

HERCULES

THE MAG

inside this issue:

Review of US Tour
with set lists

Interview
with Bernie Taupin

Exclusive
interview
with Liz Rosenthal

Auction for
rare EJ
memorabilia

SFTWC: your
chance to
vote!

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



Issue No. 57
DECEMBER 2001



Hercules is a registered member of the National Association of Fan Clubs

FAN CLUB INFORMATION

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From 1st January 2002, membership rates will be charged in Euro. Fees will be:
Europe: Euro 20 Rest of the World: Euro 35

Please be sure to change any standing orders accordingly if you are paying into one of our accounts.

Annual membership fee for the UK is £14 if paid by Standing Order/VISA/Mastercard. By Cheque/Postal Order it is £15. For the rest of Europe it is £14, and for the USA it is 17£/US\$30. 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.

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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. Please understand that we cannot always publish all contributions. All photos will be returned.

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

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Cover photo:
Elton poses with his Legend Award backstage at the Radio Music Awards show at the Aladdin Theatre for the Performing Arts in Las Vegas October 26, 2001. The show was broadcast live on the ABC network.

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FROM THE EDITOR...

Welcome to issue number 57 of The Mag. Elton is as busy as ever, with the continuing World Tour; loads of charity performances, and on top of all this he had a typically hectic schedule promoting the hugely successful Songs From The West Coast. For a while, he seemed to be on every TV or radio station, and in every newspaper or magazine that we read! Not that we're complaining.

Details of the first leg of the recent USA tour, complete with Set Lists, can be found on page 14. More tour dates for 2002 seem to be announced every week at the moment, but at the time of going to press, the list on page 27 had already been confirmed.

In this issue, you can read Bernie Taupin's comments on his lifestyle and thoughts whilst writing the lyrics for Songs From The West Coast. We also have some interesting comments from John Reid about his much-publicised split with Elton.

There have been a few changes here at Hercules; George Matlock has stepped down as UK manager, after 10 years with the Club. David Wright has taken over as UK manager, and I'm back as Chief Editor. Fran Linden-Gilles, who has been manager of Hercules Francais since 1999, has also decided to take a break from Hercules for a while. Don't worry - all these changes don't make any difference to your membership. The new contact

details can be found on page 2. On behalf of the Hercules Team and the fans, I would like to offer my personal thanks to George and Fran for all their hard work and dedication over the years.

I'd like to leave you with an extract from my personal favourite review of SFTWC, which was published in UK's Heat magazine in October:

"...These tunes are dominated by Elton's glorious piano and still flawless singing – brought here, sometimes startlingly, to the front of the mix. But more important than the album's clean, unfussy sound is the superb quality of the songs. ... The awesome Ballad Of The Boy In The Red Shoes reprises the beautiful mandolin-piano-strings sound of the legendary Tiny Dancer..... Not only is this a spectacular return to form and Elton's finest album in 25 years, but a triumphantly consistent collection of top-quality songs. Quite magnificent."

We couldn't agree more!



EJ NEWS BULLETS...



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

TOUR CONTINUES

Following the success of the US tour with the band during October and November, the tour continued with some dates in Japan. Elton then performed a few solo shows in Hong Kong, Bangkok and Singapore at the end of November, before returning to the US with the band for the postponed shows at New York's Madison Square Garden on November 27/28, 2001.

Elton and the band kicked off their World Tour in Cleveland, OH, on October 5, 2001 with a set list full of surprises: No less than seven songs from the just released album, *Songs From The West Coast*, were performed live at Convocation Center of Cleveland State University. Other surprise songs included (Gotta Get A) Meal Ticket, Country Comfort and Holiday Inn.

Further good news is that Elton and Billy Joel will continue their "Face to Face" Tour with shows in the US in January/February 2002. Shows in Washington DC, Boston, Hartford and Philadelphia are currently on the tour schedule. It is very likely that more shows will be added in the near future.



Concerts have also been announced in Australia for March, where tickets sold out extremely fast - reportedly breaking box office records when they went on sale in November. Concerts are also planned throughout Europe including the UK for summer 2002. See the Tour Dates listings on page 27 for more details.

ROYAL MAIL ADVERT



Elton has teamed up with UK's Royal Mail for a fun new Christmas advertising campaign on TV. He is seen ordering goods and presents over the internet which then appear in the living room, delivered by Royal Mail. Elton runs around excitedly to his single, *I Want Love*, throwing his packages into the air. You can view the clip at www.eltonjohn.com.

ELTON SHEET MUSIC

"Aida" and "The Road to Eldorado" sheet music have been released by publishers Hal Leonard. These beautiful souvenir songbooks feature lots of full-colour photos as well as songs for the multiple award-winning musical, and from the DreamWorks animated film.

DVD OF GBYBR

The new one-hour special on *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* in the Classic Album series was released on DVD in November in UK and USA. The programme describes the period of songwriting for Elton and Bernie that began in Jamaica and ended in the more familiar Chateau D'Hierouville, France. *Candle in the Wind*, *Roy Rogers* and *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* are some of the classic tracks featured, together with interviews with Elton and the band.

FEED ME!

New York City radio station 95.5 WPLJ ran a competition on November 28, giving away lunch with Elton, which also included a mini concert.

ELTON & DIANA KRALL

Elton and Bernie have written a song for jazz singer Diana Krall. She intends to record the track, named *Foundling*, and has already included it in her live set. Krall played at Elton's *White Tie & Tiara Ball* earlier this year. About the song written for her, she said "Is that cool or what? Elton is a very generous guy. We have become very close friends in a short time. He has spoilt me with support and affection. When I stayed with him at Windsor, we talked all day. I couldn't believe it. Me in the kitchen with Elton John, him saying that my record inspired him to make a great record."

EJ NEWS BULLETS...



THIS TRAIN DON'T STOP THERE ... AFTER MIDNIGHT

Elton and the band performed a shortened set in Osaka on November 12, 2001, in order not to miss the last bullet train to Tokyo, where they had to perform a show the next day.

ELTON AND RYAN ADAMS ON STAGE

Elton joined Ryan Adams on stage at New York on October 3, to perform two songs. Elton played piano for Ryan on La Cienega Just Smiled and then fronted the group for a version of Rocket Man. Elton and Ryan Adams have struck up a friendship in recent months, with Elton thanking Ryan Adams for "inspiring me to do better" in the liner notes of Songs From The West Coast. Meanwhile, Adams responded on the notes to his own new release, Gold, with the words, "Elton John you sweet sweet man."

DAVEY DONATES GUITAR

Davey Johnstone donated his electric Rickenbacker 12-string guitar for Hillside, benefiting abused and abandoned children. The auction took place over the internet and ended at the end of November.

LIVE ON GERMAN RADIO

German radio station WDR2 will broadcast an Elton concert on December 16, 2001. The broadcast will start at 11.00 pm German time. It is not clear when the concert is to be recorded. For those who don't receive WDR2, you can also listen via the internet.

RADIO MUSIC LEGEND AWARD



Elton and presenter Robert Downey Jr. with Elton's Legend Award backstage at the Radio Music Awards show at the Aladdin Theatre for the Performing Arts in Las Vegas October 26, 2001. The show was broadcast live on the ABC network.

Hercules would like to congratulate Elton on his latest achievement, the 2001 Radio Music Legend Award 2001. Elton was presented with the award at a prestigious ceremony in Las Vegas, on October 26. He took to the stage performing I Want Love, while the video played on the big screen

above his head. After the performance, Robert Downey, Jr., came on stage to present Elton with the trophy. Robert joked about Elton's "great cover of my song," which got a laugh from the crowd. After accepting the award, Elton gave an exceptional performance of Your Song.

SONGS FROM THE WEST COAST GOES GOLD!

Elton has earned his 35th gold record in the USA for his latest release, Songs From The West Coast. The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) has given gold certification to the new album for sales of over 500,000 units in the USA.

GERMAN TELEVISION

Elton will be a guest of German TV show "Wetten dass...?" on December 15, 2001. The show will be broadcast live by ZDF (German Channel 2). Elton will perform This Train Don't Stop There Anymore, and will also stay as a talk guest during the show.

SHANIA TV SPECIALS

ON DVD AND VHS

Two 1999 TV Specials with Shania Twain were released on DVD and VHS in November. The Specials contain 2 network TV specials, with guest appearances by Elton and the Backstreet Boys on "Winter Break.

EJ NEWS BULLETS...



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

UNDERSTANDING WOMEN

UK newspaper The Sun reported on September 24 that Elton made a startling admission - he fancies women. He confesses he often eyes up girls in the street - even though he has not slept with a woman since 1988. Elton says: "I can be driving along and see a woman walking down the street. If I like the way she walks or dresses I think, 'Phwoar! She's gorgeous'. The other day an incredibly good-looking woman was interviewing me in Spain. She was unbelievable, astonishing. She was only about 22. Even though I'm gay I don't just fancy men. But will I sleep with a woman again? Probably not. I'm very happy with David. I love women. A lot of my best friends are women - they're so intelligent and so perceptive.

