

inside this issue:

Elton & Sting
in Wedding Rain
Dance

EXCLUSIVE:
Tickets for Leeds

Tina Turner - The
tour that never
was!

plus:

VH-1 TV crew &
Charlie Morgan attend
Hercules conventions



Issue No. 47
JUNE 1999

FAN CLUB INFORMATION

Annual membership fee is £14 in the UK/Europe and £17/US\$30 for the USA and Rest of the World. Please note that your renewal date is printed on your address label in European format day/month/year.

Membership passes are available from your local HERCULES department: send a small photo of yourself when requesting your pass.

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

HERCULES is a quarterly publication released in March, June, September and December. In event of circumstances beyond our control, there is no guarantee for punctual shipment. It is published in English and German.

Printed articles do not necessarily reflect the editors' opinions. All information is based on the best of knowledge and belief. Reproductions permitted only by prior arrangement with HERCULES.

Member participation is always welcome. We are thankful for your submissions of any kind: reports, articles, photos, drawings, and suggestions. Please send them to the Editor, Tammi Law or to the Fan Adviser. Please understand that we cannot always publish all contributions.

UK Hotline 0906 888 20 20 (60p per minute)

USA/Canada Hotline 815/293 3843

Web site <http://www.eltonfan.com>

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Deadline for Issue No. 48 is 1 August 1999

No. 48 will be released 1 September 1999

Frontcover:

Elton and Sting dancing at the Rainforest Benefit Concert. April '99.

Backcover:

Elton at Paris Bercy - 7 Dec '98. (Photo: Jimmie Collins)



HERCULES Editor's Office
Tammi Law
49 Horseshoe Crescent,
Peatmoor
Swindon SN5 5AX, U.K.
Tel. +44 (0)1793 881 264
HerculesEd@aol.com

Editorial Assistants:
Barbara Turner
George Matlock

Design:
Turnstyle Design

Translations:
Mireille Mölbret
Sabine Asenkirschbaumer

For subscription details, please write to your local HERCULES department or to HERCULES Coordinator:

HERCULES Coordination
c/o Stephan Heimbecher
Orleansstr. 59
D-81667 München,
GERMANY
Tel. +49 (0)89 48900369
Fax +49 (0)89 48900370
sheimbecher@eltonfan.com

HERCULES Fan Adviser
c/o Mireille Mölbret
Zaunweg 11
D-80805 München,
GERMANY
Tel. +49 (0)89 3244146
HerculesFA@bigfoot.com

HERCULES USA/Canada
c/o Sharon Kalinoski
P.O. Box 398
La Grange, IL 60525, USA
sharonk@maxi-signal.com

HERCULES U.K.
P.O. Box 315
Richmond
Surrey TW9 3QX, UK
HerculesUK@aol.com

HERCULES Benelux
c/o Arjen Buikstra
Sav. Lohmannstr. 1
NL-3214 XA Zuidland
Tel. +31 (0)1881 451511
EJBuikstra@wxs.nl

HERCULES Italy
c/o Luca Zerbini
Via Scheiwiller n.9/A
I-20139 Milano, ITALY
lucaze@tin.it

CONTENTS

CLUB NEWS

Club Information2
Club Benefits.....26
Forthcoming Meetings.....25
News Bullets4
Convention Reports.....14
Letters to the Editor.....25

FEATURES

You Don't Have to Say You Love Me
Dusty Springfield
obituary5
Elton All Alone in the USA8
Preview of the Muse10
Looking like a True Survivor
Exclusive Charlie Morgan interview12
1999 Rainforest Benefit Concert.....16
My Greatest Day
Fan meets Elton17
The Ultimate Intimate EJ performance.....20
There are Good Days and Bad Days
Exclusive interview with J Jorgenson.....22

REGULARS

Between 17 and 20
Elton trivia & gossip ..18
Take Me Down To The Ocean -
EJ web site reviews18
Tour Dates.....26
Small ads24
Kaleidoscope Eyes
EJ's TV & Video appearances21
Lyric Quiz21

SPECIAL OFFERS

Leeds Castle Concert ticket offer27



FROM THE EDITOR...

Welcome to the June issue of Hercules Fanzine! And the first thing you have probably noticed is the new improved design and layout. In our efforts to continually improve the service we offer you, we have enlisted the help of a professional design agency, so you can now read the usual mix of news and reviews about Elton with far more style!

Elton is well under way with the second leg of his Solo tour, which takes him from the USA, to several countries across Europe (details of Tour Dates can be found on page 26). I know many of you will already have tickets to see him, so wear your Hercules T-shirts with pride, and have a great time!

And talking of tickets, Hercules UK were able to bring you an exclusive offer of group-allocation premium tickets for two of Elton's shows in the UK in July. (see page 27). Special thanks go to Dave Wilson of tour promoters Marshall Arts for his co-operation.

Elton's concerts are a good excuse for many fans to get together, before heading off to the gig. We have published details of forthcoming fan meetings near to concert venues; all fans are very welcome - whether Hercules members or not!

And you never know who might turn up to these meetings..... a camera crew from VH-1 attended the recent Hercules USA convention, and

Elton's ex-drummer Charlie Morgan turned up at the UK convention in March. Reports from both meetings are found in this issue.

Band member John Jorgenson, and Charlie Morgan both gave EXCLUSIVE interviews to Hercules in recent weeks - giving us their view of tiring Tour schedules from the other side of the fence. Read on for transcripts of both interviews.

We couldn't miss this opportunity to congratulate Elton's Watford FC on their very successful season, which has just finished. Well done to all of you!

Hercules is delighted to congratulate Paul Smith whose recent Online Raffle raised US \$1015/£609 for the Elton John Aids Foundation. The Raffle closed on April 30, and the occasion of Hercules' 11th birthday party also showcased the Draw for the Raffle Prize Winners. Well done to all the winners, and especially well done to Paul.

My thanks go to Barbara Turner, who has become an Editorial Assistant here at Hercules. And a special thank-you to you, the Hercules readers, for all your letters - it's always a pleasure to hear from fellow Elton fans. Your contributions and opinions are very welcome - let me know what you think of the new-look fanzine. I hope you enjoy reading this issue, and look forward to seeing a lot of you at the concerts over the summer. Enjoy it!

Tanni



Orlando, Oct '98.



Boston, May '98 (Photo: N Bac)



Boston, May '98. (Photo: N Bac)

NEWS BULLETS...

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

ACT OF WAR?

Following rumours of an on-stage argument during rehearsals for VH1's Divas, Elton insists there is no feud with Tina Turner, reported the New York Daily News on April 20, 1999. However, he did not confirm plans for the two to tour together later in the year. In the meantime, it was confirmed that he will NOT tour with Tina Turner in 1999.

According to unconfirmed sources close to Elton, he is privately relieved that he won't have to go on tour with Tina Turner. Rumours that the double bill tour of the two mega stars might be cancelled first started after the pair didn't hit it off at

VH1's Divas Live 99 event on April 13, 1999. Just recently, the pair also cancelled a scheduled taping together on the Oprah Winfrey show.

Elton's representative in the US, Sara McMullen, said the tour was not going forward because the performers have different creative styles, and its better to find that out now and not on the road. Elton is quoted: "I have the utmost respect for Tina Turner, but it's obvious we have different styles."

Whether this is also going to effect the Millennium show in Las Vegas at the end of the year - where tickets are already available - is not yet known.



"I have the utmost respect for Tina Turner, but it's obvious we have different styles."

LARAMIE SHOW TO BENEFIT SHEPARD FOUNDATION

Elton John's concert at University of Wyoming's Arena-Auditorium on June 1, 1999 will benefit anti-hate organizations. Those organizations include the Matthew Shepard Foundation; Southwest Poverty Law Center; and Gay, Lesbian and Straight Educational Network. Elton also sent a huge floral display to Shepard's funeral in Casper

VALUABLE PROMO RECORDING

Elton and LeAnn Rimes' duet *Written In The Stars* quickly spawns one of the most sought-after promo recordings, according to the Top 20 Promo Chart in April 1999 edition of UK magazine *Record Collector*. Withdrawn 1-track CD cat. EJSJC 44 is already number 5 in the promo chart and worth an estimated £30!

CANDLE 97 SCORE TO BE AUCTIONED

The original score for *Candle in the Wind 1997* by George Martin is to be sold for music charities. It is expected to raise \$80,000 said Auctioneers Sotheby's of London.

AIDA COMING TO CHICAGO AND NYC

Chicago will be staging Elton and Tim Rice's *Aida*. According to Mercury, the show debuts at Chicago's Palace Theater on December 9, 1999 (and not November 12, 1999 as reported earlier). It moves to New York on April 6, 2000. This new version of the musical - a bit different from the first staging in Atlanta in 1998 - directed by Robert Falls, will again star Heather Headley as *Aida*. Tickets go on sale June 4, 1999 with prices ranging from \$32.50 to \$75.

PRIVATE SHOW

According to unconfirmed sources, Elton performed a private corporate show at the Nashville Arena, Nashville, March 9, for employees and guests of Taco Bell.

USA SOLO TOUR

Elton finished first leg of 1999 US solo tour at Huntsville's Von Braun Center, Alabama, March 19. During the tour Elton changes set list slightly, adding *Better Off Dead*, *Written In The Stars* and uptempo version of *Crocodile Rock*. Other regulars in the 2:45 hrs show were *Skyline Pigeon*, *The Greatest Discovery*, *Talking Old Soldiers*, *Come Down In Time*, *Ticking*, *Carla Etude*, *Amazes Me*, *Mona Lisa* (p.1), and *Friends*.

DIVAS LIVE 99

Elton was on VH1 on April 13, on *Divas Live '99*. Guests include Tina Turner, Cher, Whitney Houston and Brandy. Elton was billed as "The King of the Divas"!

NEWS BULLETS...

