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Elton hosts White Tie and Tiara Ball

EXCLUSIVE!
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sound engineer
Clive Franks

Elton speaks to
press at Hylands
House

UK Tour review

Elton visits
Diana's Grave

PLUS:
News, Trivia,
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Letters & more!



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SEPTEMBER 2000



*Hercules is a registered member
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FAN CLUB INFORMATION

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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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Front Cover:
Elton on stage earlier this year, with the large video screen wall behind him.

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FROM THE EDITOR...

Welcome to the September issue of The Mag. At the time of writing, Elton is taking a well-deserved six week holiday at his villa in the South of France. During the last show before his holiday, at Edinburgh Castle in Scotland, Elton told the crowd "This is my 140th Solo show." Which is why we think he deserves his holiday!

In this issue, we are delighted to bring you the first part of an exclusive interview with Elton's long-time sound engineer, Clive Franks. Clive spoke to Hercules during Elton's UK Solo tour in July; and be sure to check out the next instalment of this interview in our December issue.

Many of us have been lucky enough to see Elton live this year - he has taken his Solo Tour across the USA, and then extensively into Europe. Some of us are beginning to forget what it's like to see Elton perform with the band! However, there are two very special shows with the band scheduled to take place in New York, in October. These will be recorded for both a television broadcast, and also a live CD, to be released later this year. See our News section for more details.

Also, more Solo dates have been added for later this year. See our Tour Dates listing on page 27 for full details.

For those of you who missed Elton's shows, there are several reports in this issue - an overview of the UK tour, a personal report by two fans who handed Elton a special gift on stage in Germany, and some more comments on our Letters to Editor page. And if you DID

manage to see any of Elton's shows, I'm sure these reports will bring back happy memories of great concerts.

We are all looking forward to Elton's new studio album, the first for a few years. It is being recorded in Atlanta this month (September), but as yet, there is no word on a release date. We'll keep you informed, and as soon as we know we'll put an announcement on our website, www.eltonfan.com. In fact, the news section of our website gets updated daily, so it is a good place to keep up-to-date with current Elton-related events.

Some of us may be worried that Elton may be working too hard, but as he told the press during the UK leg of the Solo Tour, he has never felt better. Read one of the interviews with Elton on pages 8 and 9 of this issue.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of The Mag, as it is my last issue as Editor for a while. I've decided to take a break from the demanding role as Chief Editor, to spend some time doing other things. I will continue to contribute articles to The Mag though - I'm not disappearing altogether! I've asked Hercules member and Watford Watch reporter, David Wright, to take over the role as Chief Editor from the December issue, so you'll see a new face on this page. For now, please continue to send your contributions to me (address at top of page 2) as normal, but this will change from December onwards.

Thank you for all your letters and contributions over the past three years.

Happy reading!

Tanni



Photo: Jimmie Collins



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

ELTON VISITS PRINCESS DIANA'S GRAVE FOR FIRST TIME

Three years after his tribute to Princess Diana moved a nation to tears, Elton was close to them himself as he made his first visit to Diana's grave, on July 23rd.



It left Elton visibly emotional and often sombre - but upbeat, too. He said: "I'm so glad I came. It's very peaceful and lovely, restful and so optimistic." Elton, a close friend of the princess, spent nearly three hours at her final resting place, during the weekend of his nearby Castle Ashby shows in Northamptonshire.

It marked a final softening of his once bitter view of her island grave on the Althorp estate. Two years ago he said: "I just feel sad that she's on that island - it's as if she's all alone again." Elton and his partner David were given a tour of the estate by Diana's brother Earl Spencer. In virtual silence, they strolled together along a gravel path surrounding Diana's grave before visiting an exhibition dedicated to her.

As stunned visitors to the estate looked on, Elton paused at a temple in her memory and stood for several minutes reading messages and floral tributes left for her. Then he briefly separated from his partner and the earl in front of the monument and bowed his head as if in prayer.

Elton and David, accompanied by Diana's brother, Earl Spencer



His friendship with Diana dated from 1981, when they met at Prince Andrew's 21st birthday party. At her funeral Elton famously sang his reworked version of *Candle In The Wind*. It raised millions for good causes when he gave the profits from record sales to the Diana, Princess of Wales, Memorial Fund.

And Elton allowed himself a smile when he caught sight of the score, signed by himself and bought at auction last year for £25,300, in a converted Althorp stable block now housing Diana exhibits and film memories.

There were smiles too, when Elton and David viewed a gallery

of Diana's dresses. David looked at the gowns in amazement and said: "She certainly knew how to wear a frock." But inside the exhibition Elton avoided the attention of visitors, smiling and quietly moving away. And outside, where nearly 100 onlookers burst into spontaneous applause, he politely declined to sign autographs or chat, saying: "I'm sorry, this is a private visit."

Two years ago any Elton visit would have seemed improbable. Attacking the decision to bury Diana at Althorp, he said: "It's none of my business, but if I was going to bury her anywhere I would have liked it to have been in Westminster Abbey. People could say prayers or whatever they wanted. It would be very easy for the boys to go and see her. I think it is very hard on them to go and visit their mother."

But a new era began in July when Elton and David arrived at Althorp in their chauffeur-driven car. They had lunch with the 36-year-old earl and his girlfriend Caroline Freud, before the poignant pilgrimage. It left Elton singing the praises of Diana's last resting place at her ancestral home. He said: "It's wonderful what has been done here."

PAVARTTI AND GEORGE

George Michael performed "Don't Let the Sun..." duet with tenor Luciano Pavarotti at the annual charity concert on June 6 in Modena, Italy.

CHARTED SUCCESS

Elton is among those 17 artists with a minimum 1 chart entry per year in the German album charts between 1990 and 1999. Others include Chris Rea, Madonna, Joe Cocker, Mike Oldfield, Queen, and Mariah Carey. Elton is also among those 7 artists with a minimum 1 chart entry per year in the German singles charts between 1990 and 1999.

EJ NEWS BULLETS...



HERCULES ON THE RADIO

Our UK manager, George Matlock, was on BBC Radio Northamptonshire, July 21, as well as on BBC Radio Essex with Hercules Francais' Fran, July 15, ahead of the Hylands House show. Tour promoter Marshall Arts were generous to provide 2 front-row tickets to see Elton at Castle Ashby to radio listeners in a Hercules competition. Radio Essex also attended a UK Convention, and broadcast Hercules members singing live "I Guess That's Why They Call it the Blues".

SATURDAY NIGHT'S

NOT ALRIGHT FOR FIGHTIN'

A Canadian Elton fan was awarded \$500,000 (£330,850) after being assaulted as she defended Elton's honour during a concert, reported the National Post newspaper, July 5. Shelley Arthur was at a concert in Vancouver when she told Jerry Wechlin to stop shouting abusive comments at Elton. After a scuffle, Shelley suffered injuries to her shoulder that have prevented her from working since the incident at the Sept 1995 concert.

PARTY IN THE PARK

The Backstreet Boys joined Elton on stage at July 9, "Party in the Park" at London's Hyde Park in front of over 100,000 music fans, and 43 different acts, to benefit the Prince's Trust Appeal. As he got down to play, there was no sound! Elton gave up and walked off stage. Rainwater was to blame. After the technicians worked their magic, Elton returned and performed with the Boys "Philadelphia Freedom", "Friends Never Say Goodbye", and two Boys' tracks: new song "I'll be the One" and hit "I Want It That Way".

PUPPET ON A STRING?

Watford FC manager Graham Taylor proved more valuable than his boss, club chairman Elton, in an auction of Spitting Image puppets. Taylor was ridiculed at the hands of the television satirical puppeteers in the 1990s while England manager. His puppet fetched £1,472 - more than twice the expected price of £600. "Elton" also sold for more than his predicted £700, at a final price of £1,141.

ELTON & BAND

"THE GREATEST HITS - LIVE"

Elton will perform two historic concerts with the band at New York's Madison Square Garden on October 20/21, 2000. The shows will be entitled "The Greatest Hits - Live", and they will be recorded for both a television broadcast and a live album which is expected to be released November 13, 2000. Apart from Elton and the band (including Davey Johnstone, Guy Babylon, Bob Birch, Nigel Olsson, John Jorgenson, Curt Bisquera and John Mahon) fans should expect a few special guests on stage as well. Note that these shows will mark Elton's 50th and 51st performance at world-famous Madison Square Garden. Tickets went on sale on August 21.

THE RICH MAN SLEEPS.

TIME WE PUT A FLAME TORCH...

Owner of Raby Castle in County Durham, Lord Barnard, revealed he had only heard a few songs by Elton ahead of the concert staged on July 29. He said: "I've heard very little of his music but despite that I'm looking forward to this concert. Judging from the little I have listened to I feel sure I will enjoy the Raby Castle event very much."

FILMS INSTEAD?!

Elton told OK! Magazine why he decided to move into film-making - because making records and touring the world is becoming boring. In an interview for the celebrity magazine in June, Elton said producing his first picture, *Women Talking Dirty*, for Rocket Pictures was like having a three-year pregnancy (!)

Elton said he felt compelled to set up his film company: "You know I'm 53, making records, doing videos and going on tour, which is very nice, but it gets boring," he said. "I've always loved film, and making them is extremely difficult. It's like having a three-year pregnancy. I love the challenge, I love creativity and I love the arts." Elton also said after giving up alcohol a decade ago, he had to drop his "hot-headed" persona and become a different person. He described his seven years with partner David as the first balanced relationship he has been in, and he said: "I have everything I could possibly want in life."

OLD FRIENDS

Just six months after reuniting with drummer Nigel Olsson, Elton met and embraced former drummer, Roger Pope, at his June 7, concert at Broadlands, Hampshire, England.