I saw Nicole Kidman at the Moulin Rouge film and I really fancy her - she is sexy. I find Julia Roberts beautiful too. It's like with Elizabeth Hurley - she's more beautiful just in jeans and a T-shirt at the breakfast table - which I've been lucky enough to see." Talking about his partnership with David, Elton went on to say "It's the longest relationship I've had by miles. I was mature enough by the time I found him. This is a tricky business to have relationships in but he has a nine-to-five job which he loves. He doesn't let me get away with anything. He's confrontational - he's very supportive and I am of him. We have the same interests in life - except he's not that keen on football and I'm not that keen on wave boarding. Apart from that, we fit hand in glove and I'm very proud of him and what he's doing with the film company."

ELTON TO SING BOND TUNE?

We have heard rumours that Elton is to record the new theme song for the next James Bond film, starring Pierce Brosnan. If this is correct, he'll be getting that going after Christmas.

SMASH HITS TENNIS

For the second time, Elton and Billie Jean King will take the Smash Hits World Team Tennis event to California. It is set for December 5, 2001, at the ARCO Arena in Sacramento. Tickets for the charity event are now on-sale at the ARCO Arena box office and all TicketMaster locations.

JAY KAY TO DUET WITH ELTON

Jay Kay, the lead singer of UK group Jamiroquai, and Elton are to team up for a duet at the Brit Awards. The collaboration is still in the planning stages and still has to be confirmed.

ELTON GUESTS ON

JAY LENO'S TONIGHT SHOW

Elton will be a guest at the Tonight Show with Jay Leno on December 10, 2001. The show airs on weeknights on 11.35/10.35 pm on NBC.

A&E IN CONCERT

Billy Joel, Elton and Sting are among the stars of A&E's new series, "A&E In Concert," which kicked off November 11 with Billy Joel from the University of Pennsylvania. Elton appears in the next instalment of "Live By Request" on December 3, from Los Angeles.

AIDS BENEFIT CONCERT

"The Concert - 20 Years With Aids", benefiting Aids Project Los Angeles and the Elton John Aids Foundation, will take place at Universal Amphitheatre in Los Angeles on December 12. Hosted and headlined by Elton, it will feature performances by Alicia Keys, Bon Jovi, Craig David, LeAnn Rimes, Matchbox Twenty, Pete Dinklage, Rufus Wainwright, Sting and other surprise guests.

DVD RELEASE OF

"ONE NIGHT ONLY"

The "One Night Only" concert - recorded live at New York's Madison Square Garden in October 2000, was released on DVD at the end of November 2001. The DVD features extra tracks to the CD, as well as the video clip for I Want Love.

GARDEN SHOWS DELAYED

Due to the tragic events in America on September 11, Elton's planned shows at New York's Madison Square Garden were delayed from October 18 and 19 until late November. Elton fought back tears as he spoke of the tragedy. He said: "It is evil and devastating. I had to switch off the TV because it was so upsetting - but life has to go on. This will change the way we live our lives. Flying won't be the same. You'll be looking over your shoulder all the time. These people did it with knives and razors. It was like watching the film Independence Day. I'm just about to get on a private jet to Malaga but it doesn't scare me. You can't let your life stop."



THE CONCERT FOR

NEW YORK CITY

Paul McCartney, Billy Joel and Elton led music stars honouring the victims and rescue workers of the World Trade Center attack, in a concert on October 20. Elton gave a solo piano performance of his single I Want Love and the New York song Mona Lisas and Mad Hatters. He was then joined by Billy Joel for a duet of Your Song, which Elton performed wearing a fireman's cap thrown on stage by one of the uniformed fireman in the front rows. The concert was broadcast live on VH1 and also included Destiny's Child, Bon Jovi, David Bowie, The Who, Mick Jagger and more. Columbia Records released a 2 CD set of "The Concert For New York City" on November 27, 2001, which includes Elton singing Mona Lisas and Mad Hatters.

ROLLING STONE

Rolling Stone issue number 881, published November 8, has an extensive interview with Elton as well as comments from David Furnish.

ADOPTION TALK

Elton revealed in September that his partner David had been keen to adopt a child, but that he had serious reservations. Elton said: "I said to David, 'If you had asked me 20 years ago, I would probably have said yes'. But we are one of the most publicised gay couples in the world. The kid is going to have paparazzi following it. I don't want to put a child through that. I'd rather just pay for some kid's education and put him or her through university in the country they were born - in South Africa or wherever."

THIS IS MY HOUSE

More details have been revealed about Elton's new Venice apartment which could become a builders' paradise site for a year. Elton, who bought the apartment in Venice, Italy, overlooking the Grand Canal, spent £1.25 million on the one-bedroom apartment in April 2001. However, a source said: "It's a beautiful apartment in a wonderful area. Unfortunately, the council is pulling up the street and it's very dusty and noisy. Sir Elton will not find it peaceful and serene at the moment. It is in chaos."

Elton is looking to spend yet more on the property. He has applied to Venice City Hall to have the apartment fully refurbished. He wants interior floors to be covered in marble and the lounge to feature a plaster facade. Other plans include a stunning bedroom, 20-metre bathroom and large cloakroom. An insider said: "Sir Elton is very pleased with the apartment. He loves Venice and has been a frequent visitor. It is a very beautiful city." If given the go-ahead, the makeover is expected to take a year to complete. The new apartment reportedly has stunning views of Piazza San Marco.

CHART SUCCESS FOR

SONGS FROM THE WEST COAST

Elton's critically praised new album sold 70,556 copies in the first week for a no. 15 debut in the Billboard 100 in the USA. In Germany, the album entered the charts at 14th position. In the UK, Songs from the West Coast made a debut at number 2. For full details, see the Chart Page on our website www.eltonfan.net.

TV APPEARANCES

Elton once again showed his sharp sense of humour on the Parkinson show which was broadcast on BBC1 on September 22. Also starring on the show, were Elton's friends pop star Victoria Beckham with her husband England Football Captain David, along with football legend George Best. Elton was the final guest and began by singing I Want Love. Parkinson asked him about the new album, and Elton said that he had gone back to piano, guitar, drums and the organ. "I like a nice organ", he said with a cheeky smile.

Elton and the band then went on to appear on "The Late Show with David Letterman" on October 1. He continued to promote the new album with appearances on "The Today Show" and "TRL" (MTV) on October 2, and "Live with Regis and Kelly" on October 3. During the show Elton and the band performed an instrumental version of The Star Spangled Banner in memory of the victims of the World Trade Center disaster on September 11.



Elton appears on the Regis and Kelly TV show.

There were many other TV and radio interviews around the world to successfully promote SFTWC, including BBC Radio 4's Front Row, and Radio 2's Jonathan Ross show.

EJ NEWS BULLETS...



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

BRIAN WILSON TRIBUTE

ON DVD AND VHS

"An All-Star Tribute to Brian Wilson" was released on DVD and videocassette by Image Entertainment in November. The show was recorded earlier this year at New York's famed Radio City Music Hall, and features performances by Elton.

GRAND SLAM FOR CHILDREN

Andre Agassi and a superstar lineup of entertainers including Elton took the stage on September 29 at the sixth Grand Slam for Children concert fundraiser, to benefit youth organisations in Southern Nevada. The Andre Agassi Charitable Foundation raised more than \$4.2 million during the weekend benefit held at the MGM Grand Garden Arena. More than 6,300 fans attended the concert gala that featured performances by Elton, Don Henley, Tim McGraw, Brian McKnight, Dennis Miller, Ray Romano, Robin Williams and Stevie Wonder.

ELTON WINS LEAVE TO APPEAL

Elton has been given the go-ahead to appeal against a court battle he lost earlier this year. The Court Of Appeal gave him permission to challenge a High Court ruling in which a claim against accountancy firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers, was rejected. The star had accused PricewaterhouseCoopers of negligence in managing his affairs. The loss of the case left him around £8 million out of pocket. The singer had originally sued the former boss of his management company, John Reid Enterprises Ltd, Mr Andrew Haydon, and PricewaterhouseCoopers for £14 million. The claims against both were rejected but his appeal is only against PricewaterhouseCoopers.

BACKING VOCALS

Elton's old friend Gary Barlow, who famously talked unflatteringly of Elton in an interview about growing old a year ago, is apparently on Elton's new album *Songs from the West Coast*. The former Take That star was invited to sing on This Train Don't Stop There Anymore, the second single from the album. A source close to Elton explained: "He still regards Gary as one of the UK's great music talents. They have been friends since the Take That days."

ELTON PERFORMS AT WEDDING

A newlywed couple hired Elton to put on a private show at their wedding in London. For full details, see page 9.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Elton was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Prize at the fourth annual GQ Men of the Year Awards at the Natural History Museum in London on September 4, 2001.

He took the award for his contribution to music, fashion and style throughout his career.

BENEFIT SHOW IN MEXICO

Elton performed at a Benefit Concert at the Castillo de Chapultepec, Mexico, on October 21. The event was completely organised by the Mexican President, and tickets cost between 50,000 and 100,000 Mexican Pesos (approx. US\$ 5,000 to 10,000). All proceeds went to the Children Foundation.