These news items have appeared on our Hotline and Web-site

FILM PROJECTS

April 6, Elton launches the first project of his new career as film producer. As Hercules reported earlier, Elton is involved in the forthcoming movie *Women Talking Dirty*, starring Helena Bonham Carter. Besides writing the score Elton will also act as executive producer for the film through his company Rocket Pictures. He also expressed interest in acting. It was time to "do other things, not just sit around and play the piano", said Elton. The film - a comedy set in Edinburgh in the 1970s and adapted from a book by Isla Dewar - is directed by Coky Giedroyc. The film also stars James Nesbitt (*Waking Ned's*) and TV star Richard Wilson.

LIVE TV SHOW CANCELLED

Just days before Elton was to perform a one hour live show in Bologna, Italy, April 8, the event was cancelled. The show, to be taped for an Italian TV show called *Taratata*, was cancelled after Elton's manager Colin Bell said Elton was exhausted by the Aida promotion he did in Europe and the US. He was advised by doctors to take a period of rest.

Here's why doctors told Elton to slow down: March 22, Elton appeared on the *Tonight Show*, three days later, on March 25, he was a guest at the *Today Show* and the *Late Show*. He was accompanied by LeAnn Rimes for some of these shows. March 28, Elton performed *Written In The Stars* (without LeAnn). He already recorded segments for *Access Hollywood* and *Entertainment Tonight* in Atlanta the week of Feb 22. On March 15 he taped for the *Rosie O'Donnell Show*. The show was broadcast on March 19.

ELTON ON TONIGHT SHOW

Elton was a guest on the *Tonight Show* with Jay Leno, March 22. Leno asked about Elton's middle name: "Hercules, where does that come from?" Elton looked contemplative, then replied it was the name of a horse in a British TV show when he was a kid. "Well, I'm hung like one, so..." he joked.

Elton went on to say the best-dressed celebs at his *Oscar Night's* Party were LeAnn Rimes, Janet Jackson, Goldie Hawn, Whitney Houston, and Kim Basinger. Referring to LeAnn, Elton said he is old enough to be her grandfather. The pair performed *Written In The Stars* live.

THE LION KING IN LONDON

Elton and Tim Rice's *The Lion King* is coming to London's Lyceum Theatre, starting Sept 24. Tickets are now available, priced £15.00 to £35.00. Check out Ticketmaster UK for reservations.

OSCAR NIGHT PARTY

Elton hosted 7th Annual *Oscar Night Party* to Benefit the *Elton John Aids Foundation* March 21. This year's event was at *Pagani Restaurant*, West Hollywood. Sponsored by *Instyle* magazine, it raised more than \$300,000. The gala began with a benefit dinner for 170 guests, including Alec Baldwin & Kim Basinger, Goldie Hawn & Kurt Russell, Geena Davis, Kevin Costner, Natalie Cole, Burt Bacharach, Rod Stewart, Puff Daddy, Paula Abdul, Melissa Etheridge, and Lionel Richie.

RITZ CD

US record retailer Target began selling an exclusive Elton CD, priced at \$6.99 on March 23, titled *Live At The Ritz*. Contains 6 songs recorded live at the *Hotel Ritz* in Paris Jan. 1998.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY YOU LOVE ME

by George Matlock

On March 2, 1999, Britain and the world was robbed early of one of the finest white soul singers, an icon for feminism and a liberated member of the 20th Century. That was **Dusty Springfield**.

Elton's affections for Dusty are well documented. Philip Norman's biography "Elton" published in 1991 lays that bare. Elton was a major Dusty fan, and he reminded us of that at the posthumous U.S. Rock N' Roll Hall of Fame admission of her: he used to have posters of the 1960s siren on his walls.

It is not for any of us to blame Elton for the circumstances of a never-dull showbiz diary which led to no collaboration. But it's nevertheless one of pop music's major sad regrets.

Dusty needed a helping hand when she was stubborn and determined to emigrate to the USA in the early 1970s. The nearest thing we ever got was some backing vocals by Dusty on Elton's major hit album, "Tumbleweed Connection" (1970). Dusty sang backing on tracks "Ballad of a Well-known Gun" and "My Fathers Gun".

Apart from the 'gun' songs, nothing. With so many ballads in his repertoire, there would have been no shortage of material from which to choose for an apt Dusty-Elton collaboration. There's no doubt Elton's sincerity when he recently spoke warmly of her. His loss and regret is shared by us all.

NEWS BULLETS...

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

PRIVACY RULING

Elton won a landmark ruling that his privacy was invaded when newspapers published long-lens photographs of Spice Girl Victoria Adams and England footballer David Beckham, taken at Elton's home in the South of France, reported the Times of London March 6. The ruling by the U.K.'s media watchdog, the Press Complaints Commission, is the first to establish the new tough line on privacy in the wake of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. It breaks new ground in that Sir Elton's complaint against the Daily Star and the Sport newspapers was upheld, even though the pop star was not himself in the pictures published.

VERSACE KILLING

Journalist Maureen Orth claims in new book *Vulgar Favors*, an account of Andrew Cunanan's 1997 cross-country killing frenzy, Italian fashion designer Gianni Versace was diagnosed as HIV-positive before his brutal murder in July 1997. Orth is said to have had access to autopsy details.

FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND

Elton, Tom Jones, and Rod Stewart sent flowers and Elvis Costello, Kiki Dee and Lulu were among mourners March 12, at Dusty Springfield's funeral. The soul pop singer died of breast cancer March 2, aged 59.

KOSOVO BENEFIT CONCERT?

According to unconfirmed sources, Michael Jackson is planning to organise a Kosovo Benefit Show at London's Wembley Stadium at the end of July. Elton will reportedly be performing. However, this has not been confirmed by Elton John Management.

DUSTY TRIBUTE



"I loved her so much"

Elton hosted the ceremony in New York on March 15 to induct Dusty Springfield to the US Rock and Roll Hall of Fame just days after she died. Elton said he joined her fan club in his youth and stuck her pictures on his bedroom wall.

"Every song she sang, she claimed as her own," he said. "I volunteered because I loved her so much. She'd been the first performer I had ever idolised. Her's was the first fan club I belonged to. I had pictures of Dusty all over my walls". The Hall of Fame honour was announced in November and Dusty hoped to attend the ceremony herself, despite the illness she had battled for years.

Dusty was among 10 inductees honoured at the 14th annual Rock and Roll Hall of Fame ceremony. Also admitted were Sir Paul McCartney, Bruce Springsteen and Billy Joel.

20TH CENTURY BLUES

Elton's *Candle in the Wind* appears at number 13 in a poll of British music lovers for BBC Radio 2. The poll, revealed April 4, represents Britain's 100 best-loved songs of the past 100 years. The Beatles' *Yesterday* took the front spot for the 20th Century. In second place - a surprise choice - is 1929 ballad *Star Dust* by American composer Hoagy Carmichael, in third Paul Simon's *Bridge Over Troubled Water*, with Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* fourth - despite more copies of *Candle in the Wind* 1997 being sold than of *White Christmas*!

ELTON AND BILLY

IN AUSTRALIA?

According to Australian news extracts of April 1, 1999, it is possible that Elton and Billy Joel will perform during the opening day of the Docklands Stadium in February 2000, in Australia. Jacques Merkus, the stadium executive director, reportedly said that many artists contacted him expressing their interest in performing on the opening day, after an AFL match.

CHARLIE'S NEW WEBSITE

Former Elton-drummer, Charlie Morgan, has got a new website, with a lot going on and a lot more in the works! Check out Charlie Morgan on line at <http://www.manicdrums.demon.co.uk>.

ELTON ON GERMAN TV

On March 28, Elton performed new single, *Written In The Stars*, (without LeAnn Rimes) at the new show *Traumstart*. Unfortunately, Elton was too busy to see Hercules Coordinator, Stephan Heimbecher, this time, as he had a pretty tight schedule. However, your birthday cards and gifts were forwarded to Elton's management, and we were promised Elton would get them immediately after the TV appearance. So he probably had an interesting and entertaining flight back to London that night!

NOT-SO-STRANGE RAIN

As in the past years, Elton performed at this year's benefit show for Sting's Rainforest Foundation. The event took place at New York's Carnegie Hall on April 17. Guest performers included Charles Aznavour, Tony Bennett, Billy Joel, and James Taylor.

NEWS BULLETS...

Full details of these items have appeared on our Hotline and Web-site

AWARD FOR ELTON

March 16, the RIAA unveils its new Diamond Award in New York, a new certification level for artists who achieve US sales of 10 million units of a single title. Until now, the RIAA had bestowed awards for gold (500,000 units), platinum (1 million), and multi-platinum sales. Elton, Billy Joel, Boyz II Men, AC/DC, and Boston were among the participants at the Roseland Ballroom to receive Diamond Awards.

MEAL TICKET

Within 5 days of going on sale, Hercules tickets for Elton's Leeds Castle July 10 gig were sold out. Hercules contacted most fans by letter, but the internet/Hotline calls proved the quickest word-spreader. It's first time Hercules provides tickets for a U.K. show. Check regularly www.eltonfan.com, or Hotline 0906 888 2020.

WHEN CARS COLLIDE, LIKE YOU AND I.....

On April 30 one of Elton's Bentley's was in a collision with a motor cycle in Holland Park, London. Elton himself was in the front passenger seat with a chauffeur driving the car.

The motor-cyclist smashed into the windscreen right in front of Elton. The windscreen was broken but stayed together. Otherwise, the cyclist would have gone straight into Elton.

Shocked Elton stayed in the car for about half an hour after the crash, before getting out and giving a statement to the police. Afterwards he walked the short distance back to his house. It is not clear who's fault it was. A new Bentley arrived at the house within minutes. The motor cyclist is in hospital with head injuries and a suspected broken pelvis.