Elton and Roger Pope

HERCULES WEBCAM

Hercules Webcam came to our website on July 7, featuring "hardcore" Elton fans enjoying themselves at Stephan Heimbecher's Munich apartment.

EJ NEWS BULLETS...



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

RECORD COMPANY RULING

A federal judge at US District Court in San Francisco ruled in favour of major record companies and issues a preliminary injunction against Napster, which allegedly offers free downloads of copyrighted material. Protest website Camp Chaos attacks the record labels with a cartoon titled "Napster Bad, Money Good," in which animated recording artists - one of them resembling Elton - sing the lyrics "Sue All the World" to the music from "We Are the World".

WRONG SPELLING!

Hercules has learned of a new release compilation available in Poland. "Elton John - Greatest Hits" on Selles Records, is a CD with selections from GYBR, Honky Chateau, and Don't Shoot Me. Duration 61 mins. Cat. SELL 1219. The item reputedly has a couple of mistakes on the sleeve. One song is called Edelberry Wine and another Saturday Night's Alright For Evening!

ELTON INSPIRES TENNIS PAIR

Wimbledon Tennis officials intervene twice to stop Alexandra Stevenson and her mother expanding on claims of racism in the sport. The mother and daughter team say they were inspired to go public after the way Elton counter-attacked a Scottish priest over the morality of homosexuality.

WHITE TIE & TIARA PHOTOS

OK! Magazine published a myriad of great photos of Elton and high society playing it up at Elton's White Tie & Tiara Ball on July 6, held at his Windsor mansion. The editions are numbers 223, of July 28, and 224 of Aug. 4.

NEW RECORDINGS

The cast recording album of "Aida" was released on June 15 by Buena Vista Records.

"Aida" actress Sherie Rene Scott's debut album "Sherie Rene ... Men I've Had" is out now featuring songs by Elton, Randy Newman and Pete Townshend. Sherie, one of the performers during the "Broadway Cares" concert April 3, selected: Mona Lisas And Mad Hatters, Come Down In Time, Midnight Creeper, and Honky Cat.

Bernie Taupin has written the title track for the new album of the Young Dubliners, titled "Red" (Higher Octave Music). Meanwhile, Elton fans await Bernie teaming up with Elton again for a new studio album planned to be recorded in September in Atlanta.

According to Entertainment Weekly, Shawn Mullins is in LA recording "Beneath the velvet Sun", a new album set for October release. The "Lillaby" singer duets with Elton on a new version of "Border Song".

The "Road to El Dorado" film featuring Elton songs written by Sir Tim Rice was released in British cinemas on August 4, several months after the US release. The soundtrack album was released in the UK on July 11.

"THANK YOU FOR ELTON JOHN"

Jazz giant Jimmy Scott entertained at London's the Jazz Café, with rendition of "Sorry Seems to be the Hardest Word", on July 19. "Thank you, England, for Elton John," said the Scott, in his reinterpretation, which the UK press described as a "heart-stopping soliloquy."

SHORT TROUSERS!

Elton wore shorts during his encore at Margam Park, South Wales, July 19 - but kept the show uncut!

CONTROVERSY

Elton publicly accused Cardinal Thomas Winning, the highest Catholic priest in Scotland and Archbishop of Glasgow, of ignorance over homosexuality on June 15. Elton was responding to an article by the Cardinal in *The Spectator* in which he said "gay sex is wrong, because such behaviour is not good for the human person". Elton in a letter in the next issue of the magazine wrote: "Cardinal Winning, and his ignorance, is totally representative of why people are turning away from the Church. I am astonished to be told by Cardinal Winning that my sexuality is not good for me. He argues that homosexuality 'ensnares them in a lifestyle that can never respond to deepest longings of the human heart'. From what practical perspective does he form this point of view?"

Elton said: "As a gay man I am perfectly happy with my sexuality and my life. Like the Cardinal I, too, have hope for our country. Over the years, Britain has proved itself to be a more tolerant and open-minded place to live. Gone is the outdated and ill-informed notion that homosexuality is a question of choice. The reality is that homosexuals have no choice - and no amount of hectoring or hypnosis can make us change." A spokesman for the Cardinal replied Elton's comments were "eminently predictable".

ELTON'S PHOTO IS THE BIGGEST!

Elton accompanied Lulu to the celebrity unveiling of a giant photo of himself, in London's Oxford Street on June 12. The panoramic frieze by Sam Taylor-Wood spans the entire facade of Selfridges store and depicts 21 famous celebrities.



by David Wright

One of the most interesting developments for Elton John fans in recent times has been the launch of Elton's official website, eltonjohn.com.

As one would expect the Emporium offers most CDs and videos you probably already have. Interestingly it offers most tribute and compilation albums Elton has featured on, useful information for the completist. With a mouse-mat, t-shirts, candles galore and a pair of sunglasses for a mere \$260 there is plenty for every credit card.

A number of fans have had the previously undreamt of opportunity of backstage hospitality, with a few being lucky enough to meet with the man himself. These events have taken place at Woburn Abbey, Broadlands and Chatsworth House in England plus Hamburg, Cologne and Munich in Germany. Whilst Elton was only able to greet fans at Woburn and Cologne in Europe, for the others the opportunity to meet Frank Presland, Clive Franks and see behind the scenes was a pleasure. EJ was also able to make it into two of the Hospitality Rooms in the USA, shortly after the launch of the Rocket.

Recently the downloads section has been extended with more and more photos, exclusive PC wallpapers and concert footage.

Fans have also been able to secure premium tickets through the Membership section of the Website, which means an excellent seat for the normal price, or promotional tickets, meaning seats as good as fourth row for free. Some of these free promotional tickets have not been so good though - it varies from venue to venue, and some members in the USA were disappointed when their promotional seats were way back from the stage. We think they

are allocated depending on how well the tickets have sold for that venue - if they've got good ones left, Rocket members can have them - but if they've all sold, then it's tough.

Tickets for some future shows may be made available to Rocket Members before any other outlet, something we must all welcome.

The happiest fans of all must be the couples from Philadelphia and Florida who won trips to England to see Elton perform. Fans in Europe are still awaiting their first chance to be competition winners, as all competitions so far have been for American members.

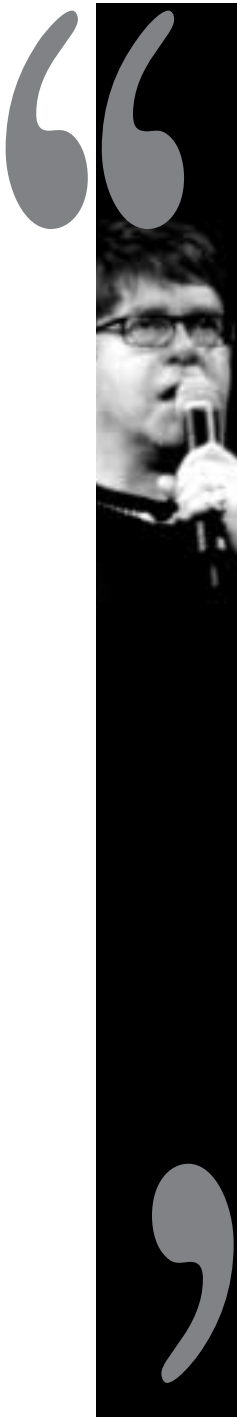
On top of all this is the joy of playing a few chords of Benny

and the Jets with the skillful movement of your mouse!

All this may have been soured by the chaos surrounding the sale of tickets for the Greatest Hits Live shows at Madison Square Gardens. Many fans in the US and elsewhere spent a weekend trying to buy tickets in vain. Too few tickets, only 200, and technical problems left many people angry and frustrated.

Rocket have apologised but at the time of writing it remains to be seen how they will make amends, though tickets for a warm-up show at Wilkes-Barre may provide the answer.

We'll keep you updated about future happenings on eltonjohn.com....



In his own words...

Elton spoke to the UK press at Hylands House, 15 July, just before going on stage to perform his Solo show. Here we bring you the best parts of the interview.

As Elton paces round a backstage dressing room, he casts his eye over a choice of 30 Versace suits hanging from a rail and smiles: "I'm like a Duracell bunny these days - my pacemaker's working really well."

It is exactly a year since heart surgeons fitted Elton with a pacemaker after he was taken ill on a plane. "It's like a little computer in there," he says. "There's only one problem - I can't walk through airport security gates. I have to be frisked instead." His eyes twinkle. "A really good old frisk. When I was ill last year there was no build-up. It just suddenly happened. I felt dizzy."

"It was the day before David Beckham married Victoria. I was supposed to play in Italy that night, but I got very giddy at the lunch table and had to cancel it. The doctor said I'd probably got sunstroke or something."

"I came back to England and was going off to David and Victoria's wedding in Ireland when I had a very bad attack on the plane. I had three days of tests and eventually they found out what was wrong. I had the operation a couple of days later. My grandmother had a pacemaker for a long time and she was fine with it, so I wasn't

scared. Now I feel very healthy. I even play tennis five times a week for at least an hour at a time."

Outside, around the stage, the crowd is building. Elton is unfazed. "My mother is 75 and going strong," he says, as he looks through dozens of pairs of shoes. "So maybe I'll reach 100 like the Queen Mum. The first time I performed for the Queen Mum I went to dinner at her Royal Lodge in Windsor Great Park, sat at the piano and played," he says matter-of-factly.

"Afterwards I danced with her and she said, 'I suppose you meet some unusual people in your line of work'. I thought, 'My God! Here I am dancing with the Queen Mother. You could certainly say I meet people out of the ordinary!'"