DIANA TRIBUTE "A BURDEN"

Elton says his tribute to Princess Diana has become a bit of a burden. He says he thinks the re-recorded version of *Candle in the Wind* has overshadowed all his other work. Elton told *The Sun* newspaper: "In a way the Diana record has become a bit of an albatross around my neck because it sold so many. It was so huge and I think people lost me in the Nineties. But I'm back and refreshed". He went on to say the use of his songs in films *"Moulin Rouge"* and *"Almost Famous"* will help attract a younger audience to his music. "Those films have helped my credibility with younger people, a lot of whom were probably hearing those songs for the first time."

SILVER LINING

SILVERLAKE FUNDRAISER

Following the success of the first Silver Lining Silverlake last year, the December 2001 event will expand into a major three day music festival starring Elton and Sting. It will take place at two different locations in the Silverlake area of Los Angeles, December 13 to 15 2001. Tickets are available through Ticketmaster Outlets and at the Ticketmaster website.

WHISTLE A HAPPY TUNE

Interviews and early live appearances with Elton, John Lennon, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and Bruce Springsteen appear on a new DVD compilation from the BBC. "The Best Of The Old Grey Whistle Test" celebrates the 30th anniversary of the first broadcast of the BBC's classic rock and pop show, and was released on September 17, 2001 via BBC Worldwide.

KISS THE BRIDE...

THERE WAS MUCH MEDIA COVERAGE IN THE UK IN NOVEMBER ABOUT ELTON'S APPEARANCE AT A PRIVATE WEDDING. DAVID WRIGHT REPORTS.....

The Sun newspaper, not known for its accuracy, reported that 'Britain's Costliest Wedding' came to some £5m and that Elton was paid £1.5m for performing just four songs.

"Bollocks! That's not true," said Elton, appearing on BBC1's Friday Night With Jonathan Ross. "It was nowhere near that amount of money and I sang for 1 hour and 20 minutes."

The extravagant party was to celebrate the marriage of Peter Shalson to his bride Pauline. Shalson made his fortune from coat hangers but there is no mention of whether Elton received any freebies for his extensive wardrobe. The venue was the Roundhouse in Camden Town, London. Two weeks work transformed it into a tropical rainforest with palm trees and live parrots.

As if an intimate performance

from Elton John wasn't enough, the 300 guests were treated to a duet of Don't Go Breaking My Heart with Kiki Dee and a finale, with the cast from the London production of The Lion King, for Circle of Life. Kiki was in the middle of her tour but was flown in by helicopter for her one song after her own show.

The Daily Mail reported that Elton's set included Your Song, Rocket Man, I Want Love and Can You Feel The Love Tonight. They suggested Elton's fee was £1m. The Mail went on to report what other stars charge for a private show; according to them, it's £350,000 for Billy Joel, £1m for Rod Stewart and £5m for Michael Jackson. And if you're thinking of booking, remember there's VAT of 17.5% in the UK.

And if you're booking Elton, remember to invite your friends from Hercules!

Elton with DJ and TV presenter Jonathan Ross



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 And your rag doll sits
With a permanent grin
- 2 If the cards on the table
Always turn up spades
- 3 You never tried and all I did
was sacrifice
My weakness for you
- 4 I have to say, my friends
We're looking for a light ahead
- 5 It's a life and a living
And a way to keep the wolves
away
- 6 It seems to me a crime that we
should age
These fragile times should
never slip us by
- 7 But you got that short cut way
about you
And no one's gonna stare you
down
- 8 I never dreamed I'd feel
This fire beneath my skin
- 9 She thought I meant her harm
She thought I was the archer
- 10 And laid across the airstrip
Were the passports and the
luggage
- 11 While the seagulls were
screaming
Lucy was eating
- 12 Erasing a passion to sin
For no one knew better than
the tea leaves and the tarots

LYRIC QUIZ

JOHN REID



Reid now lives in a rented flat in Grosvenor Square, London, while his new Mayfair house with secret garden and swimming-pool is refurbished. How many millions is this costing him? "North of five," he replies. "But figures are unreal. You never actually see the millions." One day at MCA in New York, Reid asked, out of curiosity, if he could see what a million dollars looked like, and two Central Casting-style security guards solemnly brought in a small case packed with \$100 dollar bills. "It didn't look much," Reid laughs.

A butler named Jacques serves coffee and the photographer agrees not to show the red spot on his nose ("sun damage") while Reid reminisces in his soft Glaswegian tones about 1998, "the year the shit hit the fan".

"It was a terrible year. My mother died in February. The split with Elton happened in April. The case with Michael Flatley (when Flatley dropped him as manager) happened in October. The day that finished, David Croker, who introduced me to Elton in the first place, died of a heart attack. He was 48, same age as me, the gentlest man you could ever meet, placid, even-tempered, a non-smoker. Collapsed without warning, in the street on his way to the dentist, leaving a wife and two children."

"It was the last straw. I decided to stop what I was doing. I was so damaged by the events of that year, I had no appetite for working

ever again. It had been a mad life. I'd been caught in the backwash of the acquisitiveness that had gone on for so long and realised I didn't really want any of it. So I shrunk everything down."

He folded up his company ("I had 24 staff and the impact on their lives was quite serious, the wreckage it caused") and decluttered his life. New York apartment, huge house in St John's Wood, south of France house, everything was sold, every stick of furniture auctioned by Christie's. "It was like slamming the brakes on after running at 100 mph," he says.

The dramatic split with Elton started when two letters between Reid and Sir Richard Branson, turning down Branson's request to use Elton's *Candle in the Wind* on a tribute album, were leaked to UK newspaper *The Mirror*. Then one morning in New York there came "a screaming phone call" from Elton, accusing him of leaking another letter to the press, from Sir Elton's accountants PricewaterhouseCoopers.

"I saw Elton only twice after that. I investigated, brought in surveillance people, to find out how the letters got out, and months later the truth came out (The culprit was the notorious dustbin-rummager, Benjamin Pell). But by that time, it was all over."

Despite the fact that Reid was exonerated by Mr Justice Ferris in the High Court, Sir Elton says he'll never speak to Reid again. "He said on Parky (UK chat show, Parkinson) that if I was in the same room he would ignore me. And he did, in court. I went to court to hear what he said, because from the moment I was informed by his solicitor that our relationship was over, I'd never even seen him. He chose to just cut me off." Elton has, Reid says, a ruthless streak. "I'd seen him do it to other people in the past."

But they had been inseparable for 30 years. "The refusal to take responsibility for self is very common in this business," says Reid. "Being an artist seems to absolve a person from accepting

John Reid and Sir Elton John had a symbiotic relationship for 30 years. Elton was the goldmine; and Scotsman Reid was the smart fixer of deals. First they were lovers and then artist-and-manager, becoming rich together, with Reid on "20 per cent of everything". In middle age, acrimoniously and expensively, they split.

SAYS HE'S NOT BITTER

responsibility. If a record doesn't sell, it's the record company's fault. If a concert flops, it's the promoter's fault. And the longer you last, the greater the success, the worse it gets. Only a handful are like Elton, living in a cocooned, cosseted atmosphere. Privately, he's shy, sweet, intelligent, with a rapier wit, all the things we like about him. Once on stage, he's all confidence."

Reid says he used to try to curb Elton's excessive costumes, fabulous headgear, teetering boots. "I'd try to strike some balance but the more you'd tell him not to, the more he'd go after the most flamboyant, outrageous Bob Mackie and Bill Nudie creations."

Reid goes on to talk about his reputation for hitting people - two people in one day, once, in New Zealand, including a woman journalist. "Well, she was very aggressive and I'm not defending myself, but it was a knee-jerk reaction."

He says drink made him aggressive, and "it was terrible, terrible - but I was very young when I started, learning on my feet almost daily. I always seemed to get into trouble, and got a reputation."

After the drink came drugs: "Very late, about 28." Getting addicted to cocaine, he explained, is a long process. "At first it's a lot of fun, and gave a lot of energy, for the first couple of years. Then it becomes not so much fun, and then it becomes completely destructive. I do not recommend it."

He was detoxed and cured 10 years ago and has been clean of alcohol and drugs ever since. When asked about Philip Norman's claim that Reid was against Elton coming out in the 1970s, he says "Well, in those days, it was uncharted territory, nobody ever asked, there was no need to talk about it. Everybody in the business knew we were together. And then the Rolling Stone chap asked the question, and Elton answered and it became an issue. I had no problem with it, but then I wasn't a public figure."

And when they became ex-lovers, they worked together just as closely. "I think it allowed me to be more honest. Nobody could tell Elton what to do, but at times I was able to bring a little common sense to situations that had got out of control."

Reid actually got engaged once, to Sarah Forbes, daughter of Bryan Forbes and Nanette Newman. She was 18, he was 35 and had known her since she was a child. But he got cold feet. "It wouldn't have been fair. I knew I was gay, she knew I was gay, she thought I could change, I knew I couldn't. And then she married John Standing, who's 25 years older. She's still my best friend."

As a 19-year-old shirt salesman in Austin Reid, Knightsbridge, his first London job, Reid would gaze on a stuccoed house in Montpelier Square which he coveted. At 27, he owned it. After that, the spending and acquiring of property escalated. "Elton encouraged me. I'm naturally cautious, and he'd chastise me for not spending more. He knew I wasn't Scottish-mean, quite the opposite. But if I said 'I fancy a New York apartment', he'd say 'Go and get one' and send up his decorators from Atlanta."

