

Elvis Costello



Elvis Costello (born Declan Patrick MacManus; 25 August 1954) is an English singer-songwriter. He began his career as part of London's pub rock scene in the early 1970s and later became associated with the first wave of the British new wave movement of the mid-to-late 1970s. His critically acclaimed debut album, *My Aim Is True*, was recorded in 1976. Shortly after recording his first album, he formed The Attractions as his backing band. They toured and recorded together for the better part of a decade, though differences between Costello and members of The Attractions caused them to split by 1986. Much of Costello's work since 1986 has been credited to him as a solo artist, though partial reunions with some members of The Attractions have been credited to the group over the years.

Steeped in wordplay, the vocabulary of Costello's lyrics is broader than that of most popular songs. His music has drawn on many diverse genres; one critic described him as a "pop encyclopaedia", able to "reinvent the past in his own image".

Costello has won multiple awards in his career, including a Grammy Award, and has twice been nominated for the Brit Award for Best British Male. In 2003, Elvis Costello and the Attractions were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. In 2004, *Rolling Stone* ranked Costello number 80 on their list of the 100 Greatest Artists of All Time.

Early life

Costello was born Declan Patrick MacManus^[8] in St Mary's Hospital, London, the son of Lilian Alda (née Ablett, b. 1927, Liverpool) and Ross MacManus (later Ross McManus; 1927–2011), a musician and bandleader. He is of Irish heritage. Costello lived in Twickenham, attending Hounslow Secondary Modern School, which is now St Mark's Catholic Secondary School, in neighbouring Hounslow. With a musically inclined father (who was a jazz trumpeter and sang with The Joe Loss Orchestra), Costello's first broadcast recording was alongside his dad in a television commercial for R. White's Lemonade (*I'm a Secret Lemonade Drinker*). His father wrote and sang the song; Costello provided backing vocals. The advertisement won a silver award at the 1974 International Advertising Festival.

Costello moved with his Liverpool-born mother to Birkenhead in 1971. There, he formed his first band, a folk duo called Rusty, with Allan Mayes. After completing secondary school at St. Francis Xavier's College where he formed another band that played local school gigs 'Galdis Shuttlebottom and Heavy Friends' with Paul Morrissey, he moved back to London where he next formed a band called Flip City, which had a style in the pub rock vein. They were active from 1974 through to early 1976. Around this time, Costello adopted the stage name D.P. Costello. His father had performed under the name Day Costello, and Elvis has said in interviews that he took this name as a tribute to his father.

Costello worked at a number of office jobs to support himself, most famously at Elizabeth Arden – immortalised in the lyrics of "I'm Not Angry" as the "vanity factory" – where he worked as a data entry clerk. He worked for a short period as a computer operator at the Midland Bank computer centre in Bootle. He continued to write songs and began looking for a solo recording contract. He was signed to independent label Stiff Records on the basis of a demo tape. His

manager at Stiff, Jake Riviera, suggested a name change, combining Elvis Presley's first name and Costello, his father's stage name.

Career

1970s

Costello's first single for Stiff was "Less Than Zero", released on 25 March 1977. Two months later, his debut album, *My Aim Is True* (1977), was released to moderate commercial success (No. 14 in the UK and, later, Top 40 in the US) with Costello appearing on the cover in what became his trademark oversize glasses, bearing some resemblance to Buddy Holly. Stiff's records were initially distributed only in the UK, which meant that Costello's first album and singles were initially available in the US as imports only. In an attempt to change this, Costello was arrested for busking outside a London convention of CBS Records executives, protesting that no US record company had yet seen fit to release his records in the United States. Costello signed to CBS's Columbia Records label in the US a few months later.

The backing for Costello's debut album was provided by American West Coast band Clover, a country outfit living in England whose members would later go on to join Huey Lewis and the News and The Doobie Brothers. Costello released his first major hit single, "Watching the Detectives", which was recorded with Steve Nieve and the pair of Steve Goulding (drums) and Andrew Bodnar (bass), both members of Graham Parker's backing band The Rumour. Later in 1977, Costello formed his own permanent backing band, The Attractions, consisting of Steve Nieve (piano), Bruce Thomas (bass guitar), and Pete Thomas (drums; unrelated to Bruce Thomas).