There is less than half an hour to go until he's on stage. "I've been working non-stop all year and I'm looking forward to having six weeks off," he says. "The only place I can relax is the house in Nice. It's a magical house, but I can't lie on a beach. I get too restless. I do enjoy some quiet nights in watching TV with David though."

"We'll have guests down while we're there," Elton continues. "I'll get to see them for a whole week at a time for a change." So now



Photo: Andy Thorpe

that he and David have found such stability, would they consider adopting children? "I'm too old and too set in my ways to consider it," says Elton, now narrowing his costume choice to a purple suit with emerald-encrusted lapels or a fluorescent orange jacket. "Kids are a huge responsibility. I could give a kid a great home, but I don't think I could give him or her the attention they need."

Elton is famous for throwing some of the social calendar's hottest parties, but when the partying is over, Elton is once more the quiet man. "I don't hang out that much with really famous people," he shrugs. "Though, having said that, Sting is probably the person I love the most. I'd do anything for him. If he said I had to get on a plane and fly to America now to do a charity show I'd do it."

"I also care about people in pain - like Robbie Williams and Whitney Houston. I'll have been sober for ten years on July 29 but addiction is a terrible thing and you'll only get better when you're ready. I've helped Robbie two or three times - he's been to stay at my house."

"Addiction is about running away from things you can't face up to. My shyness and fear of

confrontation were heightened by my drug-taking. Nowadays I won't even have a glass of Chablis because I'm a very compulsive person. Still, it's terrific that Robbie is now in the peak of form."

Asked about his Solo tour, Elton said "Just me and a piano. It's great not to have the restrictions of a band with you. I've never played solo before, but I love it because I can do what I want without rehearsals. I sang to a backing tape at the Party In The Park, which was a nightmare. But I can understand with all those acts why most of us had to do it. I like to play live. It sharpens me artistically." As a lot of us know, the weather at most of his recent European shows has been awful.

"Playing in a tent in Liverpool with an orchestra was the warmest I've been on this tour," he laughs. "It was the first time I'd sweated. Otherwise I've been freezing for my art. I've even had chilblains. The worst weather was at Chatsworth and I was convinced no one would turn up. We went through hail and fog getting there - and so did the audience."

"In Germany I was doing Your Song and the heavens opened up. I started laughing because no one was paying attention, they were

all scurrying for pac-a-macs. Then the flexi-glass ceiling over the stage gave way and it was like someone had thrown four buckets of water over me. I was drenched for the whole show."

Elton is proud that he currently has the Number One and Two shows on New York's Broadway with Lion King and the newly-opened Aida. "Tim Rice and I wrote Aida from scratch," he says. "It was hammered by some critics, but I'm very proud of it and I've seen it ten times."

"I'm also going to be doing a 'one night only' at Madison Square Garden in New York," he says excitedly. "I'm hoping to have people like Ronan Keating and Mary Jane Blige with me. It will be a TV special which we'll record in October for transmission in November. We'll be doing it around the time of what would have been John Lennon's 60th birthday. It will also have been 25 years since he and I played together there. That turned out to be his last performance."

But Elton is also a believer in new talent. "I like Macy Gray," he says. "She's like James Brown on stage. I like Moby and Fatboy Slim too. I dance to them in the shower."

UK TOUR REVIEW

*the UK Solo Tour 2000,
reviewed by Hercules
Editor Tammi Law*



Photo: Andy Thorpe

Welcome to the British summer" was Elton's first joke after he started with *Your Song* at Chatsworth House on June 3, 2000. But the rain which threatened the entire UK summer open-air Stately Homes tour didn't dampen anyone's spirits when Elton was on stage. Beforehand, yes maybe, and afterwards, as we all struggled through the mud and rain on our way to the car-parks. But while Elton was performing on stage? We couldn't have been happier.

I was fortunate enough to attend 13 of the UK solo shows this year. After the brilliant Leeds Castle concerts in 1999, I couldn't wait to do it all again. I won't go into every show in detail, but just tell you some of the highlights of the tour which have stayed in my memory.

Firstly, Elton himself. Looking fit and well, the strength of his



- it was only chest-high with no press/photographers section in front of it, so when it came to the point in the set when we were able to storm the stage, it was easy to shake hands with Elton. He did the infamous autograph-sweep at every venue, and often 'high-fived' the sections of the crowd who had outstretched arms, as he ran past the front of the stage. Apparently, these lower stages, without the press-box in front of them, were built at the request of Elton himself, who wanted more access to the fans to be able to "meet" us.

Hercules organised a few meeting places before some of the shows - it was really nice to meet

"...when I saw you very much alive, in the English rain again"

voice was stunning. It just seems to get better and stronger, and I noticed he held the notes for longer than last year. His mood changed noticeably from venue to venue. Sometimes he was subdued and really "into" the music, other times he was having an absolute party and messing about like a teenager. It was amazing how his mood transferred itself onto the reaction of the audience.

The height of the purpose-built stage was particularly good



Photo: Jimmie Collins

up with old friends to have a chat about "all things Elton". Entertainment was provided at Chatsworth in the form of live sound-a-like Dieter Graham, who was commissioned especially for the Hercules get-together. And in the pub before the show at Hylands House, BBC Radio Essex sent their live reporter to broadcast the events leading up to the concert - including a live rendition of "I Guess That's Why They Call It The Blues" performed by members of Hercules. Oh dear!

An overview report of the tour wouldn't be complete without mentioning the impact that eltonjohn.com has had. The Hospitality Rooms were organised very well at three of the concerts, Woburn Abbey, Broadlands and Castle Ashby. I attended all three, and the obvious highlight was meeting Elton (albeit VERY briefly) at Woburn, just minutes before the show started. The other two events were interesting and enjoyable too - with the chance to chat to Elton's 'team', including the infamous Clive Franks. The best part for me was the chance to see backstage in these open-air venues - lorries and cabling everywhere! I was struck by how basic a lot of it is - when he runs out on stage, Elton first has to

climb up what is basically a metal step-ladder! In hindsight, I suppose I'd always imagined plush extravagancies, with red carpet and everything that goes with it.

We learned some interesting facts too; it takes a large team of people three days to erect the stage - therefore there are basically TWO entire stages which leapfrog each other from venue to venue. Elton has been using his Yamaha grand piano for the European tour, known as the 'A' piano. This is the piano which he used for Princess Diana's funeral, and is his favourite. There is another one, exactly the same, known as the 'B' piano, which Elton doesn't like as much. This is used if he needs to do a special appearance in another country, and they can't transport the 'A' piano quickly enough.

Frank Presland was in attendance at most shows too, and made the effort to meet and speak to many of us. Before several of the shows, he mingled with the fans in front of the stage, and made a point of saying hello to the regulars. After the years of distant displeasure from previous management, it was nice to meet such a genuine man, who seemed to be enjoying himself as much as we were.

Elton seemed pleased to see the Hercules banners in the crowd every night, and made a point of waving at the Hercules fans whenever he saw one. Personally, the best bits for me were the times when Elton obviously recognised me. At the Hyde Park show (my last), when he saw me, he pointed and smiled, and said "Hello, you!!" and several times during the tour I got a "thumbs up" when he saw me. I have yet to come down to earth....!

The Set List basically remained the same throughout the entire tour. There were plenty of "crowd pleasers" for the casual fan, and a few less well-known songs, which I actually prefer to hear. It's difficult to say which song was the best; I can only comment on the ones which made a particular impact on me - I loved to hear Harmony, and the ever-brilliant Bennie & The Jets. And oh dear, yes there were tears during the heavily nostalgic Someone Saved My Life Tonight, which was my favourite record during my teens.

Interestingly, Take Me To The Pilot and Empty Garden were dropped a couple of times. Indeed, during the whole UK tour, these were the only songs which sometimes changed in the set. At Hylands House he left them out all together on the Saturday night,



Photo: Jimmie Collins



Photo: D Houston



Photo: Andy Thorpe

and at the second night at Castle Ashby, he replaced them both with Song For Guy. The first time this happened, at Hylands House, a crowd of us were down the front of the stage, and started shouting "Where's The Pilot?!" which made Elton laugh. He just looked at us, laughed and shook his head. At the next venue, I took the opportunity to ask Clive Franks whether this sudden change in the Set List was pre-decided by Elton, and he said no, that Elton actually decides when he's on stage, depending on how tired his voice is. It certainly keeps Clive on his toes!

The weather was good at Hyde Park, the only London show, and stayed sunny the whole time Elton was on stage. As Elton himself commented, it certainly made a change from the rest of the tour! The main difference between this show and the previous UK gigs was the size and position of the stage itself.

The Route of Kings venue in Hyde Park has been built to accommodate several acts throughout the summer of 2000, so it wasn't Elton's own purpose-built stage. It was therefore much higher, and much further away than we have been used to. In fact, there was a black cage-type barrier preventing us from getting any closer than 20 feet (c. 7 metres) to Elton himself. Those of us who had got used to shaking his hand, and receiving autographs during the show were a bit disappointed - but then we have been spoilt by the unusually small stages of the recent tour.

I was sitting near to Elton's mum, Sheila, who appeared to be

having a great time. She was singing, dancing and clapping along with the Hercules members in the audience. In fact, she was the first person on her feet to applaud Elton at the end of Empty Garden! It was great to see.

FOR ME, THE BEST ASPECTS OF THE TOUR:

The low stage (more please!!).
Elton's strong performances.
Shaking hands with Elton every night.

The fun and camaraderie of being with other fans, who have all become great friends.