Backstage in a Washington auditorium, Sir Elton and Reid went to meet Elvis in 1974. "We walked in, and there he was in a white jump suit and cape, striking a pose, being Elvis. Very pasty, and bloated, didn't look good. I could hardly speak. He looked at me, clutching my programme, and said 'What's your name, son?' and he wrote 'John Reid, love Elvis'. The next person to go in and see him was President Ford."

A few years ago in Las Vegas, Reid had breakfast with Colonel Tom Parker. "We went to a pancake house off the Strip and he sat there like an old pasha, in his big hat, and string tie, must have been about 80. I remember he said people criticised him for the way he handled Elvis's money. He said, 'I never touched Elvis's money. He got his half.'" Reid laughed.

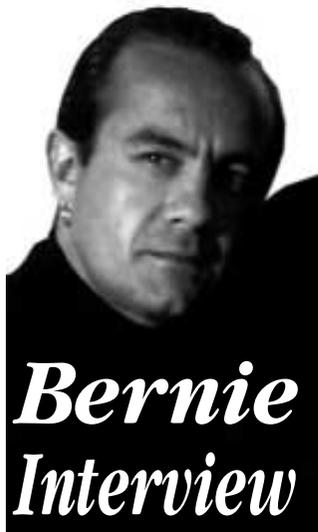
He ponders on the fragile artist-manager relationship. "Roger Forrester managed Eric Clapton for 32 years. Then the Charlotte Church situation. It's unfair, and makes things hard for young managers. If the artist decides to go, forget the contract, they're off. They always have the upper hand."

But Reid has reinvented himself as an impresario, as producer of the hugely successful play *The Graduate* in London's West End. The investors got their money back in seven weeks. "I really came up through musical theatre (he was in *Kiss Me Kate* as a boy) and I tried for years to persuade Elton to write for the theatre, until he reluctantly did it." The *Lion King* deal was one of the last he fixed for Elton. He has kept diaries and has a vivid recall, so he may write a memoir "about the absurdity and hilarity of the record business - because it is absurd."

"At the same time, how else would I have got to go to the White House, and to places that most mortals don't get to go?" He and Elton met President Reagan in the Oval Office, and were at the Clintons' dinner for the Blairs. He would include, of course, Elton's £1 million settlement with *The Sun* over the rent-boys story in the 1980s. It was Reid who drafted *The Sun* front page: "Sorry, Elton."

He now finds it exhausting to contemplate the pace of his former life. Having started out studying to be a marine engineer, he managed in his twenties to master the difficult world of recording contracts on Elton's behalf. "But there's no college for business managers. I don't know how the hell I did half the things. I was on the board of Watford, I had a restaurant in Covent Garden, I had an interest in Tatler when Tina Brown came aboard. I managed Queen, Kiki Dee, Barry Humphries, Billy Connolly. I'm glad now to be doing just one thing at a time."

Extracts from an interview in UK newspaper The Times, April 2001.



Bernie Interview

BERNIE TAUPIN IS SO PLEASED WITH SONGS FROM THE WEST COAST, THAT HE AGREED TO TAKE A BREAK FROM LOOKING AFTER HIS HORSES TO SPEAK TO ROBERT HILBURN OF THE LA TIMES

Bernie is among the most private figures in pop music, a lyricist so media-shy that he makes Bob Dylan look like an extrovert.

While Elton travels the world singing their hits (and they've had more than anyone except Elvis Presley), the reclusive Taupin lives on a 30-acre cutting-horse ranch in the Santa Ynez Valley, caring for his horses and turning out lyrics for more songs. Like much of the rest of the new album, "I Want Love" was inspired by the breakup 3_ years ago of Bernie's third marriage. But the album also touches on other topics, including the various victims of hate crimes and a slap at the Reagan administration's slow response to the AIDS epidemic.

Question: "I Want Love" is such a bitter song that it doesn't make you seem like a very attractive person. Or are we making a mistake about judging the songwriter by his song? How close is that song to the truth?

Answer: It's very close, but you have to remember that most of the songs you write are only moments of time. You might feel the emotion of the song just for a few hours or a few days, then feel totally different by the time the song is finished or recorded. When you listen to it then, you might go, "My God, I don't feel like that anymore. It's so bitter." But if everyone edited themselves like that, we would have lost some of the greatest songs ever written.

Q: Why so much bitterness in that and other songs on the album?

A: I could go into the specifics, but they are irrelevant because everyone feels pain at some point in their life and some people feel pain at many points. It would just be indulgent for me to go into the details of my own situation. All that matters is what's said in the songs. I certainly don't own the patent on divorce. Sometimes you break up because you are too young. Sometimes you make a mistake and marry the wrong person, but sometimes the marriage works, and that's the hardest breakup of all-the case in which you really, really love each other, but you can't live together. That's the kind of relationship some of these songs are about, and that's as far as I can go with it.

Q: A lot of your most memorable music with Elton has been dark or depressing. Is that your nature, or is it just easier to write about disappointment and despair?

A: I think you can be far more interesting and introspective when you are dealing with dark or serious matters. When you're working on a "fun" song, there isn't that much ammunition to work with and

you are always, always in danger of just being superficial. That's why we have so much shallow pop music on the radio these days. The music I find worth listening to isn't easy to find on the radio-people like Steve Earle, Lucinda Williams, Emmylou Harris, Tom Waits and, always, Bob Dylan. But I think the fact there isn't a lot worth listening to on the radio served as a bit of a challenge for us. When Elton and I finally got around to doing something again, I think we both wanted it to be something special. We didn't just want it to be the next record, if you know what I mean.

Q: A lot of people are going to be saying this album is a deliberate return to the sound of the early Elton John records. How deliberate was it?

A: For years I've wanted to make a back-to-basics album. When I say that, I don't mean to say we wanted to sound like an old Elton John record. It wouldn't be healthy to try to re-create your old sound. We just wanted to recapture the honesty of those early records. I think Elton realized that for a long time he might have been chasing trends in music, not necessarily setting them like he once did. After writing all those songs for Broadway and movies, I think he wanted to get his hands dirty again and do something without thinking about the marketplace or whether it is going to get on the radio or what is most likely to sell.

Q: Did you actually talk about trying to recapture that intensity?

A: Before we made the record last year, we had some pretty intense discussions about what this record should be. I was very adamant that we make this record very simply. I think he was also listening to a lot of the artists who were operating in a simpler style, like Ryan Adams. I think he saw the beauty in the simplicity and

realized that that is where we really came from. He encouraged me to try different things too. He said just write what you want, it doesn't matter how long the songs are or what form they are in. The music is very piano-dominated. In the early days, Elton often had these orchestral situations going on behind him, but the forefront was a very, very limited rhythm section and it was very piano-dominated. Elton even wrote the music this time at the piano. He didn't use any click tracks or drum machines the way he had been doing in recent years.

Q: Given all the success you've had, was there a point over the years where you simply didn't care about writing songs anymore? You love the ranch. Did you ever find that was enough in your life?

A: I never lost interest in the writing, though I did lose faith in where the writing was ending up. I've become very disillusioned with the music scene in general.

Q: What is it about the business that troubles you?

A: It's everything. I would hate to be starting out now because young artists, for the most part, aren't really given a chance. There is such an emphasis on immediate results. Labels don't work with bands and give them time to grow over a period of albums. I wonder if bands like U2 or R.E.M. would be given the time to develop if they came along today. People forget, but their first albums didn't do that much, or even their second or third. But they grew and they eventually flourished. Bands and artists today aren't allowed to do that. When a record comes out now, it is all about, "Can we get a song on the radio?" It's about a hit single. There's not a lot of emphasis on artistry, which sends the wrong signal to bands.

Q: Let's talk about "American Triangle." The song grows out of the Matthew Shepard murder, but there is really a lot more going on in the song than his death, isn't there?

A: Yes, I like to encompass more than one theme in a song. Take "Candle in the Wind." The song isn't just about Marilyn Monroe. It's about fame. The truth is I was never a particular Marilyn Monroe fan. I see her as somewhat of an icon, but she wasn't really a very good actress, was she? The song could have just as easily been about James Dean. "American Triangle" is a bit like "Candle in the Wind" in that sense. It's not just about one thing. It's about how three people lost their lives. Matthew Shepard literally lost his life, but two other lives were also ruined. That's what happens in hate crimes. Everybody loses in that situation because everyone is the product of their environment and hate corrupts everyone it touches.

Q: How do you deal with gender in a song? Do you avoid using gender because Elton is gay? There is no gender in "I Want Love" for instance. But there is gender in "Love Her Like Me."

A: There was one point years ago where Elton came to me and said, "Can we be more sexually ambiguous [on this song]," but mostly it's not something I think about. I didn't consciously write any of the songs for this record with that in mind.

Q: What's your favorite Elton album?