Elvis Costello, in Massey Hall, Toronto, April 1979

On 17 December 1977, Costello and The Attractions, as a replacement act for the Sex Pistols, were scheduled to play "Less Than Zero" on Saturday Night Live; however, in imitation of a rebellious act by Jimi Hendrix on a BBC show, Costello stopped the song mid-intro, and played "Radio Radio" instead - earning himself a ten-year ban from the show, and considerable attention as an angry young man. Following a tour with other Stiff artists – captured on the *Live Stiffs Live* album, which includes Costello's version of the Burt Bacharach/Hal David standard "I Just Don't Know What to Do With Myself" – the band recorded *This Year's Model* (1978). Some of the more popular tracks include the British hit "(I Don't Want to Go To) Chelsea" and "Pump It Up." His U.S. record company saw Costello as such a priority that his last name replaced the word Columbia on the label of the disc's original pressing. The Attractions' first tour of Australia in December 1978 was notable for controversial performance at Sydney's Regent Theatre when, angered by the group's failure to perform an encore after their brief 35-minute set, audience members destroyed some of the seating.

A tour of the U.S. and Canada also saw the release of the much-bootlegged Canadian promo-only *Live at the El Mocambo*, recorded at a Toronto rock club, which finally saw an official release as part of the *2½ Years* box set in 1993.

In 1979, he released his third LP *Armed Forces* (originally to have been titled *Emotional Fascism*, a phrase that appeared on the LP's inner sleeve). Both the album and the single "Oliver's Army" went to No. 2 in the UK, and the opening track "Accidents Will Happen" gained wide television exposure thanks to its innovative animated music video, directed by Annabel Jankel and Rocky Morton. Costello also found time in 1979 to produce the debut album for the 2 Tone ska revival band *The Specials*.

Costello's standing in the U.S. was bruised for a time when in March 1979, during a drunken argument with Stephen Stills and Bonnie Bramlett in a Columbus, Ohio Holiday Inn bar, the singer referred to James Brown as a "jive-ass nigger", then upped the ante by pronouncing Ray Charles a "blind, ignorant, nigger". Costello apologised at a New York City press conference a few days later, claiming that he had been drunk and had been attempting to be obnoxious in order to bring the conversation to a swift conclusion, not anticipating that Bramlett would bring his comments to the press. According to Costello, "it became necessary for me to outrage these people with about the most obnoxious and offensive remarks that I could muster." In his liner notes for the expanded version of *Get Happy!!*, Costello writes that some time after the incident he had declined an offer to meet Charles out of guilt and embarrassment, though Charles himself had forgiven Costello saying "Drunken talk isn't meant to be printed in the paper." Costello worked extensively in Britain's Rock Against Racism campaign both before and after the incident. The incident inspired his *Get Happy!!* song "Riot Act."

Costello is also an avid country music fan and has cited George Jones as his favourite country singer. In 1977, he appeared in Jones' duet album *My Very Special Guests*, contributing "Stranger in the House", which they later performed together on an HBO special dedicated to Jones.

1980s

The soul-infused *Get Happy!!* would be the first, and—along with *King of America*—possibly most successful, of Costello's many experiments with genres beyond those he is normally associated with. The single, "I Can't Stand Up for Falling Down" was an old Sam and Dave song (though Costello increased the tempo considerably). Lyrically, the songs are full of Costello's signature word play, to the point that he later felt he had become something of a self-parody and toned it down on later releases; he has mockingly described himself in interviews as "rock and roll's Scrabble champion." His only 1980 appearance in North America was at the Heatwave festival in August near Toronto.

In 1981, the band released *Trust* amidst growing tensions within the band, particularly between Bruce and Pete Thomas. In the U.S., the single "Watch Your Step" was released and played live on Tom Snyder's *Tomorrow* show, and received airplay on FM rock radio. In the UK, the single "Clubland" scraped the lower reaches of the charts; follow-up single "From a Whisper to a Scream" (a duet with Glenn Tilbrook of *Squeeze*) became the first Costello single in over four years to completely miss the charts. Costello also co-produced *Squeeze*'s popular 1981 album *East Side Story* (with Roger Bechirian) and also performed backing vocals on the group's hit single "Tempted".