COUNTRY COMFORT

Elton gave an unusual interview to British journalist and keen walker Janet Street-Porter, televised in *As The Crow Flies* on BBC2 Television April 30. Perhaps the first time Elton has given an 8-minute interview on foot in the English countryside. He talked about growing up in Pinner, his Northwood Hills earnings, and ageing with dignity. For full details, sign up as a Hercules Web Member and check out www.eltonfan.com



Elton walking with Janet Street-Porter

NEW JOHN JORGENSEN SOLO ALBUM

Elton band member John Jorgenson has released his first solo album, *Emotional Savant*. Written during MIE and The Big Picture tours, it's a perfect chance to hear him singing lead vocals. John gave Hercules an exclusive interview. We feature an abridged version in this fanzine. Full version available to Hercules Web Members on the web site www.eltonfan.com

NEXT PLEASE!

Elton and George Michael both accepted awards March 31, 1999, presented by Capital Radio London Awards, reported the Birmingham Post of April 1. Elton, going up on stage afterwards to receive an outstanding contribution award and wearing a shirt with a diamante collar, joked: "The afternoon just gets gaye:r."

THE CAMERA NEVER LIES?

Elton played decoy-bird for *Vorsicht Kamera* (the German version of "Candid Camera") on April 25. He helped fool German journalist and host of the remake of *Top of the Pops* on German television, Holger Speckhahn.

Speckhahn was told that he will get an interview with Elton. First of all they made him show up an hour late, and he was told that Elton is very angry about this. Then he was victim of some obscure "normal security checks". When Elton finally arrived, he did not give Speckhahn any chance to ask questions, but immediately started performing *Written In The Stars*. When he was finished, he grabbed a pen and cover of the *Love Songs* CD as if he was going to sign it for the journalist, but all he wrote was "Welcome to *Vorsicht Kamera*".

KISS THE BRIDE

Elton is believed to be guest of honour at the ceremony for Spice Girl Victoria Adams' wedding to England footballer David Beckham, reported the *Scottish Daily Record* April 8. The ceremony will likely be at 19th century Humewood Castle, in County Wicklow, Ireland on July 4. The Spice Girls will be bridesmaids and Beckham's teammate, Gary Neville, best man.

ELTON ~ ALL ALONE

After the seemingly endless "Big Picture" tour finally wound down last October in New York, many "Regheads" sighed with relief that Sir Elton was finally taking a break. However, the New Year brought the exciting news that EJ was doing a totally SOLO concert tour of the USA in February and March 99: his first ever solo tour without a percussionist. Accordingly, my stress level shot upwards as usual when he is touring, because not only do I want to attend several shows, but I feel like I am expected to, as well!

The tour only included 14 cities; most were "small markets", many of which Elton had never visited previously. Fortunately, two were in my home state and two more were within 3 hours driving distance. The first show I saw was on March 2 in Peoria, Illinois. Arriving at the arena by 4pm, we immediately heard EJ doing a rehearsal. The highlight was "Amazes Me," since he had

performed it at some earlier shows but dropped it from the set list. Again at 5:45pm he rehearsed, this time playing "WITS" several times and another tune which I only recognised the melody as a 1960's song.

What is notable about the Peoria show was that Elton added 3 songs to the set list that night: "WITS" (first time he performed it in concert), "Crocodile Rock" (first time doing the fast version solo?) and "I Only Want To Be With You" in tribute to Dusty Springfield, who had, sadly, died that day. Other highlights were the treasure "Friends", a new-for-this-tour solo "Honky Cat," and a rare treat of "Carla/Etude." We've heard "Sorry Seems...." a lot, but a cool moment occurred just as EJ sang "...when lightning strikes me..." - several camera flashes went off right then, creating a surreal effect.

A few days later we trekked to Grand Rapids, Michigan and there we were very fortunate to be allowed to stand directly in

front of Elton for the entire show. It felt like a private concert since hardly anyone was up there. Oddly, most of the audience was apparently glued to their seats for much of the show. Elton was musically playing his ass off to get people to stand up! Afterwards, we found out that security had prevented most of the crowd from going up front.



SET LIST

Your Song
Skyline Pigeon
Greatest Discovery
Border Song
Talking Old Soldiers
Daniel
Honky Cat
Come Down in Time
Sacrifice
Better Off Dead
I Guess That's Why...
Ticking
Carla/Etude
Tonight
I Don't Wanna....



The One
Written in the Stars
Mona Lisas
Take me to the Pilot
Friends
(not March 10 or 12)
Recover Your Soul
I Only want to be with
you
(only March 2/5)
Sorry Seems.....
Blue Eyes
Levon
Crocodile Rock
Don't Let the sun.....
Circle of Life
Bennie & The Jets
Last Song

IN THE U S A

Sharon Kalinoski gives us her view of Elton's recent solo Tour of America.

EJ said "drive carefully" after "The Last Song," since it had snowed quite a bit during the concert.

The drive back to Chicago was treacherous but we survived well enough to take off for Iowa City the very next day, March 6. Arriving at the arena early, we heard EJ in rehearsal again, doing "Border Song", "Levon," "Carla/Etude", and "Pilot."

I went there without a ticket but thanks to 2 great fans I found a seller with front row seats an hour before the show. This time there was a big crowd of people up front by the piano even before the concert began. More pushing and shoving than I would have liked, but things settled down after a while. Elton looked happy that there were a lot of us standing there all night.

He performed the same set as the night before, except omitting the Dusty Springfield song. After this concert, I discovered and met "Elton" Paul from Minneapolis, who ended up making a big splash at the US convention a few weeks later! (see page 15)

After a few days of rest back at work, I had the wonderful opportunity to make the drive down to Carbondale, Illinois on March 10 with a very dear friend (another famous EJ fan). It turned out to be one of the very best Elton concerts I have seen, out of nearly 100. The arena was relatively small and quaint, on the campus of Southern Illinois University; very unusual that Elton chose to perform there, since it is an obscure town not near any major city.

We were very lucky to be fairly close up to EJ and able to stand near the piano for about half of the show. On this evening, his piano technique was absolutely perfect. "Carla/Etude" was awesome; "Tonight" and "Sacrifice" were exceptionally outstanding. I'll never forget this

amazing show, definitely the best I saw on this solo tour. I knew that EJ had skipped a song, but did not realise until much later that he had dropped "Friends", unfortunately.

Last but not least I got to go to the semi-private Orlando Hard Rock Live grand opening concert on March 12. Elton made a departure from his usual black suits, and wore a purple suit with sparkly trim for this special occasion.

The set list was the same as in Carbondale. The acoustics of this new venue were the best sounding I have ever heard in any building; I heard some vocal echo effects during "Better Off Dead" like never before. Though I've heard "Border Song" and "Pilot" more times than I can count, EJ made them fresh with his extraordinary passion and demonic energy. He dedicated "WITS" to the members of the Backstreet Boys who were in the audience.

I would like to thank all of those great fans who helped me get tickets on this tour....y'all know who you are!



PREVIEW
OF

M THE MUSE

The Hollywood scene is now buzzing with details of the big summer 1999 films.....yes, there are others besides Star Wars, Episode I! August 20 in the USA is the scheduled release of a comedy called "The Muse", for which our Sir Elton has written the musical score.

Elton and David Furnish attend the charity premier of the film 'Notting Hill'



by HERCULES Mega-Spy

Set in Los Angeles, it tells the story of Steven Phillips (played by actor/director Albert Brooks) losing his screenwriter job. He enlists the help of a pal, who suggests he meet with a woman known as a "muse" (played by Sharon Stone)

for inspiration. Stone's character, Sarah Little, agrees to help Steven but with lots of "conditions", which give rise to several comedic situations that follow.

There are notable cameos by famous directors Rob Reiner, Martin Scorsese, and an especially humorous bit with James Cameron. While Steven is trying to write a screenplay, he is continually frustrated and angered that his wife (played by

Andie MacDowell) gets to spend more time with Sarah than he does. Sarah inspires his wife to start a gourmet cookie business which is an immediate huge success, notably with famous Spago chef Wolfgang Puck (in another cameo).

Steven finally finishes his screenplay and there is a sort of sudden, surprise ending, but I won't give it away. Overall a very funny film well worth seeing even if it weren't for the Elton musical score.

As for the music, it felt like a perfect accompaniment to the humourous scenes, momentum/tension building, and also the quieter dialog scenes. The music, which is very much classical form with repeated themes, is mainly piano, strings, woodwinds and brass instrumentation. Many pieces reminiscent of Carla/Etude: one wonders whether performing it live on the recent solo tour influenced Elton's work on the score, or vice-versa.

I liked the transitional scenes which seemed to almost always use the same "theme" and the "triumphant" segues when things were going right for Steven. The title song, "The Muse," with lyrics by Taupin, plays over the end credits. It is a nice uplifting ballad with strong hints of "Tactics" and "The Retreat", and a great chorus hook line: "when it's make or break, make no mistake..." Guy Babylon is credited as arranger and producer. Director Brooks was quoted as saying that Elton's work on the score was "...like getting another great actor in the movie."

looking like a true survivor

HERCULES was delighted to welcome Elton's ex-drummer Charlie Morgan to the UK Convention in London, March 99. George Matlock asks the questions in the first part of this EXCLUSIVE interview.

Often tense and stern behind the cymbals, it was easy to mistake Elton's drummer as an almost menacing presence when "The Bitch Is Back" or "Saturday Night's Alright" were served up live on stage.

But it's only when you meet Charlie Morgan, face-to-face, that you are won over by the real man; quite unassuming and gentle. And when you talk with him you discover something else - his excellent memory for dates and events - he's a profound intellectual with a sense of humour.

Far from hardman, he's had trouble with concert security - and he understands the fans. As Charlie himself told us, at the June 1998 Wembley gigs, he tried parking his then-Volvo car in the compound and heading for rehearsals. "The security are particularly awful there. I tried to park the car and the attendant said 'You can't park it there!'. I said 'I'm Elton's drummer' displaying my Access All Areas badge. He replied: 'I don't care. You may be, but your car isn't!'"