A: I don't know if I have favorite albums. I have favorite songs, of course, and they don't necessarily tend to be the ones from what everybody dubs the classic years. If I were to write down a list of my favorite songs with Elton, I guarantee you that over half of them would be from albums after 1976, which is where a lot of

people think everything ended for us. [Laughs.] I agree the albums in general maybe haven't been as good as a whole since "Blue Moves" in 1976, but within those albums there were always a couple of songs that I loved. I think "Sacrifice" is one of the best songs we've written. I also love "The One" and I'd think about putting "Simple Life" and "Empty Garden" on that list.

Q: Any of the hits make you shudder now?

A: Oh, sure. I can't stand, "Don't Go Breaking My Heart" and I'm not a big fan of something like "Crocodile Rock."

Q: But "Crocodile Rock" was such a glorious celebration of good-time rock 'n' roll. It was a hit from the moment it hit the radio. Why would you single out that one?

A: Well, it is a fun song. I just don't know if it holds up.

Q: Despite the frequent gloominess of the new album, you seem to be upbeat yourself. Do you consider yourself an optimistic person these days?

A: I like to be optimistic. I am certainly in a different frame of mind than when I wrote the songs for this album. That's why the album is both an exorcism and a baptism for me. In light of what happened on Sept. 11 [in the terrorist attacks], I consider myself a very lucky and very happy man. I really enjoy my life these days. I like being on my own. I like being on the ranch. Time does heal the wounds. As I get older, I find myself becoming slightly more reclusive, not that I am becoming a hermit. I just like to be with my dogs and watch my kids [two teenage girls] grow up. The odd thing is that after all these years and all that has happened to me, I have very much reconnected to the things that I grew up loving in England, which is the country life and the things that go along with it. 

us tour review

by Reggie Zippo

An overview
of the recent USA
tour, compiled from
Fan Reports and
new releases

On October 5, 2001, Elton John and his band of musicians, technicians, and a core of long time professionals unleashed a cornucopia of songs to a hungry audience at the Convocation Center in Cleveland, Ohio.

For this premier concert, nestled within the expected selections, Elton chose to include several classic gems such as Roy Rogers, Country Comfort, Mona Lisas And Mad Hatters, (Gotta Get A) Meal Ticket, and Holiday Inn. At later venues he will eliminate some of these, but will add other cherished treasures. One song in particular that was included on the first set list was Mansfield, which is an odd choice in itself since most fans have expressed a dislike for it altogether. Elton undoubtedly sensed this notion by eventually deleting it from the set list for later shows. It had been quite some time since Elton had toured world wide with his band mates and, if the Cleveland concert is to be an indicator, this outing will prove to be quite impressive with many twists and turns of the piano strings.

On October 6, Elton and crew crossed the USA/Canadian border to perform at Toronto's Air Canada Center with a set list that nearly matched the Cleveland show the previous evening. Hercules fan correspondent Cynthia Galpin reported that Elton was very apologetic for



Photo: Pam Quier

playing the new songs. Since the set list was interspersed with mellow classics and the new songs were largely unfamiliar to most fans, the audience members were relatively subdued, but responsive with cheers and applause at the end of each song. After Toronto, Elton made his way to Ottawa for an October 9 engagement, which was reported to be as amazing as the Toronto concert. To end his stay in Canada, Elton traveled to Quebec City to perform at the Colisee on October 10. Sadly, Roy Rogers was replaced with I Guess That's Why They Call It Blues. Perhaps Elton felt that this classic didn't receive the expected acceptance during the previous concerts, but hope is that Roy will find his way back in the saddle again.

Dipping back into the USA, Columbus, Ohio, fans were treated to a rousing performance at the Value City Arena on October 12. Mansfield was finally replaced with This Train Don't Stop There Anymore while the rest of the set list remained untouched. For the conclusion of the first leg of this world wide tour, Elton blessed Detroit, Michigan with an appearance on October 13. Hercules fan

VERSE ONE - THE TOUR BEGINS



Photo: Pam Quier



Photo: C Galpin

correspondent Tony Centofante reported that Elton's new sound system, which was recently advertised in *Billboard* magazine, was perfect beyond belief. Tony further reported that the audience was rather calm at the beginning of the concert and then a bit uneasy and disturbed when Elton blasted the Reagan administration before launching into a fast paced version of *Ballad Of The Boy In The Red Shoes*. This awkwardness was visibly expressed from the audience by taking the opportunity to go to the concession area. Elton, however, won back the audience's favor by singing his version of the *Star Spangled Banner* and dedicating *Mona Lisas And Mad Hatters* to everyone in New York City, after which he yelled into the microphone "Let's Get Those Bastards!" That single comment brought a two minute standing ovation. From there to the end of the show, Elton bonded with the crowd. On October 20, Elton took a break from the tour to perform 3 songs at the now famous New York City Tribute concert. He included *Mona Lisas And Mad Hatters*, but opted not to make the same comment again. Audience reaction was still equally matched. Expect to see

this song on the set list for the entire tour.

From New York, Elton headed south to perform four concerts in Mexico City. The first venue was on October 21 at Chapultepec Castle, a former Presidents home. Elton was scheduled to headline a private fund raising event for the *Vamos Mexico (Let's Go Mexico) Foundation*, which assists the poor. This brought angered protests from a small group of Mexican nationals who felt that Elton was not "Mexican" enough to grace the castle's corridors. They argued that Elton was too commercial and would not best represent Mexico for this affair. Undaunted, Elton arrived on stage as planned. Hercules fan correspondent Patricia Perrin de la Rosa reported that, although the presence of the "White Revolution Group" drew about 100 to 200 protesters, Elton's concert began without any type of problems. After 800 guests arrived through a private entrance, Elton performed solo for the entire evening with only about half of the set list represented and a few extra surprise classics.

October 22 found Elton back with the band again to perform at the National Auditorium (Auditorio Nacional). Patricia,

who attended all four concerts, reported that at the end of the first song Elton's piano developed an illness, which needed to be remedied before he could continue. A technician came out on stage to fix the problem while Elton entertained by doing a little dance then joked "You'll have to wait until the piano is fixed or we buy another piano for the show!" Patricia said that it was a mere four minute wait, but it seemed like an eternity. Knowing his perfectionist attitude, Elton was probably seething inside, but he did not reveal it to the audience. Upon repair, he launched into *Someone Saved My Life Tonight*. A fitting song to say the least. The rest of the set list was radically different from previous editions by adding *Honky Cat*, *Blue Eyes*, *The One*, *Sacrifice*, and *Nikita* while other songs were cast aside. Another change was that part of the set list was performed solo.

For the third Mexico City concert, Elton switched back to the set list he had installed in the USA and Canada with only a few alterations. The audience for this October 23 show was more energetic than at previous venues, which undoubtedly charged Elton tremendously, and they responded wildly from beginning

to end. Elton had not introduced his band mates the previous evening, probably because he was too preoccupied with anger over his piano problems, but this time he made sure to acknowledge each one individually.

For the fourth and final appearance in Mexico City, Sky Cable System televised the entire concert live on October 25 for the Mexican public. Patricia reported that a lot of Mexican actors were in attendance for this event. As expected, Elton gave a stellar performance. During the concert, Patricia reported that Elton hinted that he will be back to Mexico soon, but it is unclear if he meant as a performer, on holiday, or for some other function. At any rate, the audience responded joyfully. When the concert ended and Elton said his good-byes, Patricia noticed many tears flowing. She revealed that a lot of those tears were her own.

Travelling back to the USA for an October 27 show in Reno, Nevada, fans were treated to an outstanding performance at the Lawlor Event Center. Hercules fan correspondent A. Tyler Mally reported that Elton was especially in rare form that evening with long piano riffs, piano top dancing, bench flipping, and solos to add to the overall experience. The only disheartening observation was when Elton apologized for playing songs from the new album. This seems to be a growing concern for him as he had made similar comments at previous concerts. It is puzzling why he feels this way since the new album has been so embraced by all of his fans and the critics have been most supportive of the new songs. Elton needs to rest assured that we all LOVE the new album without question!

Elton continues to tour on this worldwide adventure, spreading his magic to all corners of the globe. With his never ending supply of energy and songs, Elton will always be well received from your town to the end of the world! 

The following is a complete list of all of the songs that Elton has performed in October (not including the New York City appearance) and how many times each song has been included in the set list (in no specific order):

- Funeral For A Friend/
Love Lies Bleeding (11)
- Someone Saved My
Life Tonight (11)
- Bennie And The Jets (12)
- Philadelphia Freedom (11)
- Ballad Of The Boy In
The Red Shoes (11)
- The Wasteland (10)
- Rocket Man (12)
- Daniel (12)
- Roy Rogers (4)
- Mansfield (5)
- (Gotta Get A) Meal Ticket (8)
- I Want Love (11)
- Birds (8)
- Country Comfort (8)
- Take Me To The Pilot (11)
- Mona Lisas And Mad Hatters (12)
- Holiday Inn (10)
- American Triangle (8)
- Original Sin (8)
- Levon (9)
- I'm Still Standing (12)
- The Bitch Is Back (11)
- Saturday Night's Alright (For Fighting) (8)
- Believe (6)
- Crocodile Rock (12)
- Your Song (12)
- Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me (12)
- Tiny Dancer (11)
- Candle In The Wind (9)
- I Guess That's Why They Call It The Blues (8)
- This Train Don't Stop There Anymore (6)
- The Star Spangled Banner (1)
- The Greatest Discovery (4)
- Honky Cat (2)
- Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest Word (4)
- The One (4)
- Blue Eyes (4)
- Sacrifice (3)
- Nikita (3)

HIS SONG

THE MUSICAL JOURNEY OF ELTON JOHN

INTERVIEW BY GEORGE MATLOCK

What made you decide to write it?

