

# Numan's accessible alienation

by Brent Jeffery

Appearing here as part of his retirement tour, Gary Numan delivered 90 minutes of spell-binding music to a crowd of about 2500 Numanites at the Kinsmen Fieldhouse Wednesday night.

Numan's combination of theatrics, staging and music was flawless. The uniformed presence of the band, Telekon, with each member poised behind a neon panel and the intricate stage design, culminating in a giant 'T' and covered in smoke was enough to overwhelm any audience. With the addition of Numan's mechanical rhythms and the power displayed by Telekon, the Fieldhouse took on an eerie ethereal atmosphere. The subdued power this band displays on record is practically unrecognizable when seen live.

If anything, Telekon proved their abilities are best appreciated when confronted in the flesh. Relaxed and comfortable on stage Numan radiates presence and energy commanding attention with the slightest of movements. From spastic androïdal impersonations to flying leaps, the crowd was in his sway.

Drawing on a varied selection of strong material from all of his North American albums, Numan more than proved that whatever may have been lost or downplayed for the sake of record

production was refined and revitalized when performed live. Without a doubt the most outstanding feature of this performer and his material is the amount of raw power and energy it commands, assaulting the audience time and again with waves of light and music. For the spectator the choice is simple, either latch on to Numan's magic or be bowled over. Wednesday night's devastating attack prompted everyone to latch on.

Uncharacteristically, Numan returned the roars of the audience with smiles and an open showing of appreciation, even coming at the edge of the stage to joke with the crowd after his second encore.

The Diodes opened the show for Numan. A highly-touted four-man group of new-wavers from Vancouver, the band never quite managed to capture or channel the energy of the audiences.

In general, their stage act was repetitive and unoriginal. Maybe it was nerves, maybe it was a lack of inspiration; whatever it was, it just didn't work.

Numan's tour ends in December in Philadelphia. After retiring from the life of a rock 'n roller, he hopes to work in video. We can only hope that, like David Bowie, this is just the first of many announced retirements, and the first of many farewell tours.



Gary Numan's farewell tour came to town and left 2500 people 'Numan-ized' and screaming for more.

Photo Brent Jeffery

# Liberties an eclectic collection

by Gary McGowan

**Taking Liberties**  
Elvis Costello  
(Columbia JC 36839)



It's a measure of Elvis Costello's ability as a songwriter that after a mere three years as a recording artist his fifth LP release in Canada should be a collection of twenty songs that haven't yet found their way onto any album. *Taking Liberties* is all the more remarkable for the fact that eighteen of the tracks have been released in Britain on various singles and EP's. Far from containing the failed ideas and inferior work that "previously unreleased" LP's usually do, *Taking Liberties* is a very vital Costello album from both a historic and artistic perspective.

As a career retrospective, *Taking Liberties* neatly reviews Costello's "history-on-record" with tracks from the last three years. *Stranger In the House*, a song most familiar in the version Rachel Sweet did on her *Fool Around* LP is featured here with Clover, the group that played on Costello's first album, *My Aim Is True*. The apocalyptic (*I Don't Want To Go To*) *Chelsea*, a track that was very nearly included on the Canadian pressing of *This Year's Model* instead of *Radio, Radio*, at last makes it on album. (It had been issued as the A side of one of the few EP's CBS records has ever issued in Canada, but disappeared quickly in 1978.)

*Crawling To the USA* is the single representative from the album sessions that Costello and the Attractions under-

took in Sydney, Australia. Nothing more has yet surfaced from those sessions but fans continue to drool at the prospect of a complete LP heldback, perhaps as a result of one of Costello's famous temper tantrums.

The Holland sessions that produced *Get Happy!!* album are represented by a Van McCoy(?) song *Getting Mightily Crowded*, that features Costello doing a great David Ruffin/Temptations vocal. There's also a rougher-edged version of *Clowntime Is Over* that was recorded at the same time as the one used on *Get Happy!!*

Finally, for those who, incredibly, may own all this material, there are two never-before-released tracks. *Black and White World*, again a different version of a song that appeared on *Get Happy!!* and a track called *Hoover Factory*, a great piece of Costello melancholia.

Artistically, *Taking Liberties* continues to reflect the themes of sexual frustration and life's meaninglessness that run through Costello's best work. Standouts include *Big Tears*, a song that features Nick Lowe's slick, textured production, guest guitar work by Mick Jones and a resigned Costello lamenting that "big tears mean nothin' when you're lyin' in your coffin."

In *Just A Memory*, Costello comments on the sad state of modern relationships. *The tempo of today becomes the temptation of tomorrow*, he sings as two people are randomly cast together. Then, after his lover is gone and he has time to reflect, the best he can say is "losing you is just a memory/memories don't mean that much to me." The poignancy is amplified by Costello's inability to save himself from these emotional dead end streets.

The political commentary of *Oliver's Army* from *Armed Forces* is continued in *Sunday's Best*, a song that chronicles how "times are tough for English babies." England is adrift and being swallowed by "greasy foreign money" while the population turns inward to "blame it all on the darkies". The fin de siecle mood of the song is underscored by the carnival music the Attractions play. A flood of end-of-empire documentaries have never captured the English plight so well.

With its fine liner notes and excellent music, *Taking Liberties* serves both the Costello fan and the casual listener. For a change a record company is forgiven for a compilation package since *Taking Liberties* serves to wet the appetite for the new Costello disc due sometime in the winter of 1981.

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