When this interview was conducted March 20, 1999, at the Hercules EJ Convention, Earl's Court, London, Charlie had just wrapped up the end of a marriage, attending to a settlement generously in his wife's favour the day before at London's High Court, a divorce which he said was likely accelerated by last year's shock decision by Elton to release him from the band.



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH DRUMMER CHARLIE MORGAN

But this man, who reckons his exit may be because he was the only British citizen among the band, is "looking like a True Survivor."

Unlike his predecessor in the Elton John Band - Nigel Olsson - and someone Charlie can relate to (himself victim to a sudden departure from the band for the last time in 1984), Charlie's keeping his hand in, playing in south-west London with the Papa George Band and the Barnes Blues Band, and aiming to move to the United States in April to be with his new love in Orlando, Florida.

Charlie's roll call of achievements include working on albums with Judie Tzuke, Clannad, Nik Kershaw, Tina Turner, Kate Bush, Paul

McCartney, Gary Moore, Chris de Burgh, and others.

Oh, yes, and Elton John!

"I did a lot of sessions in the late 70s, early 80s. I did Nik Kershaw's first three albums," says Charlie. "Nik was on Elton's 'Nikita' on the 'Ice on Fire' album, and Elton said 'I like your drummer on the album, what's he like?' Nik said I was great." But Charlie recalls how Elton producer Gus Dudgeon "wasn't sure about using an unknown quantity, so he phoned Peter Collins, Nik's producer, who gave me a glowing report."

Next thing, Charlie got a phone call from someone saying: "I can't tell you who it's for, but I want to book you for three days' worth of sessions at the Mill Studios."

Charlie was to go into studio midweek after Easter in 1985, he easily recalls. "Funny thing is I was motor-racing the day before in my Golf GTi, and I had a huge accident. I broke two ribs. I went to Sidcup Hospital and they said don't do anything for six weeks. I said 'you've got to be kidding' because by now I knew who the sessions were for. A week before the sessions they confirmed it was for Elton John and I'll do two or three tracks."

That would spawn the tracks "This Town", "Wrap Her Up", a couple of tracks which also didn't make it to album, and then Cliff Richard turned up and they did "Slow Rivers" in advance of the album which followed "Ice on Fire", the often underrated "Leather Jackets".

And how did Charlie react? "He's been a hero of mine for years. The first album I ever bought - not for the drums - was Elton's black cover Elton John album in 1970." Yes, he confided, he's a FAN!



looking like a true survivor

continued

Band members are usually hired hands for the gigs. But Charlie's a genuine Elton fan. "The album which changed my approach to music the most was "Madman Across the Water". That just blew me to pieces, particularly the string arrangements and the superb drumming. I just played it to death, I wore it out."

Charlie's first live concert with Elton was Live Aid in June 1985 at Elton's invitation. "I'm probably more scared doing small gigs like the one tonight (Papa George Band at Kingston's Grey Horse) than Wembley Stadium. You walk out there, and stage is too big. You hardly see the first two rows of people, and the rest is just a sea of people. You're hearing the reaction. And we were a 13-piece band so there was plenty of room to hide, ha, ha!"

Charlie holds much affection for percussionist Ray Cooper. "He stamped his persona on everything. So, as Davey said, the 'Ghost of Ray' lives on whenever something out of the ordinary happens on stage," he says. "He was a true gentleman, and I loved him for that." Ray was also a maniac. "The number of times someone shouted 'duck' as a drum stick went flying past." But did he compete with Elton for centre stage? "I think there was an element of that. But you have to remember that Ray's older than anyone else. He couldn't do it, the arthritis sets in! The only person unaffected by this is Elton. Totally unstoppable. I couldn't keep up with him 13 years ago let alone now!"

His favourite Elton album? "Apart from Madman, I think I played even more to death Captain Fantastic. But the most fun to work on was "Made In England" and the most organic. Having said that, "Reg Strikes Back" was fun, even though Elton was at a low ebb.

Charlie's worked on every Elton studio album from "Ice on Fire" in 1985 through to "The Big Picture" in 1997, although there was an interlude off when Jonathan Moffett was drummer on "Sleeping with the Past" in 1989 and most of "The One" (1992) was done with drum sequencers. So that's six albums and one live album (with the MSO in 1987 - the famous Elton throat problem album).

Everything was led by Elton

Working with Elton? Apparently he's in awe of his band and works well with their changes on tours. "We are hired hands and we give the live acts everything we've got. Some of you people have got bootleg mixes off the desk..." (silence and vacant whistles prevail from audience!). "If you listen to the 1985-86 tour you can see how songs changed. When he started playing "Rocket Man" in October 1985 it had that bit at the end and it lasted about three minutes. By the time we played with the



Charlie Morgan on stage with Papa George Band. (Photo: G Matlock)

MSO in Australia, it had extended itself to 12 minutes, just that section! The brass came in. Nothing was rehearsed. Everything was led by Elton. He's fabulous to work with on stage."

Charlie said that as a drummer he had to empathise with what Elton's doing. "I used to have him very loud in my mix on in-ear monitors. My engineer knew to put lots of Elton piano and vocals, and then bass is the next thing, and then everything else mixed in behind. But it was important to ensure I could lock into Elton, and then everyone else could lock into me."

If ever Elton didn't like what we were doing, he'd tell us before a gig

Elton's got the most funky left hand. We know that, but Charlie thinks so too! "Bass player Bob Birch (he's also a great piano and sax player) is able to work in between what Elton plays, otherwise there would be a great mess down there (on low octaves) as Elton plays great boogie-woogie on low notes. If ever Elton didn't like what we were doing, he'd tell us before a gig."

Normally the objections were about tempo. "I was always trying to keep the tempos close to what we did in the studio for the albums. And I think Elton appreciated this, because things tend to get played faster (on stage) and he didn't want to play at break-neck speed

"In fact, "The One" was played slower than on the album because Elton wanted it slowed down. By the end of 1992 we slowed it down to a bigger, grander, breathing animal. Then on other things, like "Mona Lisas and Mad Hatters Part Two" we always played it faster because the original was a medium tempo



Charlie Morgan. March '99 (Photo: G Matlock)

funk and we turned it into a rockier number. Again, Elton wanted it this way. As a boss, Elton relies on people around him to do their work and homework before a tour."

But Elton doesn't like over-rehearsing songs because everyone's bored otherwise. "We would always go into a concert first night feeling slightly under-rehearsed. It was then up to us to keep it together and things slotted in. But over time songs would mutate," he says.

Some songs had little flexible room, such as "Something About the Way You Look Tonight", which stayed the same throughout. "Sad Songs", however, was speeded up. "This was originally drum machine. Elton turned it into a more

gospelly song with the girls singing. A much heavier song by the end. Funnily enough, on the last tour, Elton asked for us to slow it down again. He would start it by setting the tempo. Most of his songs have a piano intro, allowing him to determine the speed he wants to play at."

Aida? "Most of it was Guy Babylon and drum machines at Purple Dragons Studios in Atlanta. We didn't work on those. But I remember when we were rehearsing (for a tour) Elton came in and wrote the songs in two stints of five days. Writing about 10 or 12 tracks on each stint. Then Disney cut it to the 14 songs."

You can read the rest of this interview in our September issue.



ANNUAL UK CONVENTION

Club member **Victoria Armstrong** reports on the annual Convention, held to celebrate Elton's birthday in March.

I was among 40 - 50 fans to attend the convention at the Albany Hotel in Earls Court, London. This was an event I had always wanted to attend, as I was always reading about these conventions from my home town Helensville in NZ. Today was a great chance to finally meet other fans from the UK and talk about collections, experiences and finally putting faces to names. Many of the fans came from throughout the U.K. There were two fans who had come across from Finland and Bermuda.

During the afternoon there was a raffle, five prizes in all with proceeds going to the EJAF. There was an Elton Shrine where fans submitted pieces of their collections and there was a chance to sell and buy Elton collectables. Alan McCormick from Wrap it Up was selling some fantastic merchandise as well.

Elton look-a-like Ray Johnson made an appearance. I certainly did a double take and so did a lot of people. The shoes gave it away. They weren't Elton's style. But he played the part extremely well.

Charlie Morgan with Hercules Member Andy Thorpe.



(UK convention photos: B Turner)



Maybe next year it will be for real! Hercules editor Tammi Law receives a kiss from Ray 'Elton' Johnson.

Charlie Morgan with Ray



There was a surprise visit from Charlie Morgan, Elton's former drummer. For me it was fantastic to see him again. I had previously met Charlie at Auckland International Airport in New Zealand when I helped take the crews luggage including Sir Rupert Woopsey's (guess who?!) to the hotels they were staying in for the next three nights.

There was an exclusive interview with Charlie for over an hour; life with Elton on and off the road and also what projects Charlie is involved with now, alongside photograph and autograph opportunities.

After the convention a few of us headed to Kingston where Charlie was playing with the Papa George Band. It was a fantastic evening enjoyed by all. The day was a great success.

Thanks Hercules!

conventionally

A MOST PERFECT DAY: ANNUAL HERCULES - USA GATHERING



by Mary Donnelly

At a swanky clubhouse in Romeoville, Illinois on March 27, Elton was everywhere: on the couch, the floor, the bar, the walls, the door - even on a few of the license plates and bumper stickers in the parking lot. He was even vicariously present in a young look-alike named "Elton"; Paul Thoemke, clad in his trademark red suitcoat and dark-rimmed glasses. And he was surely present in the hearts of some 35 fans and Hercules members who attended his annual Hercules-USA birthday party, many of whom spoke openly of their devotion to him before a film crew from VH-1.



Sharon Kalinoski with 'Elton' Paul Thoemke - both dressed in clothes from Elton's wardrobe.

Some fans travelled great distances, arriving from as far away as Minnesota, northern Michigan, and Massachusetts. Stories, concert memories, and photographs were exchanged, and there was a virtual "shopping mall" of Elton collectables for sale, including the prestigious Elton

speaking...