When I first became a fan in 1989, I was disappointed as well as surprised that there was next to nothing to read about Elton. I did find a few entries in some of those general rock and roll encyclopedias, but they tended to skirt Elton's music, focus on the flamboyance and really neglect his post-1970s output. As I'd just started collecting all his albums and found nearly all of his work refreshingly wonderful, I was puzzled by how uninterested the critics seemed to be in his music. My puzzlement grew as music and entertainment magazine surveys came and went, naming the greatest rock and roll acts or the greatest albums or songs, and hardly a mention of Elton could be found!

As the 1990s wore on, some good books could be had about Elton— first, Philip Norman's bio, then the Rocket Man encyclopedia, then some extremely beautiful-to-look-at picture books that had readable text. Of course, I cherished all of these. But by the mid-1990s I still perceived a gap on bookshelves that needed to be filled. I believed, and still do, that Philip Norman ignored Elton's music while focusing almost exclusively on obscure, behind-the-scenes anecdotes that barely shed light on Elton's career let alone his persona. I believed that Elton deserved a well-written, traditional biography that examined his musical achievements and career in-

NEW ELTON BIOGRAPHY, HIS SONG, HAS RECENTLY BEEN RELEASED WORLDWIDE. THE AUTHOR LIZ ROSENTHAL, WHO IS A HERCULES MEMBER, TALKS TO US ABOUT THE STORY BEHIND THE BOOK.



depth, from the beginning to the present, and provided explanations for his commercial ups and downs and musical motivations while not losing sight of the man millions across the globe have been so fascinated with for three decades. So I started writing, and I think I succeeded in doing what I set out to do.

Liz, how long have you been writing your breakthrough book?

I began writing in November 1995 and finished around the end of February 1998. That would be about 2.5 years of working every weekend to get the book done. I probably worked a little too hard, though. Since I averaged about eight double-spaced pages a weekend, I ended up with over 1200 pages at the end, which translated into about 646 pages single-spaced.

Was it easy to find a publisher, or did you have to "tour" with your manuscript?

Easy?! My understanding is that it's rarely easy for a writer, especially a first-time book author like me, to get published. It's worse when your topic doesn't seem trendy. I had a terrible time trying to find a publisher. It took me nearly as long to find a publisher as it had to write the book. On the plus side, I had the chance to edit the book a bit and refine it and even add information that I'd just become aware of. On the down side, I got rejection after rejection from, seemingly, everybody.

Initially, I was represented by a cousin — a very kind and thoughtful man— who was actually a talent agent rather than a literary agent. My cousin was very enthusiastic about the book and went to many of his contacts in entertainment to see about getting a major U.S. publisher for the book. None of his efforts panned out, as the big

publishers, such as Penguin-Putnam, felt that only juicy gossip would sell. As my book didn't provide juicy gossip about Elton but instead a serious appraisal of his life's work, these big publishers weren't interested. It didn't help that my book was too long. One editor at Little, Brown, though, seemed biased against the idea of doing anything on Elton. He refused to look at any material at all! Meanwhile, Little, Brown was putting out volume after volume about every other music star imaginable. Go figure!

Then I sought representation by a literary agent, who turned out to be a total disaster. Over the period of a year and a quarter, he sent my book out to a mere handful of the biggest U.S. publishers found not one of them interested. During this period, after a bit of nagging on my part, he did send the manuscript to a UK associate to see what could be done there. Even with Elton's iconic stature in the UK, even with the palpable love that British people obviously feel for their "favorite son," no UK publisher could provide a bit of encouragement.

Well, my agent finally dropped me in March 2000. Happily, I'd had my husband Stan by my side this whole time, encouraging me. Once I lost my representation, Stan took the bull by the horns and researched the publishing industry. He came up with list after list of publishers—big, medium-sized, small and tiny—and I started papering the entire United States with queries. Eventually I was referred to editor Bob Nirkind at Billboard Books (an imprint of Watson-Guption Publications), who lost no time in giving me a publishing offer! Bob wisely saw that a new book was needed on Elton and that Billboard was the publisher to fill the need. Many thanks must go to Bob, who went to bat for the book and made the contract negotiations swift and



relatively painless. By September 2000, I had a signed contract! What a relief!

Was it at first daunting, to pool together so much information and anecdotes?

Yes and no. For about a year before I actually sat down to write I took notes from loads of old magazines I had with Elton on the cover from all over the world, and from my enormous collection of audio and videotapes that includes radio and TV interviews with Elton and his live performances, both unauthorized and authorized. I indexed my notes and was finally ready to write in November 1995. Assisting me also, once I began writing, were huge, heavy scrapbooks filled with clippings from all over the world going back to 1970 that I'd gotten in trades with friends, by purchasing them from clipping services and by even paying someone for a period of time to wade through microfilm for me.

The point is that I had a system in place for starting the book. So in that sense, I wasn't intimidated. I figured I'd just keep writing till I finished! On the other hand, I got really hung up some days on minute details and literally had to piece certain things together. This was scary and

exciting at the same time. For example, what was the relationship between 21 At 33 and The Fox? Why wasn't The Fox, Elton's first album for Geffen Records in the U.S., more successful than it was? When did Elton first attempt his all-instrumental album and what happened to it? What happened during the period between Elton's appearance at Ryan White's funeral in 1990 and his rehabilitation?

Who was most instrumental in acting as your main sources?

Nobody and everybody. As I mentioned earlier, I'd done a lot of trading with people to fill out my clippings collection. Also, Linda Bowden, the woman I hired to get articles for me from microfilm, was tireless and meticulous. I'd also acquired an enormous audio and video collection from painstaking trades and purchases. In my book's acknowledgments, I tried to thank everyone who helped.

Did Elton or Bernie assist you in any way?

No. I didn't even try to contact either of them, as I'd heard that Elton's organization under John Reid tended to be unresponsive to aspiring authors.

A lot of books on Elton have been published since his historic 1997 performance at Diana Princess of Wales' funeral. What really makes this book stand out?

I assume you're referring to Essential Elton by Spencer Bright, A Little Bit Funny by Patrick Humphries, Elton John: The Life And Music Of A Legendary Performer by Michael Heatley and Elton John's Flower Fantasies by Caroline Cass. The pictures in those books are just wonderful, aren't they?

As for Flower Fantasies, well, that was mainly about Elton's love of flowers. Lovely to read, but you wouldn't open up that book hoping to

learn about Elton's music— and some of the lyric quotes were attributed to the wrong songs! Essential Elton, at 128 pages, is a Cliffs Notes version of his life and music, while leaving out his live performing prowess altogether, as well as other important issues such as the problems Elton had with Geffen Records and how his "bisexual statement" affected his career in the U.S. A Little Bit Funny isn't much longer than Essential Elton and very disorganized. Only one-third is devoted to the music, which is discussed in cursory fashion, and the book seems to have more white space than anything else! Finally, the layout of *Legendary Performer* is just beautiful, but it has more pictures than information.

What makes *His Song* stand out is its thorough discussion, across 544 pages, of all of Elton's albums and tours, set against the time-line of Elton's life and informed by his influences, motivations, triumphs and disappointments, as well as outside forces that affected his life and career. *His Song* also includes end notes that detail my sources, a comprehensive US/UK discography, 45 black and white photos (many taken by fans-cum-amateur photographers and never before seen!) and an index. I encourage people to go to my web site, www.ejhisong.com, which will give them a nice flavor for the features of the book.

How long have you been an Elton fan? Because I know the book was written from that perspective.

I became a fan on September 30, 1989, to be exact. That was the date of my first Elton John concert, which I attended with my husband at the Philadelphia Spectrum. What an ear- and eye-opening experience! I'd always liked Elton and by that time owned a few of his albums. But it was seeing him live that inspired and excited



me— and made me want to buy his entire back catalogue, which I did in only one month. I became acquainted with all of his music through his then current album, *Sleeping With The Past*, pretty much simultaneously. As you can imagine, I had lot of thrills in a very short period of time! I was also shocked at how "un-Eltonish" some of his albums sounded, at least to my initially untrained ears. I'm talking about *Empty Sky*, with its raw, folkish sound; *Tumbleweed Connection*, with its country-rock feel; and *Rock Of The Westies*, which was hard and grating. As you know, the Elton you hear on the radio is not the guy you always hear on record. I appreciated that element of surprise.

But getting back to that first concert, you probably want to know why I was so motivated to dig into his recordings after seeing him live. Like many others, I was hit like a ton of bricks by Elton's charisma, piano playing and voice. My husband and I had just about the worst seats at the Spectrum, but it didn't matter. The sparks that were flying from that stage reached us all the way in the back!