FOR ME, THE WORST ASPECT OF THE TOUR:

Security not letting us storm the stage until the show's nearly over. Well, we could write a book on this one. We know they are only acting on instructions, but WHO do these instructions come from? Elton himself? Over recent years, I've heard rumours that it IS Elton who issues these orders prior to each show. But then we hear from other sources inside Elton's team that he LOVES it when we're all down the front, partying along with him. So what's the answer? This is my last great burning question of being an Elton fan.

As a final note, I'd like to thank Elton for a fantastic summer. We have had a truly brilliant time, and we're very grateful that you put so much effort into bringing us so much pleasure. More please!!

With special thanks to: Dave Wilson, Sharon Doran-Thorpe, Crispin Hunt of Marshall Arts, Lynne Dicks and Andy Thorpe for making the tour so enjoyable and successful for me and other Hercules members.



Hercules members enjoying themselves at the front of the crowd at Chatsworth House

**UK Stately Homes
SOLO TOUR 2000
Set List**

Your Song

The Greatest Discovery

Skyline Pigeon
(1st leg of tour)

Someone Saved My Life Tonight
(2nd leg of tour)

Border Song

Daniel

Harmony

Honky Cat

Rocket Man

Tiny Dancer

Philadelphia Freedom

Nikita

Sacrifice

Sorry Seems To Be
The Hardest Word

I Guess That's Why They
Call It The Blues

Ticking

Carla/Etude

Tonight

Burn Down The Mission

The One

Blue Eyes

Empty Garden
(not 15 or 23 July)

Take Me to the Pilot
(not 15 or 23 July)

Song For Guy
(23 July only)

Crocodile Rock

Don't Let The Sun
Go Down On Me

Circle of Life

Bennie And The Jets

Candle In The Wind

SIR ELTON

reviewed by Wayne Martin

For the casual fan, there is no better book on the life and career of Sir Elton John than this. However, for any serious fan this "updated" re-issue is a waste. Mr. Norman never did appear to have his heart in writing the original and over nine years later all he has managed to add is about a half dozen pages of quotes from Elton's stepmother Edna Dwight, with whom he secured an interview, following the death of Elton's father Stanley. Mrs. Dwight's reflections, including a picture and some letters between father and son, are very interesting. They shed a very different light on her late husband's relationship with Elton from the version Elton has given through the years. But that's it.

Mr. Norman has come up with NOTHING on Elton's breakup with longtime manager John Reid. He merely includes what has been reported in the tabloid press. (Mr. Norman's idea of research?) While this story is still evolving, as any industry insider will tell you, it's dynamite. A book in and of itself. An author with the ego of Philip Norman's should be ashamed for releasing an updated version without including the REAL story of what Reid has done. But then again, this is the same author who released the book in it's original form without including any information on Elton's multiple addictions that nearly cost him his life. Everyone in the business was fully aware of the situation at the time, yet Mr. Norman's reaction was one of total shock, learning of the condition when Elton went public after the book's initial release.

The book in it's first printing, while giving a good overview of Elton's life and career was riddled with errors, including misquotes, wrong dates and fabrications. (In



particular, events pertaining to Elton's career in the U.S.) These errors were made known at the time, to both author and publisher. As far as I can tell, NONE have been corrected.

As for Elton's quote "He's got me spot on", that the publisher is so fond of including in ads, well, Elton did say this. However, Elton was referring to what Mr. Norman describes as "Elton's little moments", not the book as a whole. At the time he invited Philip Norman to his London residence for tea, Elton had not yet read the entire book. He said at the time that he was only half way through it. Elton is also on record as being very angry that Mr. Norman took what was intended to be a private discussion and included the transcript as an additional chapter in the paperback editions that followed. Ironically, it's the only accurate chapter Mr. Norman's tome has.

This is all truly disappointing. At 581 pages, and as the title itself promises, this should have been "The Definitive" Sir Elton John bio. Unfortunately, it is not.

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. They should have had a picture of Dolly's face
As she drove across country
2. For open crypts to silence
Nylon knots to sway by prayer
3. There's long boats in the harbour
Which arrive there every hour.
4. Winter's heavy and partly cloudy
And the snowfall leaves the tracks that catch a few
5. We can build a bridge between us
But the empty space remains
6. There were white sails on the water
For the crippled on the beach
7. If I couldn't hear your secrets
My ears would both be sealed
8. Although your friends could see I'm dying
Slowly from the knife you left in me
9. Due to natural causes she became despondent
And she tried to leave
10. I'll take my wounded pride
I'll take it on the chin
11. You had a scent for scandal
Well here's my middle finger
12. Non commercial native
It's tattooed in your veins.

Clive Franks (right), with George Matlock at Hylands House, with Elton's stage in the background.



Elton's sound engineer Clive Franks talks to Hercules' George Matlock in the first of a three-part exclusive interview.

It's not every day this cultured and profound technician provides an interview opportunity. In fact, after 28 years on the road as Elton's tour sound engineer, and producer of three Elton albums he's only ever given three interviews.

So understand Hercules' pride that Clive Franks, who in his own words doesn't seek fame and likes to stay in the shadows, agreed to shine and not fade away. By his own admission the three albums he produced, *A Single Man*, *21 at 33*, and *The Fox*, are "all the one's that never sold!" He also mixed *The Thom Bell Sessions*.

Clive Franks has an unassuming air, and a modesty that disguises his great talent which Elton's biggest fans ever attempt to quantify, while many more will at least acknowledge. I was under the impression Elton Solo was just that. Elton at the keyboard. Checking out Clive's box of tricks during the recent Hyde Park, London show

on July 27, 2000, was an eye-opener. I realised there were two magical artists at work, two pairs of dexterous hands moving to the beat of music.

The soundboard looks like a nuclear warhead arsenal, or a chess board. And yet, Clive knows which knob to tweak, and which fader to drive, and when. He fills in, singing the percussion sounds of the original recording as he hears the new, pared-down piano solo versions on stage.

Although not pre-recorded, when Elton played his sell-out summer 2000 tour, he did so with the help of Clive's judicious offering of special effects. Clive apologised the sound system at Hyde Park was a hired item used by the series of non-Elton shows that week at the venue, rather than his preferred equipment. Those acts included Steps, Five, and Buena Vista Social Club. But the mixer was his. A daunting console, with labels under faders like "ME", "X", "Spare", "EJ", "LO", "HI", "Piano Yam", "Piano Strings", "EFX", and "TC". Clive was keeping some 12 meters flicking at between -5 and -3 on his Yamaha Mixing Console

PM4000 behemoth.

While most fans like to get close to Elton in the front row - Clive is happy knowing he's got the best seat in the house. Mid-way back is where the sound off those awesome amplifier speakers, or PAs in technospeak, finally optimises.

In a more relaxed atmosphere between shows in London, July 12, 2000, Clive gave a 2 and a half hour interview - that's the length of Elton's recent shows!

Clive Franks: I'll just take this nice Coke from the fridge (free publicity to a recent sponsor of the tour). I have a sore throat after talking with a friend for four hours today.

George Matlock: What went wrong at Hyde Park (Party in the Park, July 9, 2000)?

CF: Mainly the weather, for the crowds. Half an hour before Elton was to go on there was this massive downpour. There was a 3-inch puddle outside his dressing room. Something got damp. There was chaos. The problem was that I was receiving (sound) on everything, so I assumed the piano was fine.

Marry a Music Man

I think it was something to do with the monitors. It wasn't our monitors. We were jumping in on the venue's common system for all the 30-odd acts performing that day. You're busking it in a situation like that. Then when the monitors came through it was so loud it took everyone's head off! It was embarrassing. Elton came on, sat for a bit, couldn't hear anything, went off, came back on again. Once they got going [with the Backstreet Boys] they were fine.

GM: When Kylie Minogue came on, there was a noticeable delay between movements and sound.

CF: I noticed the video screens were out of time with the vocals. This happens when you're a long way from a video screen, because sound travels slower than light. There is no excuse for that on television [the programme was televised by Channel 4]. A lot of people complained to me about that. I can't answer that one. You see, I'm not sure everyone was singing. I think there was some miming going on. Some people aren't that good at lip synching. All this dance routine these days really annoys me. Some people are so focused on their dance, they can't deliver a good vocal performance. Elton is not having to dance, he's behind a piano. Of course, he did get up after Philadelphia Freedom [to stand and dance with the Boys]. But no, he's totally live.

GM: You can vouch for Elton never miming?

CF: Never mimed in a live performance.

GM: How about the pre-recorded BBC TV show Top of the Pops ?

CF: Early days, yes [he did]. They wouldn't let you do it otherwise! They couldn't reproduce the sound, and so many people didn't want to do it live because they couldn't. And the record companies wanted the audience to hear exactly how the record sounded. But Elton would always want to sing it live. And where possible he did. But he's a brilliant lip syncher, so sometimes even for myself it was difficult to tell whether he was miming or live. He does it so well. But [on tour] I can tell from the sound whether it's a live recording or not without looking up at the stage. And I can tell you he's never mimed on tour.

Clive was often to fill-in for missing band members on Top of the Pops. He's seen himself on Goodbye Yellow Brick Road in place of bassist Dee Murray.

CF: On those early Top of the Pops, some bands would record a version an hour before the performance, then mime as the TV cameras recorded it all.

GM: [at July 9 performance] When Elton sang Friends Never Say Goodbye, the first time he sang "never say goodbye" it was delivered very slowly. Did you notice that?