FIRST SWISS CLUB FAN MEETING

Saturday, 17 April 1999, at Hotel du Lac, Waedenswil - by Bruno Kohli, HERCULES Switzerland.

Candles by Slatkin. Elton spoke and performed continuously via tapes on a large-screen TV, while fans mingled and relaxed and posed for the VH1 interviewers. Two sessions of a rollicking "Elton Jeopardy" game, brilliantly created and led by member Barb Zimmerman, were a highlight of the gathering. Jeopardy categories included questions about Elton's life, songs and lyrics, album art, and associates. It was undoubtedly fine proof of some of the best minds and memory in Elton trivia!

Cable station VH-1, currently compiling an installment for its well-known "rockumentary" series, had contacted Hercules USA coordinator Sharon Kalinoski about filming a segment of the party for an upcoming feature on fan clubs. Camera techs and anchor arrived as promised, calming the initial jitters of some fans, and asking permission to tape and quote anyone who wished to contribute. As the primary interviewee, Sharon provided a great wealth of information on Hercules origins and history. She commented on the growth of the club and the sophistication of the members, and on Elton's magnetic charisma. Other members discussed why they belonged, what benefits they

enjoyed, and what made Hercules unique among fan clubs. All agreed that Elton's longevity and status in the rock community made him a kind of senior statesman, the artist for everyone.

Delightfully captured by the camera was a chorus of "Happy Birthday" sung around a cake featuring a recent concert photograph of Elton. Just in time, "Elton" Paul emerged from the circle to blow out the candles.

Only the Guest of Honor, in person, remained to be glimpsed - maybe next year, Elton!

(USA convention photos: S Kalinoski)

A cake fit for "The King of Divas"



VH-1 interviewing Paul Theomke



Looking at the number of participants, this was a huge success. Never before had so many fans got together, despite cancellations due to sickness or work...

At the side of the bar, we had room for about 15 people, plus a piano. Jean-Martin (Eggenberger) entertained us with music from "Friends", "Your Sister Can't Twist", "Tonight", a great "Club At The End Of The Street" and quite a few more. The other people in the restaurant specifically requested "Crocodile Rock" which was preserved for eternity on video tape, and the chorus was sung along with great volume. Once again great piano playing!

Among other topics, Elton's solo tour and its current schedule was discussed. Unfortunately, I had to report bad news: Elton will definitely not perform in Switzerland! Martin and Rolf had already decided to attend the concert in Brescia (Italy) on July 3rd and had ordered tickets. The longer we discussed the issue, the more we thought that this would be a realistic alternative for us in Switzerland, because other possible concert venues (Northern Germany, England, Austria) are not exactly on our way either. At the end, eight people instead of two had made the decision in favour of the "spontaneous" trip to Italy.

I was very happy to see some new faces and really hope that we will meet again next time. A second club meeting is planned for the Fall.

1999 BENEFIT CONCERT RAINFOREST

Review of the annual benefit concert held this year on April 17 in New York's Carnegie Hall, by eye-witnessing Elton fan Elizabeth Wilcox

Just got back from Sinatra Night at Carnegie Hall - they did it his way, and they did it with his orchestra. This show was quite a departure from the ones I've seen in the past. It was all-Frank, all-night.

The show began with Elton, Sting and James Taylor singing Well, Did Ya Evah from "High Society." For the final chorus they were joined by Billy Joel, Don Henley, Tony Bennett, Charles Aznavour, and Sandra Bernhardt. Everyone was wearing black, except Sandra who was wearing grey. It ranged from Billy Joel in a suit jacket and tie to Sting in full tux. Elton was wearing a black Versace suit, like those he's been wearing on his tour - solid black with rhinestone-edged lapels and the Versace-medusa symbol on the back.

Most of the show, the performers just took turns interpreting Sinatra songs. The set list was as follows:

(Note: If marked * I'm not sure if this is the actual title, but it's often repeated in the lyric.)

- **Well, Did Ya Evah** - All
- **Wish I Were In Love Again*** - Tony Bennett
- **I Get A Kick** - James Taylor
- **Here Goes*** - Don Henley
- **Witchcraft** - Sting
- **One For My Baby, And One More For The Road** - Billy Joel

This was a real highlight. One For My Baby is among my favourite Sinatra songs, and of all the performers there, Billy Joel sounds the most like Frank Sinatra. He introduced the song by setting up a scenario of a guy alone in a bar late at night (It's a quarter to three, there's no one in the place but you and me...). Smooth, suave, cool.

Then Trudy Styler came out and gave a brief speech and showed a video on the current Rainforest situation. The main point is that with the loss of rainforests many species of plants and animals are also being lost, and with them potential cures for disease.

- **These Precious Days*** - Charles Aznavour
- **Love And Marriage** - Elton



This was Elton's finest moment of the show. During the instrumental bridge he went over, put a veil on Sting and the two began to dance (see front cover). During the final chorus of the song, Elton went over, sat on Billy Joel's lap, and gently kissed him on the head. It was too cute.

- **Something Stupid** - Elton and Sandra Bernhardt

As he was introducing Sandra to the stage, Elton referred to her

as a fabulous diva and that he had had a lot of experience with divas last week. They really hammed it up, and they actually sounded quite good together. There was some serious flirting going on. Sandra has a far better singing voice than a speaking voice.

- **That's Life** - All

The second half began with Sting introducing Ricky Martin. He told of his recent experience at the Grammys where after Ricky Martin's very stimulating performance of his Grammy nominated song, Sting's wife Trudy led the charge of women to the stage.

- **World On A String*** - Ricky Martin
- **Come Fly With Me** - Elton
- **My Funny Valentine** - Charles Aznavour
- **These Boots Were Made For Walkin'** - Sandra Bernhardt
- **I Got You Under My Skin** - Billy Joel
- **Wee Small Hours*** - Sting
- **Night And Day** - James Taylor
- **Angel Eyes*** - Don Henley
- **My Way** - Bill Murray

This was the only real surprise of the evening, and it certainly qualified as the comic high point (if you don't count Elton and Sting dancing in the first half). He did it in his wonderful "lounge-act" style made famous on early episodes of Saturday Night Live.

- **The Lady Is A Tramp** - Billy Joel
- **The Music Never Ends*** - Tony Bennett

For a man of his age, it's amazing how he can sustain those long notes - very impressive.

- **New York New York** - Ensemble finale

They all came out wearing Frank Sinatra-style black hats. Overall, it was a very good show. Excellent performances and good choices of songs. But, even though over 20 songs were performed, the show lasted only 90 minutes. Way too short. And, of course not enough Elton. In past years he's performed more.



my greatest day...

FAN AND CLUB MEMBER ANNETTE KOHL TELLS US ABOUT THE NIGHT SHE CLAIMED THE ULTIMATE COMPETITION PRIZE

On March 15 I heard from my friend that "something to do with Elton John" could be won by listening to the radio station NDR2 (in Germany). Thus, I obediently sat in front of the radio that night and called them within one second when I heard the first bars of an Elton song - and I was put through.

Though rather confused, I answered trivia questions for about 45 seconds, some maths, sports, literature etc., and I was told that 12 correct answers are really good, but that they are going to play the game the following four nights as well, and only if no one else was

better than me I would win. When I asked, "Win what?" they replied "A meeting with Elton John!"

Four sleepless nights followed, and every evening I listened to that radio show, but could not believe that no participant in the game scored more than ten points. I had won - and not a meeting before one of the shows in July, but before the taping of the TV show "Traumstart" in March.

Finally the great day, March 29, was there. In the hotel in Duisburg I got to know Thomas from Cologne who would also join the meeting. (The lucky guy only had to sing one of Elton's

songs to win the contest). We drove to the Rhein-Ruhr-Halle together and nervously waited for things to come. After some time, which seemed like an eternity to us, we were led into the backstage area and positioned ourselves in front of a door where - according to information from his record company - Elton was recovering from jetlag. Only a little later we heard him and the choir rehearse "Written In The Stars" and waited even more impatiently to be let in. We did not go inside. Instead, Elton came out and suddenly stood in front of us. Luckily, we recovered our voices after a few moments so that we were able to wish him a belated Happy Birthday and to give him our presents.

It was obvious that he was happy and very interested in what we had to do in order to win this meeting. Then he talked to us about working on the Aida album, and we learned how happy he was to have two weeks off after all that work. After having received personal autographs, I asked Elton to autograph my leg which made him give me a rather strange look. When I explained to him that I planned to have it tattooed there he burst out laughing. But then he signed my leg with his most beautiful handwriting while I tried to hold my balance standing on the other leg. As a farewell, Elton gave Thomas and me each a big kiss. And so we grinned rather deranged for the entire evening which I realised when I watched the recording of "Traumstart" at home. We did not pay a lot of attention to the show.

Ever since I became an Elton fan at the age of 13, this has been my biggest dream. I have seen some concerts in the meantime but this meeting was something very special. I am happy that I have everything on tape because the DJ from NDR2 recorded everything. And my tattoo looks great!



Annette Kohl meets Elton. March '99 (Photo: S Heimbecher)

take.me.down/to/the.ocean a.web.surfer's/guide/to.finding/ej/on.the.net

by **Reggie Zippo** All websites are rated from 0 to 4 Royal Waves.
Please keep in mind that these reviews do not reflect the opinions of HERCULES, its staff members, nor its supporters.

BLUE AVENUE - LE SITE FRANCOPHONE SUR ELTON JOHN

<http://homepages.go.com/~lapinemo/blueavenue.htm>

The intro to this website is quite appealing and included a great pic of EJ kissing his Oscar award. Further investigation of the main page links uncovered a lot of EJ pics that I don't normally see on other people's websites (psst...I saved the one with EJ in his bathrobe). The text is in French, which I cannot read, so I am not able to comment on that part of the content. What I did find was that most of the links on the main page do not work (well, for me anyway). I continually got "not found" messages. Either the website owner has abandoned the site, it is still

under construction, or the links do not work through AOL. Find out for yourself.

