concert.



Although I did not get to meet him at the concert, perhaps he will read this message.

"To you and Bernie and all the wonderful people who provide us with your amazing gift, thanks for filling my life with such beautiful music."

Stephanie McLamb, North Carolina, USA

WEB REVIEW

kiki dee

By John Michie

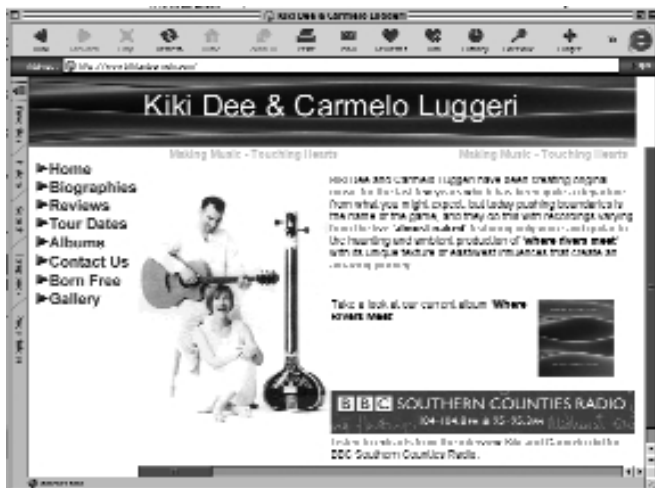
Hot on the heels of the news that John Jorgenson has launched a new website comes the arrival of www.kikiandcarmelo.com. This is the site that focuses on the music of Kiki Dee and Carmelo Luggeri. Kiki did previously have a web presence, but this is a big improvement. The site is well laid out and very easy to navigate around.

For those of you that are only aware of Kiki's mid 70's to early 80's solo material and work with Elton, you will be surprised and delighted by the innovative music her and Carmelo produce together. It is acoustic and brings together both eastern and western influences. I was most interested in how they came to work together, and found this within the 'Biographies' section. Carmelo co-produced 2 tracks for Kiki's Greatest Hits along with Greg 'Made in England' Penny. Since this mid-nineties meeting they have remained a creative couple.



You might well be interested in the 'Tour Dates' part of the site as the duo are embarking on an extensive UK tour in the Autumn. I was intrigued by one page called 'Born Free'. It transpires that Carmelo was a very good friend of Julie Ward, who was tragically murdered in Kenya in 1988. 10 years after this awful event Carmelo organised an exhibition of Julie's photos, with her mother deciding monies raised would go to the 'Born Free Foundation'.

You will see that I have found much of interest within this new addition to the world wide web. I am sure you will too.



CD Nigel Olsson

REVIEW

Nigel Olsson's new album reviewed by George Matlock

At last! A fresh album from Elton's returned drummer, Nigel Olsson. But apart from a fancy and loveable sleeve artwork which features Nigel The Slipper man taking it easy with a cartoon cat in an armchair listening to his favourite Hi-Fi music.

The cover fails to conjure the title of the album, *Move The Universe*. But scratch the details of the audio, and you have a mind-blowing album to blow away a few Klingsons.

As Nigel told us in an exclusive interview for *Hercules* in January 2001, he has brought in several famous names on this album of 12 tracks, mostly covers plus some gems from Davey Johnstone, and one from Elton and Bernie Taupin.

Regrettably, the album has taken the form of a showcase of the artists' respective talents. It is very much in the genre of recent compilation albums. Although Nigel sings on four of the songs, there are none of him singing in duet with his guest performers, nor a BandAid type song of the artists together. As the album is sub-titled *Nigel Olsson's Drum Orchestra and Chorus Volume 2*, this chance to bring voices together is lost.

And before you ask, there was a volume one many years back!



NIGEL TAKES TO BATTLE WITH THE STARS

The album features Elton guitarist Davey Johnstone, as well as bass player Bob Birch and Guy Babylon on keyboards. Percussion is supplied by John Mahon, and Billy Trudell offers backing vocals. Indeed it appears Nigel has not spared anyone from Elton's larder of band members! The only person not on the recording which Nigel would dearly have, is the man to whom the album is aptly dedicated: Dee Murray 1946-1992.

The album begins with a strong title track, *Move The Universe*. The song, performed by Nigel, is an anthem to all those dating on the Internet! I am told there are a few! Hear the lyrics: "We search the world over, as the continents drift, It's

no small wonder love's a big if". This song is in the style of Nigel's modestly named 1978 album *Nigel*.

And listen out for the Tears For Fears *Seeds of Love* or Elton's *El Dorado* trumpets. But the little giveaway is towards the end of the song, where a racing car can be heard speeding past – a salute to Nigel's other big passion in life, rally car racing.

The first song is a classic, written by Davey Johnstone and Steve Trudell.

The second song *Take A Chance* is more of a hum-drum contemporary song which would sit well on a Mariah Carey album, but sounds like something straight off a Wilson Philips album. And I have both their early 1990 albums!