Following *Trust*, Costello released *Almost Blue*, an album of country music cover songs written by the likes of Hank Williams ("Why Don't You Love Me (Like You Used to Do?)"), Merle Haggard ("Tonight the Bottle Let Me Down") and Gram Parsons ("How Much I Lied"). The album was a tribute to the country music he had grown up listening to, especially George Jones. It received mixed reviews. The first pressings of the record in the UK bore a sticker with the message: "WARNING: This album contains country & western music and may cause a radical reaction in narrow minded listeners." *Almost Blue* did spawn a surprise UK hit single in a version of George Jones' "Good Year for the Roses" (written by Jerry Chesnut), which reached No. 6.

Imperial Bedroom (1982) marked a much darker sound, due in part to the production of Geoff Emerick, famed for engineering several Beatles records. *Imperial Bedroom* remains one of his most critically acclaimed records, but again failed to produce any hit singles. Costello has said he disliked the marketing pitch for the album. The album also featured Costello's song "Almost Blue"; jazz singer and trumpeter Chet Baker would later perform and record a version of this song.

In 1983, he released *Punch the Clock*, featuring female backing vocal duo (Afrodiziak) and a four-piece horn section (The TKO Horns), alongside The Attractions. Clive Langer (who co-produced with Alan Winstanley), provided Costello with a melody which eventually became "Shipbuilding", which featured a trumpet solo by Chet Baker. Prior to the release of Costello's own version, a version of the song was a minor UK hit for former Soft Machine drummer Robert Wyatt.

Under the pseudonym The Imposter, Costello released "Pills and Soap", an attack on the changes in British society brought on by Thatcherism, released to coincide with the run-up to the 1983 UK general election. *Punch the Clock* also generated an international hit in the single "Everyday I Write the Book", aided by a music video featuring lookalikes of the Prince and Princess of Wales undergoing domestic strife in a suburban home. The song became Costello's first Top 40 hit single in the U.S. Also in the same year, Costello provided vocals on a version of the Madness song "Tomorrow's Just Another Day" released as a B-side on the single of the same name.

Tensions within the band—notably between Costello and bassist Bruce Thomas—were beginning to tell, and Costello announced his retirement and the break-up of the group shortly before they were to record *Goodbye Cruel World* (1984). Costello would later say of this record that they had "got it as wrong as you can in terms of the execution". The record was poorly received upon its initial release; the liner notes to the 1995 Rykodisc re-release, penned by Costello, begin with the words "Congratulations!, you've just purchased our worst album". Costello's retirement, although short-lived, was accompanied by two compilations, *Elvis Costello: The Man in the UK, Europe and Australia*, and *The Best of Elvis Costello & The Attractions* in the U.S.

In 1985, he appeared in the Live Aid benefit concert in England, singing the Beatles' "All You Need Is Love" as a solo artist. (The event was overrunning and Costello was asked to "ditch the band".) Costello introduced the song as an "old northern English folk song", and the audience was invited to sing the chorus. In the same year Costello teamed up with friend T-Bone Burnett

for the single "The People's Limousine" under the moniker of The Coward Brothers. That year, Costello also produced *Rum Sodomy & the Lash* for the Irish punk/folk band The Pogues.

Growing antipathy between Costello and Bruce Thomas contributed to the Attractions' first split in 1986 when Costello was preparing to make a comeback. Working in the U.S. with Burnett, a band containing a number of Elvis Presley's sidemen (including James Burton and Jerry Scheff), and minor input from the Attractions, he produced *King of America*, an acoustic guitar-driven album with a country sound. It was billed as by "The Costello Show featuring the Attractions and Confederates" in the UK and Europe and "The Costello Show featuring Elvis Costello" in North America. Around this time he legally changed his name back to Declan MacManus, adding Aloysius as an extra middle name. Costello retooled his upcoming tour to allow for multiple nights in each city, playing one night with The Confederates (James Burton et al.), one night with The Attractions, and one night solo acoustic. In May 1986, Costello performed at *Self Aid*, a benefit concert held in Dublin that focused on the chronic unemployment which was widespread in Ireland at that time.