Was it hard to write about the material precisely because you were a magnet for capturing

every piece of useful and perhaps trivial information about Elton?

Yes, but as I mentioned before, I did try to devise a system for sorting through my material. Also, the fact that I continued to collect as I was writing helped me to piece things together. However, I must admit that my book's first draft had too much information in it to be publishable. Reading and re-reading it, and editing it several times, helped me to identify the essentials that had to be included. For example, my first draft included thorough discussions of all of Elton's B-sides as well as unreleased recordings. Sadly, I had to edit most of that out to get the book to a publishable length. Nevertheless, all B-sides, released in both the US and UK, are listed in the discography.

What is your favourite Elton song? And what does Elton mean to you?

Two very difficult questions! I don't really have a favorite Elton song at the moment. At one point, "I Don't Wanna Go On With You Like That" was my favorite. I still think it's an amazingly exciting amalgam of dance and rock. At another point, "Live Like Horses" was a favorite. It's a stunningly gorgeous, panoramic ballad. In the live setting, though, I would have to say that "Bennie And The Jets" is my absolute favorite song. Elton has been reinventing that one since 1973, and he's always bringing something new to light from it!

And what does Elton mean to me? I guess, to me, he means a personification of what is best about music. He has somehow taken many genres and distilled them into his own ingenious mixture that continues to morph to this day! From that ingenious distillation you get an impression of a man to whom music means everything. He doesn't just have to say that



(and he has said that innumerable times); it's obvious every time he plays a note on the piano or sings a phrase.

Do you feel you understand

him and his complicated persona better having written this book?

Yes and no. On the one hand, I can honestly say that I understand that Elton will continue to create and perform as long as he's able to. It's clear from all I've learned that his drive and ambition are limitless. We can all be thankful for that. On the other hand, there are so many facets to his personality that I think we'll

all still be learning about him long after the 21st century has passed into history.

Can you recount a few highlights from the book? Just the sketch of funny or truly revealing stories?

I have many favorite parts of the book. A few of these include:

- The musical analyses of Goodbye Yellow Brick Road, Blue Moves, Reg Strikes Back, The One and Made In England.
- The account of Elton's first Russian tour in 1979.
- The aftermath of Elton's surprise marriage announcement in 1984 and how it interwove with his Australian tour that year.
- The description of Elton's performance at Wembley Stadium on June 30, 1984.

• The account of Elton's tour with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in 1986, possibly the most dramatic and memorable tour of his career.

• The background to and description of Elton's gigs with Ray Cooper in South Africa in December 1993.

• How Elton coped with the summer and fall of 1997, when two dear friends, Gianni Versace and Princess Diana, suffered untimely deaths, and how his conduct inspired and instructed.

I read through the review copy, and I was most impressed. I have no doubt it will be a bestseller, Liz. Thanks for your time.

Thanks, George, and everyone else at Hercules for generously spreading the word about His Song!

Elton Shines On Through

'MYSTERY GUEST' ELTON APPEARS ON MTV *By Reggie Zippo*

On October 2, Elton appeared as a mystery guest on MTV's TRL music video program in New York City. Throughout this program, young members of the studio audience were each given the opportunity to ask 2 yes or no questions that would help to determine who was concealed behind a large curtain with a big question mark attached to it. With each question asked, Elton would either say yes or no, but his voice was digitally disguised to sound very deep and sinister, further masking any indication as to his true identity.

In between the Q&A sections, the host introduced the current top music videos. After each video, this host chose a studio audience member to ask any 2 questions as long as the answer could be given with a yes or a no. Some of the questions asked revealed that he was a male solo

artist with no current single on the charts (that will soon be remedied without a doubt).

The participants incorrectly guessed that he was Jon Bon Jovi, Paul McCartney, and even Billy Joel. Periodically, the host gave a few hints to help speed things along, but it was altogether apparent that nearly everyone had no clue as to who was behind the haunting voice. Finally, a female member asked if the mystery guest had a hit song in the 70s with the title "Bennie and the Jets". When Elton said yes, you could feel the gasp of excitement in the air then everyone cheered wildly! The roar of applause and cheers as he walked out from behind the curtain brought a smile to Elton's face.

The female who guessed his identity correctly was awarded a CD shopping spree with Elton across the street at the Virgin Records CD shop. She then asked

Elton if that included shopping with him at some of the finer clothing stores in the New York area! Elton gave her a big hug, but the host said no.

Elton did not perform, but he did provide details about Songs From The West Coast, released the same day. He indicated that the album is receiving rave reviews and that it is the most single album in years that he is excited about, but his true hard-core fans have heard him say those very words with every new album release. When asked if he disliked the fact that some fans do not understand the meaning behind the lyrics, Elton said that as long as they love the songs then that's all that matters. It would have been wonderful if he had been given the opportunity to perform, but the quiz show type setting made for an interesting spin on the usual interview regime.

poster auction

HUGE RARE ELTON JOHN POSTER



Hercules is auctioning an extremely rare promotional Elton John poster/bill for German TV station ZDF. The total size of this item is 2.5m x 3.5 m (approx. 8'2" by 11'5"). It comes in six parts (folded).

This item is not available for sale anywhere. This might be your only chance to get your hand on a huge Elton poster like this one. Hercules will donate proceeds from this auction to the Elton John Aids Foundation.

Hercules had two copies of this rare poster to auction; the first was auctioned via our website at the end of November. We reserved the second copy for readers of The Mag, who may not have access to the internet.

In order to place a bid on this item, you need to send your silent bid to Stephan Heimbecher, Berg-am-Laim-Str. 87, D-81673 Muenchen, Germany. Or fax him on + 49-(0) 89-48900370 by January 15th 2001.

Minimum bid is Euro 50. The highest bid over that amount received by 15th January 2001 will purchase the poster. The winning details will be published in the March 2001 issue of The Mag. Buyers pay actual shipping costs. Mastercard/Visa and Paypal accepted.

Good luck!

A selection of promotional pictures taken to coincide with the release of the new album, *Songs From The West Coast*

*Photographer:
Greg Gorman*





membership matters

Hercules regrets to announce that George Matlock has stepped down as UK and Commercial Affairs Manager of Hercules to focus on other projects. French-speaking manager since 1999, Françoise Linden-Gilles, who translated the French part of the website and the French fanzine supplement, has also stepped down. George was UK manager since 1993 after first finding us in an advert inside Record Collector magazine in 1991. He became Commercial Affairs Manager in 1997.

As well as securing some great interviews for Hercules, including Clive Franks, Roger Pope, Kiki Dee, Nigel

Olsson, and Davey Johnstone among others, George was also responsible for many other projects within Hercules, including numerous UK fan conventions. If anyone wishes to stay in contact with George they can email him at george@eltonfan.net

We would like to thank George for his dedication, enthusiasm and vision for the fan club over the years. We would also like to thank Françoise who brought maturity and a fresh dimension to the way we looked at issues within the fan club, and enabled our French-speaking members to have their very own version of The Mag.

idol



YOUR LETTERS

We always love to hear from you; after all, it is YOUR Elton John fan-club.

If you have anything you would like to share with other Elton fans, then please send your letters to the Editor, Tammi Law (address on page 2), or e-mail tammi@eltonfan.net

Just had to write...

...and pass on my greatest congratulations to Elton on the magnificent album - WELCOME BACK ELTON!

This music takes me back to when I first became an EJ fan in the early 70s, back to the Christmas Concert at the Hammersmith Odeon when I had front row tickets opposite EJ's piano....an unforgettable memory. Well done again and please can we have MORE AND MORE AND MORE of this music!!!

Love and best wishes,
Angela Delaney,
Orpington, Kent.

The reasons for terminating The Mag...

... are intelligible, although I will still miss it. After all, a tangible compilation of Eltonia is incomparable!

Cheryl A. Herman, U.S.A.

YOUR LETTERS

songs from the west coast

VOTING COMPETITION

Tell Us What You Think! by Luca Zerbini, Hercules Italia

Sardinia, Golfo Aranci, Italy: music echoes though one of the most wonderful places on the planet!

It's quite surprising that the sound is not coming from the usual holiday village but from the veranda of a lonely villa dominating the beauty of the bay. The sweet melody immediately links to nature to create an unbelievable atmosphere. Birds "always look for a quiet place to hide": for me, I can feel that's Tavolara Isle! It's just on my right, almost unreal, like it's been created by an artist.

And then technology brings me back to reality, as my cellular phone rings.

Everybody is linking the new sweet music of Songs From The West Coast to their own place, their feelings and emotions.



And we thought it would be interesting to compare opinions, share feelings and make predictions. Now it's your turn!

What is your Top 3?

What's the song you like the least?

What's your overall vote for the new album?

With Elton's new music, there are many new stories and

feelings to share.

And you could be one of our lucky winners, just by telling us YOUR opinions on the tracks on the new album. We have some great and rare prizes to give away. Winners will be chosen at random from all who have entered, after the closing date of 15 December 2001. Winners will be notified by post.

Many Elton John fans have already voted via our website over the past few weeks for their Favourite Top 3 and Least Favourite Song from the new album, and it is very interesting to see the results so far. Now for you, readers of The Mag, we have decided to postpone the closing date of the Songs From the West Coast Competition and give you more time to express your preferences.