The song is sung by Japanese artist I Miyakawa, and aimed for the Japanese audience for where the album is released at present. Not a great deal to remark about this less than outstanding song, nice but not massive! Written by Kathy Brown Babylon, Reginald Burrell and Guy Babylon.

An established artist next...a tender rendition of Andrew Roachford's *Naked Without You* by Kiki Dee. Then Nigel returns to vocals on *If I Was Love*, another Davey and Steve penned song. This is Beatle-esque. The first bars of the song remind of Elton great summer hit

Little Jeannie. Nice balanced song which test Nigel's higher register.

A very loud "snog" can be heard at the end of the fifth song, Would I Lie To You, the 1981 Whitesnake hit. Here it is performed by Ken Stacey and the delectable Windy Wagner. Really not a bad cover version.

The next cover is no ordinary cover. It is the much-awaited Elton and Bernie penned song which failed to make it to album Made In England and was subsequently skimmed for this album by Davey and Nigel. But the title of the song, when I first heard the title, had me perplexed. Building A Bird is not perhaps the best use of the English language, although perhaps some readers would agree that I do no more justice to lingo with this review!

Suffice to say, Elton forgot he ever wrote this song! In fairness, the song is not a bad ditty tune, with strong keyboard by Guy Babylon and drums of course by Nigel. It is sung in a style reminiscent of U.S. band Chicago, a style Nigel used strongly on his Nigel album. But this song, performed by Nigel, leaves me very uncomfortable. While the song title sounds like nonsense, await the lyrics: "I'm building a bird, from the wreck of a story, something I once heard sifting through this pile of words." So far it is merely confused, but there is harsher to come: "Take a broken bird home, wrap it in barbed wire, saddest song I ever heard, was a bird in a house on fire...If you need it you don't know it, if it moves screw it in the ground."

Creative but very disturbing song and no wonder it never made it to the commercial ears of Elton's A&R man at Universal

Music. This is more an example for Elton fans of the songs that don't quite make it to release.

Kai Olsson steps in on the next track a cover of that classic country song When I'm Dead and Gone, originally a hit for McGuinness Flint in 1970.

The next song Say You Feel the Same is another signpost on this album which seeks to move the universe. It is a song Nigel wrote, along with Wayne Olsson and John Jonethis. It is performed by Nigel. Another Chicago style of song, you could easily make out Peter Cetera singing this song – if only Nigel would let him lay hands on it! This is a wholesome song for the lonely. We've all been there sometime.

The ninth song How Many Times is a second go for Japan's answer to Celine Dion. Yes, she even pronounces words that way, and her voice is mostly unusual for a non-European. The song is, however, not justice to this voice. A very sultry number written by Nicole RenEe (that's how it is spelt), Guy Shultz, and Durrell Bottoms. The song, I think, is a cover of the top 70 song by Brother Beyond in 1987. It certainly sounds like a song from that era.

Gigi Worth gives value to Trader. Not an easy song by Carl Wilson and Jack F. Riley III. But this unusual song is also very monotonous, which is fine if you like fast technotronic sounds, like the average Elton fan, I do not!

The penultimate song is a heavy rocker sung by Christina Vierra. The song is written by Don Nix. Enough said.

The final song is a hark back to those 1960s albums when a



reprise completed the album and rounded it off nicely. It is Nigel singing If I Was Love...with a special effect turntable stylus needle as it approaches the end of the album Forget not – Nigel is a traditional man brought up on LPs not CDs and MP3s!

Nigel has strived to bring to his first album in over 20 years a combination of new and established talent. He has succeeded and most of the songs are strong and apt. Having taken on the universe, I will be intrigued to know what Nigel takes on next?



White Tie & Tiara ball

Elton's annual White Tie & Tiara Ball garden party raised £1 million for the Elton John Aids Fountain at Woodside on 5 July.

The sum raised was boosted by an anonymous donation of £300,000.

Among the celebrities attending were Kate Winslet, the Duchess of York, Naomi Campbell, Elle Macpherson, Hugh Grant and Mick Jagger. The event was compered by oscar winner Kevin Spacey and included a performance by Anastacia.

Elton said: "I am completely bowled over at the amount raised and would like to thank everyone for making this possible.

"It was a great party and it's so fantastic to know that the monies raised are already committed to international projects helping people affected by HIV and Aids."