I must give this site 1 Royal Wave for the EJ pics. Otherwise, it would have received 0 Royal Waves.



BETWEEN 17 AND 20 · BETWEEN 17 AND 20

ANOTHER VERSE OF OUR REGULAR COLUMN FEATURING TRIVIA AND

HERCULES

When Elton was just seven years old, he played the piano to entertain the guests at his cousin Roy's wedding reception. Roy Dwight was a professional footballer who scored a goal for Nottingham Forest against Luton in the 1959 cup final.

HERCULES

By the age of 11, Elton had already achieved Grade 8 on the piano and won himself a part-time scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music in London. Elton trained here for 4 years before deciding to take up a job with a music house rather than going on to study music full-time at university.

HERCULES

One of the outrageous costumes Elton wore on stage in 1974, is described as the 'fluorescent balls'! (This is one I must get a picture of!!). It consisted of a myriad of fluorescent cork balls attached to Elton's lures suit with fine wire so that they gave the appearance of floating around him. If you are the proud owner of 'Fluorescent balls' we'd like to hear from you!

HERCULES

The release of the single 'Rocket Man' in April 1972, coincided purely by chance with the excitement surrounding the recent launch of the American moon probe Apollo 16. 'Rocket Man' shot to number 2 in the UK charts and no.6 in America.

<http://www.fortunecity.com/tinpan/chemical/748/index.htm>

As the main page of this site loads in, a "Hi Reg Heads" pop up window appears. You'll have to click "ok" to proceed. If you follow any of the main page links to any of the other subpages, the only way to explore the rest of the site is to either click your "back" button or click on the "Home" link to get back to the main page. Either way, that pesky little "Hi Reg Heads" pop up window rears its ugly head again. After the fourth time of clicking "OK", I was ready to call it quits.

For a 16 year old person, however, the site was constructed fairly well. The main page, though, does have a lot of needless empty side space on the left and right hand sides. The "Band" section is a nice idea, but the pics are a bit grainy. I liked the Bio pages of EJ and David Furnish, but the animated waving flags in the background made it extremely hard to read the text.

There is a "Boardroom" available to leave messages, but it is currently empty. I was quite impressed with the "Collection" section. Clicking on an album will take you to info about the album and the list of its songs. Click on a particular song and you'll get the lyrics for it. There are not very many EJ pics to choose from (only 4 are in the Pics section). Until that pop up window is modified and more pics and directory links are added, this site earns only 2 Royal Waves.



Update: After expressing my displeasure about the "Hi Reg Heads" pop up window, the site owner thanked me for my constructive criticism and removed it from the main page (for now anyway).

BETWEEN 17 AND 20 · BETWEEN 17 AND 20

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

HERCULES

If you are fed up with being stuck in traffic jams, do what Elton did! In the early '70's Elton kept a moped in the boot of his Rolls Royce, so that he could beat the London traffic. Good thinking Elton! I wonder if one would fit in my mini?

HERCULES

Your Song has been covered by more than 40 different artists including recordings by Cilla Black, Roger Whittaker, Andy Williams, Sacha Distel and The Osmonds. Not bad for a song that Elton composed in just 10 minutes. On Oct.27, 1969 he wrote in his diary " In the end I did nothing today...wrote a new song called 'Your Song'."

HERCULES

Bernie Taupin wrote the lyrics to 'Your Song' in just 15 minutes (5 mins. longer than it took Elton to write the melody!). Bernie says he was eating a fry-up breakfast in Elton's mum's kitchen at the time and accidentally got some of his egg on the lyrics. Fried or scrambled ?

HERCULES

Rod Stewart recorded and released 'Country Comfort' on his 'Gasoline Alley' album a month before it was released by Elton on the 'Tumbleweed Connection' album in Oct.1970.



the
ultimate
intimate
ej
performance

Reggie Zippo shares
with us his ultimate
Elton dream

When I heard the news, I could not believe my ears! Through an insider tip, I found out that Rocket Records was about to announce that, on May 15th, EJ would perform in private for only 500 people at The Loft Theater, Tilton, New Jersey. My heart sank, though, when I found out that the ticket price would be \$2,000 a piece. To most fans, this might seem rather pricey for a private EJ event. However, this was going to be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. On behalf of the EJAF, EJ agreed to create and record one song on stage within a 3 to 4 hour period. The only restrictions he gave himself was that he would not see BT's proposed lyrics until he walks on stage, and he and his band would not have any preconceived notions of possible musical arrangements. This all seemed too good to be true. I could barely contain my excitement!

When the ticket package arrived, a list of audience "restrictions" stipulated absolutely no talking, clapping, cheering, or whistling; no food or drink; no cell phones, beepers, cameras, recording devices, and above all, once seated, no one would be allowed to leave the auditorium. As if anyone would want to!

On the morning of May 15th, I made my way to The Loft Theater. A large crowd was gathered outside the entrance waiting for the doors to open. A Rocket representative came out to welcome everyone. We were all quickly ushered into the theater, and since there were no assigned seating arrangements, I was fortunate enough to get a position in the third row from the stage. A huge, heavy looking, red velvet curtain hung down in front, like a big wrapped gift waiting to be opened.

Producer Gus Dudgeon came out from behind the curtain to explain what was about to occur. I was pleased to see him. He

appealed to the audience to please observe the "restrictions" until the end of the recording session. He then quickly exited as the curtain began to rise. There, on the stage, was a mock up of a real recording studio, complete with mixing boards, amplifiers, sound proof booths, musical instruments, and Elton's trademark black grand piano. Several video cameras were also in place to capture every moment on tape.

Within minutes, Bernie Taupin walked out from stage left, went over to the piano, then quietly placed one sheet of type written lyrics on top of the piano. Without hesitation, he made his way to exit stage right. As instructed, no one uttered a sound. At that point, EJ made his grand entrance from stage right, walked over to the piano, quickly read the lyrics, then sat down to begin the coupling of words to music. Elton did say a brief "Good afternoon" to us, but his attention was more concentrated on the lyrics. He seemed quite pleased with Bernie's offering. Within seconds, Elton's fingers began to weave their magic.

As the song began to take shape, the words and music being combined brought tears to many in attendance. It was truly a moving piece. Before long, EJ turned to the audience and said "This song is for you. Thank you for coming." He then performed a solo version of it from beginning to end. It was simply amazing that Elton had just created a perfect, haunting ballad right before our eyes. As instructed, no one uttered a sound. As if by cue, EJ's band and recording crew filtered in to take their position and so began the recording process. The rest of this story I'll leave to your imaginations, because that is just what all of this was....an imagined event. It never happened. I wish that it really did happen, but for now I can only dream about it. This would, however, be The Ultimate Intimate EJ Performance if it ever came true! I sincerely hope that word about this story gets back to EJ. Perhaps it may spark an interest in making something like this really happen! Time will tell.

In the meantime, take care and have a Captain Fantastic day!



PART THREE OF OUR COLLECTORS SERIES ON Elton's optical epics

by **George Matlock and Sharon Kalinoski**. Please be aware Hercules is unable to supply any of these recordings to you!

UNOFFICIAL VIDEOS, COMMERCIALY RELEASED

ELTON JOHN AND RAY COOPER: LIVE AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL (1995)

The whole concert at the RAH on World AIDS Day, Dec. 1, 1994, was recorded on this amateurish camcorder video. A lot of ducking and diving from the cameraman, and mostly filmed off the large-screen projectors flanking the stage. Poor sound/vision quality. Enough said.

We couldn't resist it. This section wouldn't be complete without Hercules' very own choice cuts...

THE CAMERA NEVER LIES (1994)

A film about the first-ever UK Convention by Hercules, at that time known as Rocket Fan, held in Dec. 1994.

60 min. George Matlock. VHS only

I'VE SEEN THAT MOVIE TOO (1997)

Celebrates Elton's 50th birthday, in July 1997, with the first Hercules UK Convention since 1994. Davey Johnstone, John Jorgenson, Clive Franks, and Baz Marshall provide an entertaining impromptu interview in Aschaffenburg, Germany.

170 min. Directed by George Matlock. Production Assistants: Sabine Seifert, Mike Goodman. VHS only

VIDEO SINGLES

(Videos that have been made and/or used specifically for the promotion of a single.)

(Directors credited where known)

1971 **T Rex: Bang A Gong Video / Album**

1971 **Your Song / Elton John Album**

1972 **Crocodile Rock / Don't Shoot Me I'm Only The Piano Player - Album**

1973 **Step Into Christmas**

1975 **Pinball Wizard/"Tommy" soundtrack - Directed by Ken Russell**

1976 **Don't Go Breaking My Heart / with Kiki Dee - Directed by Mike Mansfield**

1976 **Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest Word / Blue Moves Album**

1978 **Ego**

1980 **Chasing the Crown / 21 at 33**

Readers: We have heard from a reliable source that Bernie Taupin gave a radio interview in the late 1980s, when he stated that the first video he and Elton ever produced was for THE GREATEST DISCOVERY. We have never seen a copy, but if anyone knows of its existence, please let us know the details. Also, if you have any corrections or additions for this series, such as the names of video single directors, please forward them to Hercules UK, PO Box 315, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 3QX, England. Or email HerculesUK@aol.com Thanks for your help.

Special thanks to Wayne Martin for this contribution to this series

Part Four continues in Sept 1999



Boston, May '98. (Photo: N Bac)

JUST FOR FUN

LYRIC QUIZ

How well do you know your Elton lyrics? Test yourself with the following - we give you a line, you see if you can name the song titles!