CF: When we're on tour, we pick up on the little nuances day after day. But this was got together only at midday for rehearsals. We were at the rehearsal studios for two and a half hours, minus one of the Backstreet Boys who was missing. Elton was concerned lyrically not to mess up and ordered an auto-cue. Whether he got one I'm not sure. Elton's such a perfectionist. As you know, he's forever mouthing sideways "more of this, less of

that" and "turn this up". It was also difficult for me to focus because there were three mixing consoles, and each alternated between acts. Of the three consoles, two are ones I use on tours and the third is the type I dislike, and which shall remain nameless. That's the one I had to use! So, I was concentrating on their balance and level, rather than lyrically to what's going on. Elton's reverb wasn't right. I didn't actually see him after the show, because he had interviews to do backstage. Meanwhile, me, Elton's assistant and the crew were taken out to a wonderful Indian restaurant. And I've not seen Elton since. I asked his assistant Bob, who said Elton was a little tense but he enjoyed it.

GM: For the final two songs, Elton seemed to really enjoy things. He was not seated at the piano, even gave a wiggle with his backside! His voice projected better, he looked more relaxed, as though the piano had been a ball and chain! Do you have post mortems about performances?

CF: No. He has to be the most consistent performer - ever. I've worked with him since 1972. And perhaps half a dozen gigs were below par - but that's on HIS standard. If we're doing a quick getaway to the airport after a show, in the car, Elton will rather focus on the highlights. He might say, beaming like a child: "Oooh, that was great wasn't it? What about that little bit on Rocket Man, or that solo bit." But it's rarely ever an inquest going the other way, because there's never anything negative to focus on. Maybe at the start of a tour, when we haven't locked in a set list he's happy with, we'll have

a little talk about whether Daniel should come before or after some song? Should we do such song? That would go on for a couple of shows. And he very rarely talks anyway. Sometimes we don't even say a thing after the shows.

GM: *Talking of airports, we heard Elton went back to the South of France after most of his German gigs. Is that true?*

CF: Yes, on a private charter plane.

GM: *And what of the other ingredient that makes a show, the crowd?*

CF: He works so hard to get the audience to their feet. These shows are more of a challenge because they're intimate shows, solo. If the audience isn't moving, he works them. It's harder without the band, as he performs more ballads. He can't do "Saturday Night's" or "The Bitch is Back". So it's harder for the crowd to get enthusiastic in any part of the world - except the USA. They seem go nuts at everything! But I've noticed in England and Europe they'll sit and listen to him. Very appreciative and wonderful audiences between songs, but during songs they don't emote much.

GM: *Except for that small band of fans Hercules marshal to the front!*

CF: He loves that. I would wish people would go up sooner.

GM: *We would, but security won't let us!*

CF: Yeah, but you have to realise that there are people near the front who paid for tickets and can't see a thing. We were in Austria, in the show just before Bregenz in June, and we

were in a town square and no seating. It was like a festival. The atmosphere was the best we've had the whole tour. Everyone was up and with him from the very start. I'm sure countless barrels of beer had something to do with it too! A totally different, American vibe. They picked up on everything and went nuts. But when we got back to Germany, we had good audiences, but the rain was awful.

GM: *Most of the fans complained there were so many shows this year, and they couldn't afford to go to all of them.*

CF: What I don't understand is why does anyone want to go to all of them?

GM: *You're right, he's already bringing the music to smaller venues, closer to the fans and accessing more territory. But the fans still come again and again! I was at Germany's Kassel, Hamburg and Cologne shows, but perhaps because I hadn't heard Elton indoors for a long time, the Cologne show was a disappointment. The music all just merged.*

CF: Acoustically, it's a very difficult room. It's cavernous. We used our own sound system and supplemented with theirs to fill up in the Gods. But that was one of my favourite shows, believe it or not. The fans were great and Elton loved that show because he could feel the feedback from the audience. I was pleased with the results. If you were at the front, you heard only his loud monitors, which are trained for him, and anyone slightly away from that distance, such as the crowds in the first six rows, will get a very strange sound. You would have heard his monitors rather than my

mix. So it was reflective sound, very mushy.

GM: *And Munich, where Elton's throat was rough. What happened there?*

CF: Things sometimes do go wrong, as you know. I checked everything. Elton started to sing. I could hear his voice coming from the monitors but not the mixed PA. I freaked out! The first few lines didn't come out. I use a limiter on Elton's voice which keeps the volume constant and controls any unexpected loud peaks. Unfortunately, the damp weather had caused moisture to get onto the jackplug which then cut out Elton's voice from the PA, so we had to carefully pull the plug in and out a few times to get it working, and then it was fine. Makes live shows exciting and unpredictable!

The second part of this exclusive interview with Clive will appear in the December issue of The Mag. Part 2 will focus on a flashback to concerts and antics over the years.



photo: N Bac.

Kaleidoscope Eyes (part 6) The 80s

Part 6 of our Collector's Series on Elton's TV and Video appearances, by George Matlock & Sharon Kalinoski Should you be able to add or correct any details, please email:

HerculesUK@eltonfan.net, or write to: Hercules UK, PO Box 315, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 3QX, England

Please note that Hercules is unable to offer for sale or exchange items listed.

We provide the list for information record only. The series is mainly a compilation of US and UK performances. However, we welcome news of other broadcasts. Thanks to Wayne Martin for his invaluable contribution to this series.

(Month is stated where known)

1980

Jan: American Music Awards "Sorry Seems..." & "Elton's Song"

April: Hollywood Nights (Olivia Newton-John Special). (4 songs)

September: Tomorrow with Tom Snyder (3 Live Songs, Interview)

October: Phil Donohue Show (Your Song, interview)

November: Tonight Show with Johnny Carson
Sydney Rome Show "Sartorial Eloquence"

Paul Gambaccini interview from Elton's UK Home
Tonight Show. Performs "Sorry Seems to Be..."

1981

April: The Fox Telepress conference

June: Tomorrow With Tom Snyder (Nobody Wins, Belgium, Breaking/Barriers, Interview).

Best of Brit: Captain Fantastic and the DJ (3 Songs, Interview)

Lip Syncs: Loving You Is Sweeter (w. Kiki Dee)

1982

April: Saturday Night Live (Ball & Chain, Empty Garden. Note: The original 'live' broadcast had EJ singing 'Empty Garden' first, then singing 'Ball and Chain' later in the

program. However, in subsequent repeated broadcast, 'Ball and Chain' came first, 'Empty Garden' second)

May: Entertainment Tonight - (EJ's LA home sale, shows empty house)

June: Entertainment Tonight (EJ receives key to city of L.A.)

November: Pebble Mill at One, UK TV
Christmas Eve: Elton John in Concert at the Hammersmith Odeon
Today Show

1983

March: UK BBC TV Blue Peter video clip of "I Guess That's Why They Call..." & brief Elton interview

May: Entertainment Tonight: Too Low For Zero Promo
Noel Edmunds Show

Today Show : Two Low For Zero Promo pt 1&2
Top of the Pops: Cold as Christmas
Ronnie Corbet. BBC TV. Cold as Christmas & interview

1984

March: Paul Gambaccini Other Side of The Track. Interview

July: Cinemax Album Film Breaking Hearts

September: Elton John Live In Toronto Breaking Hearts Tour

Christmas Day: Terry Wogan: In

Neon & Interview

Top of the Pops (1 Song)

Montreaux Rock Festival (2 Songs)

Main Presenter of BBC Sports Personality of the Year Awards

Polish TV, meeting dissident Lech Walesa

FA Cup Final at Wembley Stadium, Watford v Everton

MTV Interview w. Jools Holland

Jools Holland interview

Sassoon Advert US TV commercial

1985

February: Terry Wogan, Breaking Hearts & interview

BBC TV and ITN report on London High Court copyright case failure, w. Bernie Jackson

May: Montreaux Golden Rose Festival. Act Of War w. Millie Jackson

July: Live Aid: I'm Still Standing, Bennie, Rocket, Don't Go Break, Don't/Sun

November: UK TV "The Tube", 4 Songs and interview

Good Morning Britain: Making of Act of War video
BBC Saturday Superstore

Saturday Picture Show Pop Profile, UK TV

UK Soul Train "Act Of War"

BBC TV Blue Peter from Elton's Home
Jools Holland TV show

1986

February: International BPI Awards

February: Wogan BBC TV, "Cry to Heaven" and interview

June: London, UK (Prince's Trust)

August: Kansas City concert

October: U.S. TV Joan Rivers Late Nite (3 Live Songs, Interview)

US showing of Princes Trust concert

US Rock and Roll Evening News (3 Part interview & clips of current tour)

November: U.K. TV BBC 2 interview

December: UK TV Sky Channel interview

UK TV Noel Edmonds "Slow Rivers"

Cliff from the Hip "Leather Jackets & Slow Rivers"

The Tube: This Town, Sad Songs, Nikita, Burn/Mission
Cilla Black Show UK TV

Cadbury's Chocolate Ad. UK TV commercial
The Melbourne Tapes. Interview from Australia concert. Australian TV

1987

January: BBC1 & ITN News on throat operation

April: Parkinson One to One. Interview

June: 2nd Annual Prince's Trust: London, UK (Your Song & Saturday

Night)

Elton & Jennifer Rush on Terry Wogan Show: "Flames of Paradise" & interview

September: MTV Special Recognition Award

US airdate of 2nd Annual Princes Trust

1987 Stand By Me: AIDS Benefit (Interview, Will You Still Love Me, I Guess...)

1987 Jools Holland TV show

1988

January: BBC TV Top Of The Pops: Candle In the Wind

March: Totally Minnie (Don't Go Breaking My Heart w. Minnie Mouse)

May: French TV "I Don't Wanna Go On With You"

Jonathan Ross

June: Wired "Japanese Hands" & interview

2nd Annual Prince's Trust- A Royal Gala (Saturday Night's & Candle)

July: LA Aids Benefit Concert
News AID Benefit

Sept: VH1 Conversation with Elton John
Miami, FL (MTV Awards, Don't Wanna Go On...)