SMALL ADS

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LYRIC QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1 I Am Your Robot
- 2 Empty Sky
- 3 Have Mercy on the Criminal
- 4 Pinky
- 5 This Town
- 6 Where have All the Good Times Gone?
- 7 Wrap her Up
- 8 The North
- 9 Simple Life
- 10 Japanese Hands
- 11 House of Cards
- 12 Crystal

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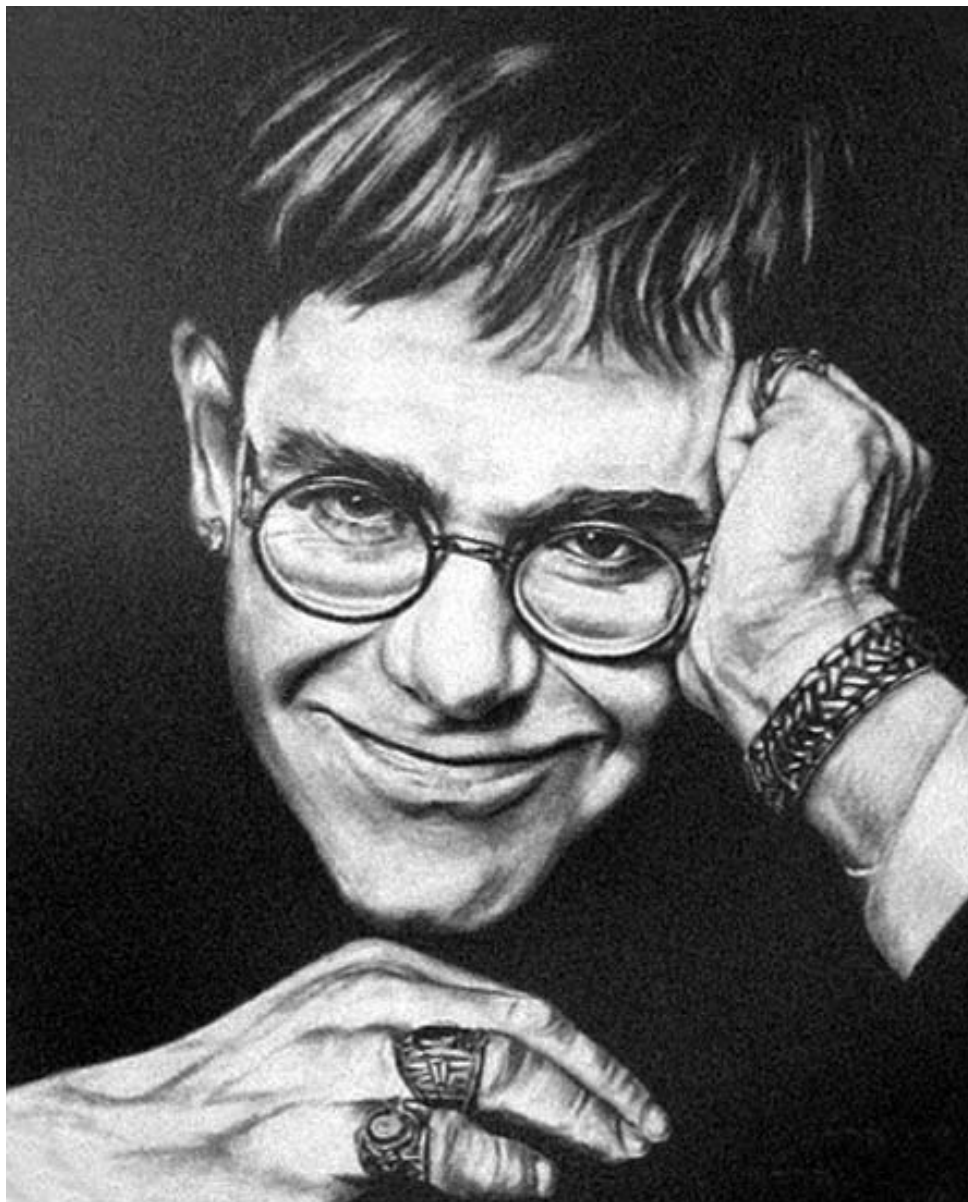
TOUR DATES

ELTON JOHN SOLO TOUR 2001

DATE	CITY	VENUE
05-Oct-2001	Cleveland, OH	Cleveland State Convocation Center
06-Oct-2001	Toronto, Canada	Air Canada Centre
09-Oct-2001	Ottawa, Canada	Corel Centre
10-Oct-2001	Quebec, Canada	Colisee
12-Oct-2001	Columbus, OH	Value City Arena
13-Oct-2001	Detroit, MI	Joe Louis Arena
18-Oct-2001	New York, NY	Madison Square Garden
19-Oct-2001	New York, NY	Madison Square Garden
22-Oct-2001	Mexico City, Mexico	Auditorio Nacional
23-Oct-2001	Mexico City, Mexico	Auditorio Nacional
25-Oct-2001	Mexico City, Mexico	Auditorio Nacional
12-Nov-2001	Osaka, Japan	Osaka-jo Hall
13-Nov-2001	Tokyo, Japan	Budokan Hall
15-Nov-2001	Tokyo, Japan	Budokan Hall

Please note: This is not an official Tour Schedule, as it contains unconfirmed dates at time of going to press.

2001



For up-to-the-minute news about Elton,
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