By **Barbara Turner**

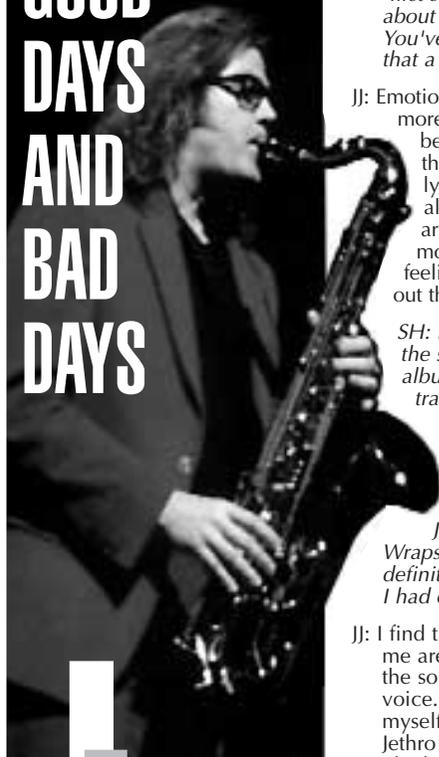
(Answers on page 25)

- 1 **You're a cool little one
My dark southern breeze**
- 2 **The old girl hobbles,
nylons sagging
Talks to her sisters in the ground**
- 3 **Do you ever dream of me
Do you ever see the letters
that I write**
- 4 **Me I'm so young and
I'm so wild,
And I still feel the need for
your apron strings
once in a while.**
- 5 **I saw you dancing out the ocean
Running fast along the sand**
- 6 **Some men like the Chinese life,
Some men Kneel and pray.**
- 7 **It's like tryin' to find gold in a
silver mine,
It's like tryin' to drink whisky
from a bottle of wine.**
- 8 **Do you still feel the pain
Of the scars that won't heal?**
- 9 **I never knew sleep so restless
Empty arms so cold**
- 10 **Lay me down in sheets of linen,
You had a busy day today.**
- 11 **The cellophane still
on the flowers
The telegram still in her hand**
- 12 **Oh I got the speed if you got
the need
But the need in me needs
nothing**

JUST FOR FUN

THERE ARE GOOD DAYS AND BAD DAYS

J JOHN JORGENSEN



Elton John Band's John Jorgenson talks to Stephan Heimbecher
Exclusive Hercules interview (April 1999)

SH: John, congratulations on your Emotional Savant album. In the liner notes to the first song, Easter Island Heads, you refer to it as your "first solo CD". But what about your album After You've Gone in 1988? Wasn't that a solo album too?

JJ: Emotional Savant I consider more of a "first solo CD" because I composed all the songs, wrote all the lyrics, sang, played almost everything, did the artwork, and am putting more of my personal feelings and philosophies out there in the world.

SH: I see ... Off My Back, the second song on the album, is the first vocal track. It was also the first time for me to hear your singing voice. For some reason, it very much reminded me of Ian Anderson on Jethro Tull's Under Wraps album. It was definitely different than what I had expected ...

JJ: I find that people who know me are always surprised at the sound of my singing voice. I never considered myself too influenced by Jethro Tull, but I did enjoy the Thick As A Brick album when I was a teenager. Vocally on Off My Back I was certainly influenced by Roger Daltrey's singing on the early Who singles, which had a profound impact on me at the time, and still does.

SH: Black And Blue, one of my favourites on the album. It has this nice piano riff. You refer to this as a "song about the difficulties of trusting another person". Is there a real story that inspired the song that you wanna share with us?

JJ: Thank you - this song is where perhaps the clearest influence of early Elton music can be heard, due to the piano carrying much of the musical weight of the song. The lyrics were written in a hotel room in London during the recording of The Big Picture CD, when I was missing my fiancée. I don't want to say too much about the lyrics, as they are pretty personal and I would like to leave them open enough for each individual's interpretation.

SH: How long did it take to create the whole album? When did you record it? I bet you are somehow thankful for Elton to tour solo for a while giving you the chance of finishing this project?

JJ: Most of the songs were written in January to March 1996, after the Made In England tour was over. The majority of the recording was done in LA from April to August 1996, with the lead vocals being recorded in North Wales! Then the final mixing, song selection, finishing up new additions, mastering, etc took place in spurts between legs of the The Big Picture Tour. The musical part was completed in July '98, then it was time to start on the artwork. I actually did a lot of work on the artwork on my laptop computer on the road. It was very difficult to finish this CD while in the middle of a full world tour, and got to be quite frustrating when it was so close to done but I didn't have the time in the right place to get it fully completed. I am actually thankful for the time to promote this CD, now that it is finally out!

EMOTIONAL SAVANT CAN BE ORDERED FROM:

Camp Hellecaster, P.O. Box 1150,
Burbank, CA 91507, USA.

The price is US \$18 in the US/Canada
or US \$20 elsewhere.

Money order or check made out to John Jorgenson accepted



SH: *Let It Go* features this Django Reinhardt style guitar solo that seemed a bit out of place to me. How much do you consider yourself being influenced by Reinhardt?

JJ: I have always had very disparate influences and interests in music, and part of my goal with this CD was to bring some of those together. If I had to pick just two musical influences in my life, it would be The Beatles and Django Reinhardt. Django always inspires me, as does Jeff Beck as a guitarist, and World music in general to give me new outlooks and ideas.

SH: *To Tomorrow* to me has this Toto feeling. In the liner notes you explain you wrote this song to "remind myself of my own resolve, which is easily forgotten at times". What did you mean by that?

JJ: I never considered myself hugely influenced by Toto, but I did see them live in their first stadium concert, as an opening act for Cheap Trick! I first saw Jeff Porcaro play when he was 16 (and I was 14) and thought "he is so much better than me, and only two years older - I may as well just give up!"

Do you know the saying that we tell others what we most need to hear ourselves? I used this song as a vehicle to tell myself what I needed to hear - to remain true to myself, first and foremost - which is not an easy thing to do all the time.

SH: Micheala Rose, it certainly had some positive effect on me just by listening to it. Such lines as "There are good days, and there are better days". May I ask who the person is which received this "aural thank you card" (liner notes) from you?

JJ: Micheala Rose is actually not a person, but a yacht! I was invited by some old friends to

take an 11 day cruise around New Zealand on a beautiful yacht, with two 5 star chefs, jet skis, luxury cabins, etc. I think it is the fourth largest private yacht in the world!

SH: *Jig in 'D'* to me has a very medieval taste, so why not call it something like "Jig of the knights"?

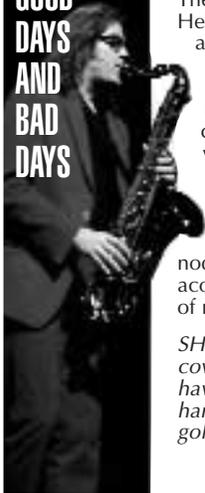
JJ: (laughs) Stephan, I don't think that knights could easily do a jig in all that armour!

SH: *This song and Easter Island Heads* remind me of your work with *The Hellecasters*.

New York - Oct. '95 (Photo: S Kalinoski)



THERE ARE GOOD DAYS AND BAD DAYS



JJ: Easter Island Heads is the most reminiscent of my style with The Hellecasters, and was written before the first Hellecaster's CD was recorded. Jig In 'D' is really more of a nod to the acoustic side of my playing.

SH: *On the cover, you have your hands painted gold.*

JJ: I didn't really plan to have a typical "John with a guitar" shot on the cover. The gold hands was first an idea for an unusual texture in a black and white photo, but looked cool in colour too.

SH: *I noticed that there are no lyrics printed in the booklet. Is there a reason for that?*

JJ: I really felt that I enunciated the lyrics well and that the vocal was present enough in the mix for the lyrics to be easily understood.

SH: *Well, thank you very much for this interview.*

JJ: Stephan, you are quite welcome - it is always a pleasure to talk with you. Thanks for the continued support of my music in Hercules, and my thanks go out to all the

Elton fans who have been so kind to me since I became part of "Elton's World".

Full interview, plus song samples reproduced by kind permission, are available to Hercules Web Members.



SMALL ADS

ELTON ITEMS FOR SALE

Huge list of Elton items For Sale or Trade, 7" vinyl / 12" vinyl / CDs / Video's / Cass / Books and much more, for my updated lists write to; Steven Betts, 75a Coillesdene Avenue, Edinburgh EH15 2LN, Scotland or you can e-mail me at stevenbetts@btinternet.com

RECOVER YOUR SOUL

Can anyone help me getting the maxi-single of "Recover your Soul" INCLUDING a video clip and virtual room? Also penpals wanted. Tim Blezer, Post Pendersstraat 8, 6262 PA Banholt, Netherlands

ELTON LIVE RECORDINGS

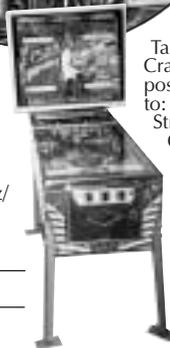
For sale: 12 video tapes (VHS Euro-PAL) with Elton live recordings altogether for DEM 100 (incl. Shipping within Europe): Patricia Schmidt, Tel.: (0049) 089 - 3617633 (in the evening)

EJ CELS!

Similar to the way animation Cels are made. Matted and presented in shadow box frames. 16 titles available. Some in limited edition! Write to: Cartoon Creations, PO Box 396, Dunedin, FL 34697 USA or visit our website at <http://www.angelfire.com/biz/celebritycel>.

CAPTAIN FANTASTIC PINBALL MACHINE

For sale: Elton John pinball machine "Captain Fantastic". Good condition, incl. circuit diagram and extra lamps, original glass without starts. Price: DEM 2000 (negotiable). Address: Stefan Kälber, Viktoriastr. 25, D-64293 Darmstadt, Germany. Tel.: (0049) 06151 - 28828 (in the evening)



FARM DOGS

I am looking for singles & live recordings of Farm Dogs (VHS US-NTSC & Euro-PAL), plus photos and singles from Taupin's solo albums. I am also looking for Taupin's books (except "A Cradle of Haloes"). Payment is possible in US-\$. Send offers to: Roland Dreyer, Flensburger Str. 6, D-10557 Berlin, Germany.