October: Yoruno Hit Studio London

USA Weekend Interview

MTV John Lennon Remembered (interview)

November: Best Hit USA:

interview & video

Eric Clapton & Friends in Tokyo (Candle, I Guess/Blues, I Don't Wanna, Daniel)

Washington, DC (Kennedy Center, That's What Friends Are For)

Steve Blame Show VH1 Story of Rock feature

Reg Strikes Back press conference
CBS This Morning interview

1989

January: Ryan White Story

May: Good Morning Britain (TV AM) with Paul Gambaccini from LA

August: Los Angeles, CA (Universal Amphitheatre, 2 Live Songs with The Who). Pinball Wizard

Terry Wogan Show, Healing Hands & Whispers

Elton John in Concert, Meadowlands New Jersey
Kansas City concert
Good Morning America

October: Music Box: Germany TV Show "Healing Hands"
New Haven, CT. concert

ABC TV In Concert (4 Live Songs)

Sleeping with The Past "Press Kit"
Sky TV Verona, Italy

Good Rock'n Tonite w. Bernie
Canadian TV interview EJ&BT

MEMBERSHIP PASS RENEWAL



Photo: Andy Thorpe



The new Membership Pass for 2001

The current version of the Hercules membership pass will expire at the end of the year (December 31, 2000). In order to renew your membership pass, we need to ask you to send us a new passport photo (approx. 3.5 cm x 4.5 cm). It is not possible to re-use the old photo in your current membership pass as it will be destroyed by opening the laminated pass.

There is no need to return your old pass (keep it as a souvenir), but we need to ask

you to include a self-addressed envelope and an International Response Coupon (which you can buy in the post office). Send everything to the following relevant address, and you will receive your new membership pass (valid through December 31, 2002) in the mail shortly afterwards:

USA/Canada members send to:
Sharon Kalinoski
Hercules USA/Canada
P O Box 398
La Grange, IL 60525, USA

UK members send to:
George Matlock
Hercules UK
PO Box 315
Richmond
Surrey TW9 3QX, UK

All other members send to:
Stephan Heimbecher
Hercules Co-ordination
Orleansstr. 59
D-81667 Muenchen, GERMANY

If you never ordered a membership pass before, you can do so by following the instructions above. Please note that resignation from the fan club is only possible after the expiration date or by return of the membership pass.

BETWEEN 17 AND 20 · BETWEEN 17 AND 20

ANOTHER VERSE OF OUR REGULAR COLUMN FEATURING TRIVIA AND

HERCULES

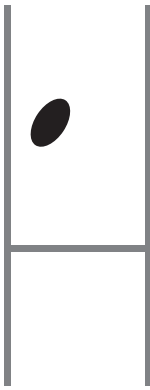
Bennie and the Jets" on the BGYBR album is not live! It was all recorded in the studio. EJ has always been fascinated with making a recording "sound" like it was recorded live when it really wasn't. His first attempt at this was with "Rock And Roll Madonna".

HERCULES

Elton was in one of his "moods" minutes before he recorded the lead vocals for "Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me". In an angry fit, he recorded the vocal in one take and then stormed out of the studio. Apparently he didn't want to record the vocals for the album.

HERCULES

Did you know that there is a third verse to "Holiday Inn"? For some reason, it was dropped during the final recording of the song. It fit with the rest of the song and didn't make the song seem "too" long. So it's a mystery why it was scrapped.



Club AT THE END OF THE STREET

Elton look-a-like and Hercules member Ray Johnson tells us about a recent experience....



Elton look-a-like Ray Johnson

I thought you might like to know about a recent appearance I made at Watford Football Club, in my role as 'Elton'. I was booked to turn up and mingle with the crowds on the touchlines and in the executive boxes, including the Elton John Suite, and to surprise the punters in our midst.

The match was the last game of the season between Saracens (who share the Vicarage Road ground with

Watford), and Bristol. A win for Saracens would see them secure a place in the Heineken European League next year. And win they did, so it turned out to be a fun festival.

At half time, I was asked to pick out the Lottery Draw on the centre of the pitch, which was also filmed by the Big Screen in the corner of the stadium. As I walked onto the pitch, I got a standing ovation; but then my cover was blown after the announcer told the crowd I was the EJ look-a-like as seen on TV. As I trudged off the pitch after doing the deed, I still got another great reception from the 10,000 strong crowd.

It was great fun and makes it all worthwhile for me to don the wig and see people smile.



BETWEEN 17 AND 20 · BETWEEN 17 AND 20

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

HERCULES

In a 1997 interview, EJ claimed that he had never teamed up with Tim Rice to write and record a song for one of his own albums. He claimed that they have only written "musicals" together. I guess EJ forgot all about "Legal Boys", which appeared on his "Jump Up" album in 1982.

HERCULES

Did you know that the bits of the EJ recordings that appear throughout the "Friends" movie are not the same renditions that appear on the soundtrack album? The vocals are from an earlier recording session.

HERCULES

Elton recorded the vocals for every song on the "Rock Of The Westies" album only to have to go back to the studio and record them all over again. Apparently there was a mad rush to record the vocals for the album, which showed through on the vocal tracks, so they had to be re-done.



White Tie &

Elton and David host a lavish party at Elton's UK country home, Woodside, to benefit the Elton John Aids Foundation.

In July, a host of international celebrities and Royalty were invited to the £1000-a-head

annual party, which the press dubbed "The Party of The Year". The weather stayed kind, and guests were able to stroll around the grounds of Woodside and admire Elton's famous gardens, before enjoying a banquet in a

luxury marquee.

Guests, who included George Michael, Mick Jagger, Jerry Hall, Joan Collins, Duchess of York, Geri Halliwell, Sean Connery, and Liz Hurley, were also treated to an after dinner cabaret. With Lulu



Kate Hurley, Hugh Grant, Elton, Elizabeth Hurley and David Furnish.



Sarah, Duchess of York with Elton



Elton greets Ronan Keating



Elton with Sean Connery and Joan Collins



Elton and David with Mick Jagger and Jerri Hall



White Tie and Tiara Ball menu

Tiara Ball

hosting the raffle, Elton then went on to sing "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head" accompanied by Burt Bacharach on piano! The evening raised £575,000 for the Elton John Aids Foundation.

As you may know, eltonjohn.com had offered fans the opportunity to bid for a pair of tickets for the Ball. Unfortunately they were unable to invite the successful bidder to the Ball in the end, due to circumstances beyond

their control. However, we would like to congratulate Hercules member Rob Cargill who very nearly made it - and who handled the whole situation so well. Maybe next time Cinderella!



Elton with Elizabeth Hurley



Elton, Karen Sinclair and David Furnish



Kenny Goss, Elton and Geri Halliwell



David Furnish and Bob Geldof



Jeanne Marine (Bob Geldof's girlfriend) with Elton



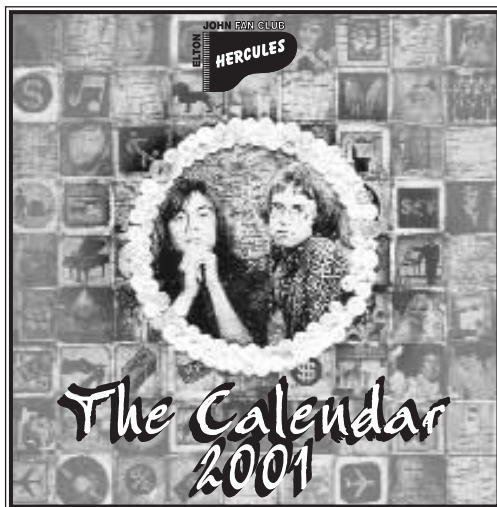
Elton and Dionne Warwick duet!

HERCULES LAUNCHES THE 2001 CALENDAR

Following our major success with the Hercules 2000 Calendar, we're keeping the wishes of fans to bring them the Hercules 2001 Calendar. This time, packed with photos by the FANS. This is a rare collection of the finest photos by the finest photographers - his fans.

We're keeping the successful CD-case design, with specially-commissioned graphic artwork. A 13-card calendar, it covers each month separately. Important dates in Elton's and Hercules' diary are also noted overleaf each card. A grid format lets you store important personal dates.

Here, we're giving you the chance to pre-order your calendar in time for the New Year. Hurry - it's a limited edition so order yours before stocks run out of this rare item! We cannot guarantee supply on orders received after 1 December 2000. We will despatch the Calendars in December.



collage by Janet Kolstein

HOW TO ORDER

Send details of your name, address and membership number to the postal OR internet address below, together with details of how many Calendars you require.

By Post:

Sterling cheque orders, sterling bankers drafts (for non-UK fans), UK Postal Orders, US\$ check orders, made payable to "Hercules UK" and mail us at:
Stephan Heimbecher
Hercules Co-ordination
Orleansstr. 59
D-81667 Muenchen
GERMANY

By Internet

Visit our Website at www.eltonfan.com and follow the instructions. This is a secure Website for your security.

PRICES FOR HERCULES 2001 CALENDAR

Members:

UK/Europe:
£8 for each item
(includes postage).

USA/rest of world:
£11 (or US\$18) for each
item (includes postage).

Non-Members:

UK/Europe:
£9 for each item
(includes postage).

USA/rest of world:
£12 (or US\$19)
for each item
(includes postage).

Please note credit card payments will be debited in German currency, and the rate of exchange which applies at time of transaction will be effective. Hercules reserves the right to refuse orders.