Turn on your computer, open your internet connection and go to <http://www.eltonfan.net/sftwc/competition.shtml> and share with us your feelings about the new album. Closing date is 15th December.

Here is how the fans have voted so far:

BEST TOP 3 SONGS FROM SFTWC	LEAST FAVOURITE FROM SFTWC
1) Original Sin	1) Love Her Like Me
2) American Triangle	2) Mansfield
3) Red Shoes	3) Dark Diamond
4) Train	4) Birds
5) Wasteland	5) Emperor
6) Emperor	5) I Want Love
7) I Want Love	5) Wasteland
8) Birds	8) Look Ma No Hands
9) Mansfield	9) Train
10) Dark Diamond	10) Red Shoes
11) Look Ma No Hands	11) American Triangle
12) Love Her Like Me	12) Original Sin
OVERALL SFTWC VOTE: 8.8459	

ELABORATE LIVES OF THE BACKSTAGE SUPERSTARS

Since the advent of the "Superstar" artist within the ranks of the entertainment world, backstage demands of the touring divas, rock idols, and various musical celebrities have ranged from the mundane to the outrageous. Nearly every performer outlines exactly what is expected in each dressing room of each venue before any performance will be delivered. If these requirements are not met precisely, then the artist has the option of bailing out of the concert. For those not privy to the contractual agreements between the artist and the concert venues, a typical fan may think that it surely is not such a difficult task to accommodate these icons of the music industry. The following proves just how wrong this opinion can be.

Individually tailored for each personality, the detailed tour contracts - called "riders" in the industry - contain very specific instructions and feature lists of the foods, beverages, and all other materials that must be provided at each venue. Often, these riders reveal more about the artist than what is generally known by the public. For example, in the 1980s the rock group Van Halen demanded that a very large bowl of M&M candy be placed in their dressing room, but if any brown M&Ms were in the bowl then they would not perform. The same can be said of the Country act Alabama. They will not perform if any live animals are present in the backstage area at any time of day or night of the concert. Shania Twain requires ten pounds of carrots in her dressing room and the Rolling Stones need a pinball machine,

An insight into Elton's DRESSING ROOM DEMANDS

By Reggie S. Zippo

a snooker table and racing video games, among other sporty recreational items.

Now we come to our Elton. His riders are not too terribly unreasonable, but it does require a lot of decorating before Elton will give his stamp of approval. Below is a sampling of the requirements that Elton placed on the venues during "The Elton John One Man Show" tour. Can you imagine just how much more is required if the band is touring with him as well?

Elton's Private Hospitality Room - This room should comfortably hold 10 people. It should have at least two 120 volt A.C. power outlets and one 230 or 208 volt 20 amp single phase supply (for personal, portable air conditioner if needed). It should have private access to a minimum of 1 shower, toilet, and washing facilities, with hot and cold running water and a supply of 12 clean towels. This room must be kept clean and at a comfortable temperature at all times (60 degrees in the summer and 70 degrees in the winter). The Lighting in this room should be adequate for a relaxed atmosphere (i.e., table and floor lamps rather than overhead fluorescent). If this room is a

Locker room, it must be completely draped by 12 noon on the day of the show. This should be carpeted and furnished with 1 six foot sofa, 1 love seat, 2 easy chairs, 2 chairs, 2 table lamps, 2 floor standing lamps, 1 coffee table, 2 six foot banquet tables (covered with white linen table cloths), 4 large green plants, 1 large arrangement of colored flowers (NO Chrysanthemums, Lillies, Carnations, or Daisies). In addition, this room should be supplied with 4 large San Pellegrino bottled water or 12 small bottles, 4 large Evian or 18 small bottles of water, 8 Diet Coke (MUST BE IN CANS), 4 Diet 7-Up and/or Diet Sprite, 1 pint of fresh squeezed orange juice, 1 pint of fresh 2% milk, 1 hot water kettle, assortment of teas, coffee, sugar, uncut fresh lemons to include English Breakfast Tea, and Equal brand sweetener. Please be aware all drinks need to be iced down. We will use approximately 40 kilos of ice on a show day. The room should be set up for 4 people and include 1 fresh fruit basket (the fruit left whole), ABSOLUTELY NO COLD CUTS, 6 cups, saucers, plates (stoneware), knives, forks, spoons (no plastic), 12 drinking glasses (no plastic), 24 large plastic cups, 2 lined trash cans, and 2 bottle openers.

Elton's rider contains many more revealing details, too numerous to print in this issue, but one can only imagine the lengths a concert promoter must go through just to pamper the weary traveling Superstar.

Reference: The Smoking Gun Archive website

SMALL ADS

...are free to Hercules members.
Send yours to the Editor, Tammi
Law (address on page 2), or
e-mail her at tammi@eltonfan.net

MASSIVE EJ COLLECTION

30 years of collection includes –
Vinyl, Tapes, CDs, Videos, Various
Memorabilia including Autographs,
Promo Items, Tour Programmes,
Books, Magazines, Papers, Posters,
Tour T-shirts, Gold and Silver Discs
and Rarities.

Send SAE or IRCS to Mike, 6
Seymour Road, Mile End, Stockport,
Cheshire, SK2 6ES, United Kingdom.
You will not be disappointed!

BROWSE COLLECTIBLES

You are able to browse
through Reggie Zippo's Amazing
Collectibles at
<http://members.tripod.com/reggiezippo>
Reggie has a lot of cool and
unusual movie, TV, music, sports,
and various collectible memorabilia
to choose from. Of course there are
Elton John items as well. Reggie is
looking forward to hearing from you!

WANTED:

A copy of Elton's interview from
BBC's "Friday night with Jonathan
Ross" on VHS. Please e-mail details
to suzymfisher@yahoo.co.uk
Thanks. Susan Fisher, UK.

ELTON COLLECTIBLES FOR SALE

For a complete list e-mail Kelly
at: ktmslman@kfc.com

PLEASE REMEMBER...

ALWAYS state your membership no.
if you send a cheque to Hercules, or
pay into one of the Club accounts.

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

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

LYRIC QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1: Cry to Heaven. 2: Go it Alone.
- 3: Lovesick. 4: Salvation.
- 5: Crazy Water. 6: Friends. 7: Saint
- 8: The Last Song 9: High-flying Bird
- 10: Town of Plenty. 11: Sails
- 12: The Wide-eyed and Laughing

TOUR DATES

DATE CITY VENUE

ELTON JOHN & BAND TOUR 2001

07-Dec-2001	Fresno, CA	Selland Arena
08-Dec-2001	Las Vegas, NV	MGM Grand Garden
09-Dec-2001	San Diego, CA	Cox Arena
12-Dec-2001	Los Angeles, CA	Universal Amphitheatre
13-Dec-2001	Los Angeles, CA	Paramour

ELTON JOHN & BILLY JOEL FACE-TO-FACE TOUR 2002

13-Jan-2002	Washington, DC	MCI Center
18-Jan-2002	Washington, DC	MCI Center
22-Jan-2002	Boston, MA	Fleet Center
24-Jan-2002	Boston, MA	Fleet Center
04-Feb-2002	Hartford, CT	Hartford Civic Center
06-Feb-2002	Hartford, CT	Hartford Civic Center
13-Feb-2002	Philadelphia, PA	First Union Center
15-Feb-2002	Philadelphia, PA	First Union Center
17-Feb-2002	Philadelphia, PA	First Union Center

ELTON JOHN & BAND TOUR 2002

17-Apr-2002	Adelaide, Australia	Entertainment Centre
19-Apr-2002	Melbourne, Australia	Rod Laver Arena
20-Apr-2002	Melbourne, Australia	Rod Laver Arena
23-Apr-2002	Brisbane, Australia	Brisbane Entertainment Ctr
24-Apr-2002	Brisbane, Australia	Brisbane Entertainment Ctr
26-Apr-2002	Sydney, Australia	Sydney Entertainment Ctr
27-Apr-2002	Sydney, Australia	Sydney Entertainment Ctr
29-Apr-2002	Sydney, Australia	Sydney Entertainment Ctr
28-May-2002	Paris, France	Bercy
31-May-2002	Copenhagen, Denmark	Parken Stadium
01-June-2002	Oslo, Norway	Oslo Spektrum
02-June-2002	Oslo, Norway	Oslo Spektrum
04-June-2002	Helsinki, Finland	t.b.a.
05-June-2002	Helsinki, Finland	t.b.a.
07-June-2002	Gothenburg, Sweden	Scandinavium
08-June-2002	Stockholm, Sweden	Globen
10-June-2002	Frankfurt, Germany	Festhalle
13-June-2002	Kiel, Germany	Ostseehalle
14-June-2002	Berlin, Germany	Max-Schmeling-Halle
16-June-2002	Erfurt, Germany	Messehalle
20-June-2002	Duesseldorf, Germany	Rheinhalle
22-June-2002	Stuttgart, Germany	Schleyerhalle
23-June-2002	Munich, Germany	Olympiahalle

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

2001/2

Photograph: Greg Gorman

