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Elvis Costello Returns To The Stage

By Jay Nault

Elvis Costello, one of the truly revered figures of rock and roll, is returning to the stage in venues across the country in 2006. Costello has built a multi-generational and extremely loyal following over the years, so his performances, which are legendary in nature, are sure to be a popular choice among concert goers this year. A look at Costello's life should help explain his current popularity.

Early Life

Declan Patrick MacManus was born in London on August 25, 1954. MacManus was almost born into music, as his father, Ross MacManus, was the leader of a jazz band and a lifetime music lover himself. MacManus' father used to bring home records for his son to listen to as a child, and the artists included on these record collections included early works by the Beatles, the Kinks, the Who and the biggest acts in Motown.

MacManus immediately fell in love with music himself, and was an avid fan throughout his childhood. When MacManus was 16, he moved to Liverpool with his mother, and soon thereafter formed his first band, Rusty. Rusty was a folk duo, and MacManus played this genre with his partner until he moved back to London after completing secondary school.

Upon arriving in London, MacManus formed a pub rock band called Flip City. MacManus stayed with Flip City from 1974 – 1976, and it was during this time he adopted the stage name of D.P. Costello.

MacManus was not yet a successful musician in financial terms, and in 1975 he was married, and had to work a number of odd jobs to make bills on a monthly basis. Some of this work later appeared by reference in his music, most notably his time at a cosmetics firm as a data entry clerk, which led to several lyrics in his songs.

Musical Career

While working these jobs, MacManus pressed on for a solo recording contract. He was successful, and signed a record deal with Stiff Records. It was at this time that, at the suggestion of his new manager,

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that MacManus finally changed his name to Elvis Costello, combining his admiration for Elvis Presley and the maiden name of his maternal grandmother.

In 1977, Costello released his first album, My Aim Is True. The album did well, rising to number 14 on the UK charts and climbing into the Top 40 in the United States. The rest, as they say, is history. Subsequent to his initial release, Costello put out over 30 albums and additional collections.

His niche was rock and roll, and his style incorporated not only his unhappy working past in his lyrics but his early roots of the Beatles, the Kinks and Motown, among others in his melodies. However, when one truly examines Costello's style, it's easy to see why so many simply label his work as "eclectic."

Among those with whom Costello collaborated, one could find an extremely wide array of styles. Legends such as Tony Bennett, Lucinda Williams, Lee Konitz, and Brian Eno worked with Costello,

and these influences were worked into the early style that was adopted as a result of his father's records.

If you would like to see a true musical legend and to be reminded of all the stars listed above through someone else's work, you must take advantage of the opportunity to see Elvis Costello in 2006.

By Jay Nault sponsored by

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