A DOG NAMED

Numerous fans had turned up for the Hercules convention in Kassel on 23 June 2000 - to get to know each other and talk about Elton nonstop. Just before the concert of the Rocket Man on that same day, we heard the great news that the concert promoter had made it possible for Hercules members to stand in front of the stage and the historic flower bed which set the stage apart from the audience's area. When the fan club entourage finally set off for the strenuous 20 minute uphill walk to the huge Herkules monument we got some quite funny looks from passers-by: Our huge stuffed Afghan toy dog, the banners, fan club jackets, Elton T-shirts, and last but not least the German Elton look-a-like Andreas Herr clearly provoked interested and slightly amused stares. At about 7pm, we received the longingly-awaited passes, which would make it possible for us to be very close to Elton that evening. We strolled to the stage while the envious masses watched us - among them the Hessian governor.

To the sounds of the "Orchestral Finale" the Master walked on stage, and we fans in the front row could even catch a glimpse of his limo's brake lights. Elton seemed to be in a good mood and played - perfectly as usual - the songs well-known to us, but partly as new versions. After a great rendition of "Honky Cat", Elton accepted the first few gifts. Now we thought the right time had come for us to lift our huge stuffed animal - an Afghan dog we had christened "Johann Sebastian Bach" years before (he was bought in the composer's hometown) - onto the stage by his hind legs. Elton took it. He was clearly moved and his eyes lit up. He thanked us with a handshake. While we - close to

Johann Sebastian Bach

Report about the Elton concert in Kassel, Germany, by Lena Kristin Spies and Jaqueline Theofel



Elton on stage at Kassel. The dog can clearly be seen to the right of Elton's piano stool

tears from happiness, slightly dizzy - stepped back, Elton took our dog (which according to other Hercules members bore a striking resemblance to Davey Johnstone due to his long hair!). He carried it to the piano and told the guy who wanted to take Johann Sebastian Bach backstage, that he wanted to keep him for the show and to our great surprise put it down right next to himself in the spotlight. During the next song "Rocket Man", Johann Sebastian Bach was to be spotted hugely enlarged on the video screen. He was allowed to remain there in the first class position next to the piano stool until the encores.

Elton amazed the audience for more than two hours and finally during "Crocodile Rock", the Kassel Wilhelmshöhe became

a frenzied mass which even pseudo-VIPs could not stand apart from. During the final song of this totally successful show - "Candle In The Wind", the Herkules monument lit in turquoise once again shone in the light of a sea of lighters. After the show, we were contemplating what might happen to our stuffed toy dog. Meanwhile, the fan club met at the Hotel again to conclude the evening in a relaxed atmosphere.

At this point, we should note that the friendly security people were of great help to us. Unfortunately, this is not always the case: On 4 July 2000 in Mannheim, the security staff made it impossible for us to get to the stage until just before the very end. They acted like some kind of Military Troop. The show

A dog named Johann Sebastian Bach continued

in front of greatly picturesque castle Ehrenhof had the atmosphere of a funeral. It must have been very depressing for Elton. No wonder he did not write a single autograph. Although we - along with another fan - managed to outrun the security people in order to give Elton roses and to shake the "Rocket Man's" hand once more, the concert was disappointing to us from the very beginning because we were treated like offenders being escorted back by a security guy (who later admitted to us that he was not happy with the way things happened, too. He was merely following his orders.). Mannheim was the perfect example of how tight security can ruin a concert.

Thank you, Elton, for all those great concerts which we saw and will surely see in the future. We take this for granted. You know how happy you make your fans with such shows and small gestures - especially since we found out that our dog travelled along in the tour bus after the show in Kassel.

It would be nice to be able to see more shows with such little distance to the stage. Elton surely has no fun sitting lonely at his piano, hardly being able to spot his fans.



10 WAYS TO TELL...

Top 10 ways to tell if you're too much of an Elton fan...

- 10** If you could buy a car with all the money you've spent on Lalique Angels and Slatkin candles.
- 9** If you have ever traveled to 3 different countries in the same week to attend Elton shows and did not receive a paycheck for doing so.
- 8** If you think you have come up with a logical explanation to "Solar Prestige A Gammon".
- 7** If Dennis and Bruce know you by name - and are afraid of you.
- 6** If you listen to Victim of Love on a regular basis.
- 5** If the number of emails you have received from John Jorgenson now are in triple digits.
- 4** If you can name all of Davey's children in chronological order.
- 3** If you have ever had an Elton (or EJ Band member) autograph tattooed on your body.
- 2** If Clive Franks dives under his soundboard as soon as he spots you in the audience of a show.
- 1** If you know about appearances Elton will make with the band - before the band does.

*by Brooke Murphy,
Vice President/Co-Founder of the
Official Nigel Olsson Fan Club*

If you would like to submit your own Elton-related Top Ten List, or add to the above, then we'd love to hear from you. Please send all contributions to Tammi Law, Chief Editor (see page 2 for details).

A small prize will be sent to each person whose list is published.

LETTERS

Send your letters to Tammi Law,

I loved June issue of The Mag. I have one question however: on page 9 there is a quiz, "Are You Sure?!" Q7: How many fish references are there in the song "Solar Prestige A Gammon"? Adam Buckley answers five. But he didn't include Herring ("hair ring") in his answer. Why not? Is this just a sad lack of English fish names in my poor vocabulary? "Solar Prestige" is on the set list of my dreams!

Wouldn't you just have LOVED IT if Elton did "Solar Prestige" instead of "Your Song" in a concert? Front row would have fainted!!

Signe Norbotten NORWAY

Many thanks for the "do" at the White Horse pub (Hylands House concert, 15 July). I think it's great to meet up with the other members before these shows, especially for those travelling quite a distance. With Elton in great form in the evening it was an excellent day all round.

Now I'm home I can give you all the info on a DANCE record incorporating Song for Guy which other fans may want to know about. Details: Title :SUNSTORM featuring Song for Guy. Re-recorded and remixed by HURLEY & TODD. Written by Elton John. Track 1 :Radio edit (3:52), Track 2: Mike Koglin Remix (8:12), Track 3:Club Caviar Remix(5:28). An English CD, on Multiply Records. Ref no CDMULTY58. Taken from the forthcoming album "Best of Multiply Records".

Released just recently, I've only heard it on Capital Radio 95.8 after 10.00pm in their Dance/club slot. I bought it in HMV in Kingston, London.

Mark Giles, UK

TO THE EDITOR

Editor (address on page 2) or e-mail her at HerculesEd@aol.com.

A SMALL PRIZE
WILL BE SENT TO THE
WRITER OF EACH LETTER
PUBLISHED.

First of all I want to say that I love your mag! I got my second issue today and I think it's the best fan club magazine I've ever seen - and is certainly the best one for our Sir Elton that I've ever read! I've been an Elton fan for 12 years and it never seems like there's enough to read for Elton fans.

I was very fortunate to obtain Elton's autograph through a very dear young friend of mine in 1992, named Matt Allen. Elton read about him having AIDS and asked him to his show here in Dallas, and gave him a backstage pass. Well, Elton signed some things for Matt, and Matt asked Elton to sign something for me, and he signed a brown paper bag. Matt said "Honest Elton, she worships the ground you walk on!" Elton then said "Well then,



Elton and Matt Allen

this will never do" and he went into his dressing room, brought out a photo of himself, signed it and gave it to Matt to give to me, along with the paper bag! I've since had both the picture and the bag framed.

Matt, who was 8, has since died from AIDS, but I'll never forget the way he and Elton made my life so very happy and I'll always love both of them for that. Elton is every bit the wonderful and kind man we all thought he was.

Melissa Hodges, Texas, USA

I am not a member of Hercules, but I do visit your Website on a very regular basis. I would just like to say that I also visit eltonjohn.com, and that your unofficial site is, in my opinion, far superior to the official site. In terms of content, options and presentation, Hercules totally eclipses eltonjohn.com in every way. I especially enjoy your 'news' section which keeps me up to date with Elton happenings. Please keep up the good work.

Simon Owens, USA

Just a short note to thank Hercules for an excellent day at Chatsworth on 3rd June. The pre-concert entertainment was superb, and to meet all the other fans was really good. The tickets for the concert, bought through Hercules, were on the 3rd row, bang in the middle of the stage, right in line with the great man himself. They were the best tickets anyone could

have wished for - thank you for those, it's the nearest I've been to the stage at an EJ concert.

And what a concert! 'Empty Garden' and 'The Greatest Discovery' nearly brought tears to my eyes. A superb performance from a man who just gets better every time you see him. Thank you for a great day.

Mike Bibby, Stockport, UK.

On Friday, 7th July, we headed off to Künzelsau at noon. Without tickets - they had been ordered and purchased through eltonjohn.com - said to be front row - but had nothing in hand. Could this turn out well?

After a three hour drive we reached a village in the countryside, found the free parking lot and walked to the event. On our way there, we passed the local soccer grounds - there was Elton's helicopter! At the venue, we looked for the box-office where we were supposed to collect our tickets. No box-office, just half a tent

where a few desperate girls from the local promoter were waiting for the guys with the tickets! After a wait of about one hour, a car finally arrived - inside: a box with the awaited tickets! Envelope ripped open: Yippee! Front row!!! Into the venue - and the seats were just in front of the piano.

Meanwhile, it started raining - but we could not have cared less. The show started - Elton was in a good mood, and I decided that I would give my gift to Elton today! If I dared to... And I did it. Bravely, I walked up to the stage halfway through the concert - Elton approached me, smiled at me, shook my hand and said "Thank you very much" with his cutest smile. Of course, I was unable to articulate any sensible word, but happily floated back to my seat... If I feel like 15 years old during his concerts (I will soon be 40) then I felt like I was 10 at that moment with Elton!