ALBUMS, BOX SETS, MAGS

Various items including Vinyl albums, POS, box sets, mags etc. Archive collection contained in 5 binders, with press cuttings, pics and promos dating back to 1987. For further info write to Daniel Hayes, 62 Swinley House, Redhill Street, Regents Park, London NW1 4BB, UK. Or telephone 0171 387 0082.

Having been at BOTH recent Manchester shows I was left wondering whether I had been to the same concert as Sabine in her 'Wake Them Up Before They Go Go' review of the most recent Manchester show (as reported in March 99 issue of Hercules).

I concur 100% with Mike Bibby of Stockport and Keith Whitty of The Wirral, who both reported a fantastic 'apology' show at Manchester in 'Your

Letters' page in the most recent Hercules Issue.

I personally, would go so far as to say Elton gave his best performance since Christmas Eve at the Hammersmith Odeon - my previous 'all time favourite' concert. Those piano solos for virtually every number, along with Elton and the Bands energy, will stay with me for all time!! The crowd had a GREAT time!!!

Robert Cargill, UK

I just want to convey my thanks and to say what a great time I had at the UK Convention in March. It is certainly days like that which make me feel proud to be a member of Hercules.

I was so surprised to receive a letter from a fellow member in Belgium (Francoise Linden-Gilles), who wrote to me and enclosed a print-out from the Internet about the Convention. She, as well as I, was thrilled to see that I was mentioned.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to bring some of my Elton memorabilia. A lot of people were interested in acquiring various pieces for their own collection, and needless to say my case was a fair bit lighter on my homebound journey!*

Danny Hayes, London, UK

(*Ed' note: Danny has a very interesting Elton collection with many items for sale; see the Small Ads for details of how to contact him)



Chicago, Aug '98 (Photo: S Kalinoski)



Chicago 'Bear', Aug '98 (Photo: S Kalinoski)

I have just received my first issue of 'Hercules', and I would like to congratulate you - it is really great! I was also happy to get the lyrics to *Written in the Stars*, which is now my favourite song.

I like to collect videos of Elton's TV appearances. I especially like to see interviews on TV because there is not that awful microphone covering Elton's face. When he sings, most of what we see is the microphone which can be very frustrating.

When Elton sang *Written in the Stars* at the peoples choice awards, the microphone was below his face and it was WONDERFUL, and the music sounded perfect. Someone should tell him that!

Ruth Carter, San Angelo, USA

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

FORTHCOMING CLUB MEETINGS

Hercules Convention IN GERMANY

As a warm-up to Elton's solo show at Halle's Gerry-Weber-Stadion, Hercules will held a German Convention at Hotel Ravensberger Hof in Bielefeld (approx. 20 minutes by car from the venue) between 11.00 am and 5.00 pm on June 26, 1999. If you plan to attend the convention, please contact Hercules Coordination for a registration form.

Hercules fan meeting IN FINLAND

Have you seen the North ...? Well, here is your chance as Hercules will be hosting its first fan meeting in Finland on July 10, 1999 from 1 pm to 6 pm. The event will take place at Hotel Cumulus Hämeenlinna, Raatihuoneenkatu 16-18, Hämeenlinna, Finland.

For more details please e-mail our Nordic contact person Urpu Kallio on urpukallio@GNWMail.com

LYRIC QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1 Amazes me, 2 Emily, 3 Nikita,
- 4 Tell me when the whistle blows,
- 5 The One, 6 Hercules, 7 Honky cat,
- 8 Daniel, 9 Healing hands,
- 10 Tiny dancer, 11 Cage the songbird,
- 12 Boogie pilgrim

CLUB BENEFITS

Your membership pass and member number are more than your passport to Elton news. They also bring special deals, saving you money. No one else gets them but you...

HERCULES WEB MEMBER

NEW SERVICE

Since Jan. 1999, you can enjoy a great extra Internet service at the HERCULES web site <http://www.eltonfan.com>

While news remains totally FREE, we've introduced a unique and growing news archive section you can search, PLUS articles only Hercules Web Members can access, PLUS an Audio, Photo and Video Library of exclusive items! You can join online for just \$15 a year (about £8) to enjoy the benefits. More great benefits coming soon. Hercules Gold: Combine it with your fanzine subscription, and enjoy a 25% discount!

ACCESS FRONT AREAS FIRST

Please bring your unique member passes to all Elton-related events. They assist ID, and SOME concert venues allow early access when invited by a HERCULES Team chief.

HERCULES U.K.

DISTRIBUTION DEAL

Check out London record music store Barry Paul & Sons, Leather Lane for Elton recordings discounted for HERCULES members. Offer only on official Elton CDs, subject to availability. At: 67-69 Leather Lane. Tel +44 171 405 1270/405 6078, fax +44 171 405 1515.

DISCOUNTS AT WRAP IT UP!

Hercules has negotiated a permanent discount package worth up to 25% to club members buying selected 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 email: eltonwrap@aol.com

NEW HERCULES

HOLIDAY INN, LONDON

Hercules member Iain Burt runs the 2-star Anna Hotel, Queensborough Terrace, London.

Quote "Hercules Fan Club" to Iain when booking, to benefit from BIG club discounts on single/double rooms. Double rooms are £28 per person sharing, single rooms, £40. Unbeatable for central London! Contact: +44 171 221 6622 or email Iain.Burt@btinternet.com It's 60 rooms at the end of the world!



"Face to Face" tour, Las Vegas '98.
(Photo: S Kalinoski)

1999 TOUR PLANS &

ELTON JOHN

SOLO PIANO TOUR USA

- 1/6/99 Laramie, WY, University of Wyoming Benefit Concert
- 4/6/99 Kansas City, MO, Kemper Arena
- 5/6/99 St. Louis, MO, Riverport Amphitheatre
- 8/6/99 Fort Wayne, IN, Allen County Memorial Coliseum
- 9/6/99 Dayton, OH, Ervin J. Nutter Center
- 11/6/99 Burgettstown, PA, Star Lake Amphitheatre
- 12/6/99 Cuyahoga Falls, OH, Blossom Music Center
- 15/6/99 Hamilton, Ontario, Copps Coliseum
- 16/6/99 Rochester, NY, Blue Cross Arena
- 18/6/99 Baltimore, MD, Baltimore Arena
- 19/6/99 Providence, RI, Providence Civic Center

ELTON JOHN

SOLO PIANO TOUR EUROPE

- 25/6/99 Ludwigslust, Germany, Schlossberg (open air) +49 (0)38207 73961
- 26/6/99 Halle (Westfalen), Germany, Gerry-Weber-Stadion (open air)

1999 TOUR

TOUR 1999 RUMOURS

- 27/6/99 Linz, Austria,
Schlossberg (open air)
- 29/6/99 Dresden, Germany,
Theaterplatz (open air)
+49 (0)351 8611650
- 2/7/99 Lucca, Italy, Piazza
Napoleone (open air)
+39 (0)584 30335
- 3/7/99 Brescia, Italy, Stadio
Rigamonti (open air)
+39 (0)584 30335
- 5/7/99 Trieste, Italy, Piazza
Unita d'Italia (open air)
+39 (0)584 30335
- 7/7/99 Graz, Austria, Stadtpark
(open air)
- 8/7/99 Madrid, Spain,
Plaza de Toros
- 10/7/99 Maidstone, Kent,
Leeds Castle (open air)
+44 (0)870 444 4402
- 11/7/99 Maidstone, Kent, Leeds
Castle (open air)+44
(0)870 444 4402
- 12/7/99 Maidstone, Kent,
Leeds Castle (open air)
- 14/7/99 Pontevedra, Spain
(to be confirmed)

ELTON JOHN & TINA TURNER

- 30/12/99 Las Vegas, NV,
Thomas & Mack Center

*This is no official tour schedule,
as it also includes rumoured and
unconfirmed dates.*

1999 TOUR

EXCLUSIVE GROUP ALLOCATION CONCERT TICKETS FOR HERCULES MEMBERS!



Elton's first solo shows in England for more than 20 years also marked a major achievement for HERCULES. Tour promoter, Marshall Arts Ltd., have assisted HERCULES with exclusive group allocation of tickets in rows near the front for Elton's forthcoming July 10 and July 12 shows near Maidstone, Kent.

We were allocated 30 tickets on each night, and could easily have sold more. And we were able to negotiate tickets at a generous £51 (inclusive of £1 booking fee) against the £55 charged on other priority tickets.

Most tickets were sold instantly via the Hercules web site (www.eltonfan.com) and e-mail addresses that fans have supplied us. If you didn't receive an electronic Infoletter, please let us know your e-mail address for future use.- send an e-mail to HerculesUK@aol.com now!

We also posted invitations to as many members as we could source. And the details were announced on the UK Hotline, 0906 888 2020. At crucial times like concerts, check the Hotline regularly!

Tickets will be distributed at The George Inn, Lower Street, in Leeds Village, (Tel 01622 861314) which is just near the Castle. We will be in there from 2pm - 4pm, when we will then make a move to the venue. Remember to bring

suitable ID. Your Hercules Member Pass will be "IDeal" for this.

And don't forget to wear your Hercules clothes at Leeds! If you want to order polo shirts, please write with Sterling/US\$ cheque payable to HERCULES UK to the UK address on page 2. Or send VISA/Mastercard details to Stephan in Munich (page 2 again).

We hope to organise TOUR BUS transport to Leeds Castle on July 10 & 12 from central London. Anyone needing transport should contact Iain Burt at Anna Hotel on tel (+44) 171 221 6622, or Iain.Burt@btinternet.com. The charge will be no more than £20 per person. You don't have to book concert tickets through us to benefit, but you must be a Hercules member. The more, the merrier and the cheaper!

Special thanks to Barbara Turner, Tammi Law, Dave Wilson and George Matlock for their help in organising this exclusive for Hercules.

Now, enjoy the shows and bring on the summer!



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

HERCULES Hotline on 0906 888 20 20

Calls cost 60p per minute anytime