Later that year, Costello returned to the studio with the Attractions and recorded *Blood and Chocolate*, which was lauded for a post-punk fervour not heard since 1978's *This Year's Model*. It also marked the return of producer Nick Lowe, who had produced Costello's first five albums. While *Blood and Chocolate* failed to chart a hit single of any significance, it did produce what has since become one of Costello's signature concert songs, "I Want You." On this album, Costello adopted the alias Napoleon Dynamite, the name he later attributed to the character of the emcee that he played during the vaudeville-style tour to support *Blood and Chocolate*. (The pseudonym had previously been used in 1982, when the B-side single "Imperial Bedroom" was credited to Napoleon Dynamite & The Royal Guard, and was later appropriated by the 2004 film *Napoleon Dynamite*). In 1989, Costello, with a new contract with Warner Bros., released *Spike*, which spawned his biggest single in America, the Top 20 hit "Veronica", one of several songs Costello co-wrote with Paul McCartney in that period.

1990s

In 1991, having grown a long beard, Costello released *Mighty Like a Rose*, which featured the single "The Other Side of Summer." He also found time to co-compose and co-produce, with Richard Harvey, the title and incidental music for the mini-series *G.B.H.* by Alan Bleasdale. This entirely instrumental, and largely orchestral, soundtrack garnered a BAFTA, for Best Music for a TV Series for the pair.

In 1993, Costello experimented with classical music with a critically acclaimed collaboration with the Brodsky Quartet on *The Juliet Letters*. During this period, Costello wrote a full album's worth of material for Wendy James, and these songs became the tracks on her 1993 solo album *Now Ain't the Time for Your Tears*. Costello returned to rock and roll the following year with a project that reunited him with The Attractions, *Brutal Youth*. In 1995, Costello released *Kojak Variety*, an album of cover songs recorded five years earlier, and followed in 1996 with an album of songs originally written for other artists, *All This Useless Beauty*. This was the final album of original material that he issued under his Warner Bros. contract.

In the spring of 1996, Costello played a series of intimate club dates, backed only by Nieve on the piano, in support of *All This Useless Beauty*. An ensuing summer and fall tour with the Attractions proved to be the death knell for the band. With relations between Costello and bassist Bruce Thomas at a breaking point, Costello announced that the current tour would be the Attractions' last. The quartet performed their final U.S. show in Seattle, Washington on 1 September 1996, before wrapping up their tour in Japan. To fulfill his contractual obligations to Warner Bros., Costello released a greatest hits album titled *Extreme Honey* (1997). It contained an original track titled "The Bridge I Burned", featuring Costello's son, Matt, on bass. In the intervening period, Costello had served as artistic chair for the 1995 Meltdown Festival, which gave him the opportunity to explore his increasingly eclectic musical interests. His involvement in the festival yielded a one-off live EP with jazz guitarist Bill Frisell, which featured both cover material and a few of his own songs.

In 1998, Costello signed a multi-label contract with Polygram Records, sold by its parent company the same year to become part of the Universal Music Group. Costello released his new work on what he deemed the suitable imprimatur within the family of labels. His first new release as part of this contract involved a collaboration with Burt Bacharach. Their work had commenced earlier, in 1996, on a song called "God Give Me Strength" for the movie *Grace of My Heart*. This led the pair to write and record the critically acclaimed album *Painted From Memory*, released under his new contract in 1998, on the Mercury Records label, featuring songs that were largely inspired by the dissolution of his marriage to Cait O'Riordan. Costello and Bacharach performed several concerts with a full orchestral backing, and also recorded an updated version of Bacharach's "I'll Never Fall in Love Again" for the soundtrack to *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me*, with both appearing in the film to perform the song. He also wrote "I Throw My Toys Around" for *The Rugrats Movie* and performed it with No Doubt. The same year, he collaborated with Paddy Moloney of The Chieftains on "The Long Journey Home" on the soundtrack of the PBS/Disney mini-series of the same name. The soundtrack won a Grammy that year.

