



# Have you heard the NEWS



*"There's Good Rocking Tonight"*

News letter for members of the Official Elvis Presley Fan Club, Elvis-Aberdeen.

## James Burton: Elvis The King Lives On

Ask James Burton about Elvis Presley, and the guitarist gets straight to the point. "He was an incredible musician and singer," Burton said. "It was God's gift. Everything he did was so natural. He wasn't a great guitar player. But he was like the drummer in the band - he kept the rhythm. The guy, to me, had perfect pitch. He could start singing one of his songs out of the blue and it would be in the key he recorded it in. It was incredible." Burton, one of the great guitarists in country and rock 'n' roll history, played with Elvis for the last nine years of Presley's life.

After working in recording sessions that started with "Viva Las Vegas" - "They said, 'Watch Ann-Margret and when she gets real sexy, throw some hot licks in'" - Burton was asked to put together the band for Elvis' return to live performance at Las Vegas' International Hotel in 1969. While seen by some as a low point in Elvis' career, the Las Vegas shows were far from that. The spirit, intensity and pure entertainment of those engagements can be heard on "Elvis Presley: On Stage," a just-released two-disc set that combines live recordings from shows in August 1969 and in February 1970.

The 1969 disc finds Elvis doing his '50s hits and then-current singles. On the other disc, he's expanded the repertoire to include the best songs of the day, such as The Beatles' "Yesterday," Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline" and Tony Joe White's "Polk Salad Annie." "Elvis loved the Vegas shows," Burton said during a panel at the South By Southwest Music Conference in Austin, Texas. "He loved playing with the big orchestra. But his main love was the small rhythm section behind him. He was very close, he played very tight. He had a strong powerful voice, and we had a strong band behind him." The Vegas orchestra and Presley's touring group, known as the TCB (Taking Care of Business) Band, were well rehearsed. But Burton said there was no way to fully prepare for an Elvis show. "You had to pay attention to him," Burton said. "He was kind of like Jerry Lee Lewis. ... You just had to watch him on every song. Sometimes he'd stretch out a song. Sometimes he'd stop in the middle of a song. He might have a solo. He might not."

Surprisingly, Burton said, Elvis and his band rarely had monitors, making playing even more difficult. "We played so many shows and I couldn't hear anything," Burton said. "All I could hear was screaming. I stood next to the drummer and sometimes couldn't hear the drums. I could hear my amp and that's it." Presley generated even more of a frenzy in the 1950s, drawing hundreds of screaming teens to his shows and mobs when his entourage stopped anywhere. "Whenever anybody saw a pink Cadillac with a big bass strapped on the top, they knew Elvis was in town," said Wanda Jackson, who toured with Elvis in the mid '50s and was "his girl" for a little more than a year. Jackson was an aspiring country singer when she met Presley. He gave her advice that changed her life, making her the Queen of Rockabilly. "He told me, 'Look at the record sales; it's the kids buying the records. You need to record songs that appeal to them,'" Jackson said. "No one wrote rock 'n' roll songs for girls back then. There weren't any girls doing it besides me." After seeing her versions of "Fujiyama Mama" and "Let's Have A Party" turn into hits, Jackson said, "I thought, 'Wow, Elvis did know what he was talking about.'"

On Aug. 16, 1977, Burton and the TCB band were in a plane to Portland, Maine, when the pilot got a call telling him to return to Las Vegas. "We couldn't figure out why Elvis would cancel the tour," he said. "We had to stop in Pueblo, Colo. That's where we were told that Elvis had passed. It was a very sad time. ... A lot of things went through my mind, losing such an incredible person." But Burton emphasizes Elvis continues to live on through his music: in arena-filling performances that the TCB band continues to give, with Presley shown on a big screen. And in a new Cirque du Soleil troupe in, appropriately enough, Las Vegas.

*Adapted from 'A Heart That's True: Remembering Elvis' by L.Kent Wolgamott Lincoln Journal Star 26/3/10*

### Inside this issue:

King Lives On	1
Membership Renewal	1
Elvis Trivia	1
Graceland Gates	2
Great British Songbook	2
Contact Details	2

### Elvis Trivia

Elvis only ever commissioned one song personally; usually he was content to sing whatever was given him (at least in the beginning, when the monstrous consequences of the Colonel's sweet-heart songwriting deals hadn't yet occurred to him). But famed songwriting team Lieber and Stoller knew just what to do when Elvis approached them in April of 1957 and asked them to write "something real pretty." The result was the smash "Don't."

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL MARCH 2010

A reminder that the Annual Membership Fee was due in March. For those of you who have yet to renew your membership please do so urgently as otherwise next month's newsletter will not be sent out.

The fee remains unchanged at £5 per year.

## Graceland Gates Damaged

At around 2.30am on Friday April 2nd, a large black SUV truck smashed through the gates at Graceland causing damage to the famous gates. The driver of the vehicle subsequently drove up to the mansion and shouted something to a security guard before driving off. It is understood the female security guard on duty was shaken, but the driver escaped before Memphis Police arrived. There has yet to be any news of an arrest. The gates had to be removed and were taken away for repairs and repainting before thankfully being returned to their home on April 8th.

Many Fans would have had the rare opportunity, and the first time in many years, to see the mansion without it's iconic gates.

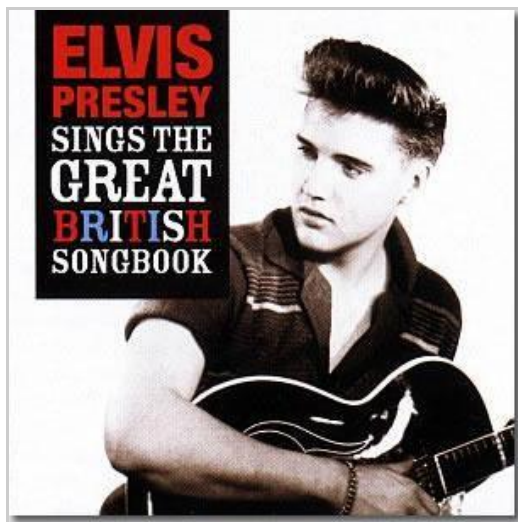


## The Great British Songbook

On May 24 Sony U.K. will release a 2 CD compilation called **Elvis Presley Sings The Great British Songbook** compiled by Todd Slaughter of the British fan club. The compilation features songs that were written by some of Britain's greatest songwriters. This is an unusual compilation and well worth investigating.

### CD1:

01. You Don't Have To Say You Love Me
02. Wonderful World
03. Something
04. This Is Our Dance
05. Sweet Angelina
06. It's Easy For You
07. Love Me, Love The Life I Lead
08. The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face
09. The Fair's Moving On
10. Just Pretend
11. How The Web Was Woven
12. Softly As I Leave You
13. My Boy
14. I've Lost You
15. Girl Of Mine
16. Let Me Be There
17. Let's Be Friends



### CD2:

01. Yesterday
  02. Words
  03. Amazing Grace
  04. Hey Jude
  05. If You Love Me (Let Me Know)
  06. This Is The Story
  07. The Last Farewell
  08. Sylvia
  09. A Little Bit Of Green
  10. Heart Of Rome
  11. It's A Matter Of Time
  12. Danny Boy
  13. Twenty Days And Twenty Nights
  14. Stay Away
  15. How Great Thou Art
- Bonus Recordings:**
16. O Come, All Ye Faithful
  17. If I Get Home On Christmas Day
  18. Lady Madonna (Studio Rehearsal)

### Contact info

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**Next Dance: Friday 7th May**