Patricia Schmidt, GERMANY

SMALL ADS

ELTON MEMORABILIA:

For Sale: Various Elton Memorabilia. Vinyl, CDs, Videos, Books, Magazines, plus huge archive collection. Danny Hayes, 62 Swinley House, Redhill Street, Regents Park, London NW1 4BB, UK. Tel: 0207 387 0082 or e-mail: DannyHayes7@aol.com for list.

GERMAN CONCERT PHOTOS

Selling/trading photos of the concerts in Germany this summer (revenue will be donated to the EJAF). If you are interested, write to Claudia Hochmuth, Otto-Braun- Str. 85, D-10405 Berlin, Germany; e-mail: ClaudiaBerl@aol.com

CDS LIVE

For Sale: Double Cd : Live in Brescia 2000. From Elton's solo tour, amazing sound quality. (20 GBP) and All Alone in Baltimore (25 GBP). I've many other Elton items for sale. To receive my complete list write to : rocket@inwind.it or to Alessandro Perfumo, str Maggiora 65, 15011 Acqui Terme, Italy.

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

TICKING, TICKING,

Hercules brings you an offer for the Millennium. Count down to the next Elton concert with superb original Elton singles and albums made into quartz clocks from The Original Vinyl Clock Co. 7-inch singles £10.99, and albums £14.99, inclusive of UK postage. Overseas orders please add £3. Special Hercules offer waives the normal £3 search fee for Elton records. Don't ask for anything obscure - or search fee may apply! Other artists available. For more info, email: info@vinylclock.co.uk, website: www.vinylclock.co.uk. Or write to: Original Vinyl Clock Co, Land of Green Ginger, Hull HU1 2EA, England. Tel: +44 1482 229966. Please do not send your orders to Hercules.

ELTON VINYL SINGLES & ALBUMS?

Yes, there are still some around! Ask for free sales list from bruno.kohli@access.ch or: Bruno Kohli, Roessliwiese, CH-8854 Siebnen, Switzerland

PEN-PALS WANTED:

I'm looking for pen-pals from anywhere in the world, including the USA. Please write to me at: Melissa Hodges, 10815 Myrtice Drive, Dallas, Texas 75228-2623, USA

'WRAP IT UP' PERMANENT

HERCULES DISCOUNT

Our retail outlet 'Wrap it Up' now gives a 10% discount on all purchases by 'Hercules' members, just quote your membership number. To obtain their lists that contain 1000's of Elton items for sale, just write to: 'Wrap it Up', PO Box 220, Lincoln, LN1 2RU, England, or e-mail 'eltonwrap@aol.com'. Alternately visit their web site: http://members.aol.com/eltonwrap

MORE PEN-PALS WANTED:

I have been an Elton fan since 1990 when Sacrifice got me hooked. I would like an EJ pen-pal. mle or female. Write to me at: Liam Harrison, 10 Holdforth Close, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS12 1YD, England

COMPLETE EJ COLLECTION

For Sale - Picture discs, flexi singles, maxi singles, scarfs, badges, rarities and all official vinyl albums with original covers. More than 100 items, DM 1.500 plus postage. For more information, contact Peter Kraus, Am Roland 2c, D-40883 Ratingen, Germany.



Photo: George Maitlock

PLEASE REMEMBER...

ALWAYS state your membership number 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.

For up-to-the-minute news about Elton, callers in the UK can phone the
HERCULES Hotline on 0906 888 20 20

Calls cost 60p per minute anytime

T SHIRT AUCTION RESULTS



In the June issue of The Mag, we gave all readers the chance to send in a postal bid for two very rare Elton Tour T-shirts. All proceeds from this Auction benefited the Elton John Aids Foundation. Bids were invited in German currency, and the closing date was July 31st.

Congratulations to the two successful bidders:

1. Sharon Kalinoski, USA
2. Jochen Loh, Germany

A T-Shirt has been posted to each of you.

All proceeds have been forwarded to the Elton John Aids Foundation.

LYRIC QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Shoulder Holster
2. The Scaffold
3. Valhalla
4. The Fox
5. Shoot Down The Moon
6. The Retreat
7. Made For Me
8. Tortured
9. Love So Cold
10. The Camera Never Lies
11. Made In England
12. Passengers

TOUR DATES

EUROPEAN SOLO TOUR 2000

- 08-Sept.....Reggio Calabria
Italy
- 10-SeptAthens, Greece
Herodes Atticus Odeon
- 13-SeptLisbon, Portugal
Casino
- 15-Sept.....Marbella, Spain

ELTON & BAND

"GREATEST HITS LIVE"

- 18-OctWilkes Barre, PA
- 20-OctNew York, NY
Madison Square Garden
- 21-OctNew York, NY
Madison Square Garden

EUROPEAN SOLO TOUR 2000

(CONTINUED)

- 11-NovParis, France
Olympia
- 13-NovOslo, Norway
Spectrum
- 14-NovOslo, Norway
Spectrum

- 16-NovAntwerp, Belgium
Sport Palais
- 18-NovRotterdam,
Netherlands, Ahoy Arena
- 19-Nov ..Hannover, Germany
Preussag Arena (Expo)
- 21-Nov....Frankfurt, Germany
Festhalle
- 22-Nov..Dortmund, Germany
Westfalenhalle
- 24-Nov....Zurich, Switzerland
Hallenstadion
- 25-NovVienna, Austria
Stadthalle
- 28-NovMilan, Italy
Forum

US SOLO TOUR 2000

(CONTINUED)

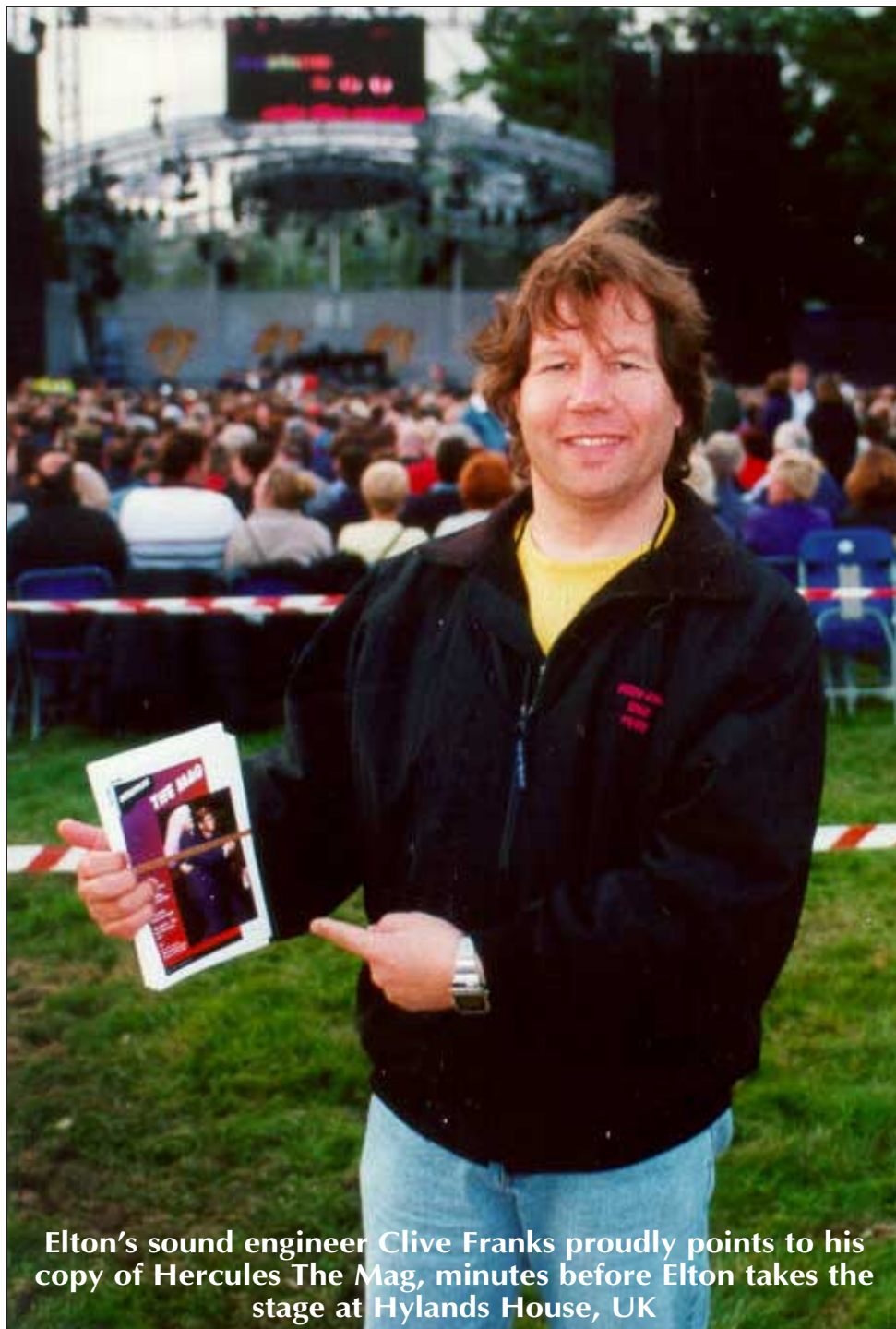
- 05-DecJohnson City, TN
Freedom Hall

EUROPEAN TOUR 2001

- 03-AprilParis, France
Bercy Arena

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

2000



Elton's sound engineer Clive Franks proudly points to his copy of Hercules The Mag, minutes before Elton takes the stage at Hylands House, UK