In 1999, Costello contributed a version of "She", released in 1974 by Charles Aznavour and Herbert Kretzmer, for the soundtrack of the film *Notting Hill*, with Trevor Jones producing. For the 25th anniversary of *Saturday Night Live*, Costello was invited to the program, where he re-enacted his abrupt song-switch: This time, however, he interrupted the Beastie Boys' "Sabotage", and they acted as his backing group for "Radio Radio".

2000-present

Elvis Costello performing at a Promotional concert. (Summer 2006).

Costello performing at Glastonbury, 2005

Performing in Glasgow, July 25, 2006.

In 2000, Costello appeared at the Town Hall Theatre, New York, in Steve Nieve's opera *Welcome to the Voice*, alongside Ron Sexsmith and John Flansburgh of *They Might Be Giants*. In 2001, Costello was artist-in-residence at UCLA and wrote the music for a new ballet. He produced and appeared on an album of pop songs for the classical singer Anne Sofie von Otter.

He released the album *When I Was Cruel* in 2002 on Island Records, and toured with a new band, the Imposters (essentially the Attractions but with a different bass player, Davey Faragher, formerly of Cracker). He appeared as himself in the "How I Spent My Strummer Vacation" episode of *The Simpsons*.

On 23 February 2003, Costello, along with Bruce Springsteen, Steve Van Zandt, and Dave Grohl, performed a version of The Clash's "London Calling" at the 45th Grammy Awards ceremony, in honour of Clash frontman Joe Strummer, who had died the previous December. In March, Elvis Costello & the Attractions were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. He announced his engagement in May to Canadian jazz singer and pianist Diana Krall, whom he had seen in concert and then met backstage at the Sydney Opera House in Australia. That September, he released *North*, an album of piano-based ballads concerning the breakdown of his former marriage, and his falling in love with Krall. Also that year, Costello made an appearance in the television series *Frasier* as a folk singer in the Cafe Nervosa, sending Frasier and Niles on a search for a new coffee bar.

The song "Scarlet Tide" (co-written by Costello and T-Bone Burnett and used in the film *Cold Mountain*) was nominated for a 2004 Academy Award; he performed it at the awards ceremony with Alison Krauss, who sang the song on the official soundtrack. Costello co-wrote many songs on Krall's 2004 CD, *The Girl in the Other Room*, the first of hers to feature several original compositions. In July 2004, Costello's first full-scale orchestral work, *Il Sogno*, was performed in New York. The work, a ballet after Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, was commissioned by Italian dance troupe Aterballetto, and received critical acclaim from the classical music critics. Performed by the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, the recording was released on CD in September by Deutsche Grammophon. Costello released the album *The Delivery Man*, recorded in Oxford, Mississippi, and released on Lost Highway Records, in September of the same year, and it was hailed as one of his best albums.

Costello's hand prints on the European Walk of Fame, Rotterdam.

A CD recording of a collaboration with Marian McPartland on her show *Piano Jazz* was released in 2005. It featured Costello singing six jazz standards and two of his own songs, accompanied by McPartland on piano. In November, Costello started recording a new album with Allen Toussaint and producer Joe Henry. *The River in Reverse* was released in the UK on the Verve label the following year in May.

A 2005 tour included a gig at Glastonbury that Costello considered to be so dreadful that he said "I don't care if I ever play England again. That gig made up my mind I wouldn't come back. I don't get along with it. We lost touch. It's 25 years since I lived there. I don't dig it, they don't dig me....British music fans don't have the same attitude to age as they do in America, where young people come to check out, say Willie Nelson. They feel some connection with him and find a role for that music in their lives."

After Hurricane Katrina, Costello and Allen Toussaint, in September 2006 in New York, performed onstage at a series of Hurricane Relief benefit concerts. By week's end, Mr. Costello had written "The River in Reverse", performed it with Mr. Toussaint and discussed plans for an album with Verve Record executives. The result is Costello's 2006 album, "The River in Reverse" which is a collaboration with New Orleanian, Allen Toussaint and recorded with The Crescent City Horns . Elvis Costello has turned to older songs (namely, those of New Orleans songwriter/producer/arranger Allen Toussaint) to subtly and serendipitously reflect the current national malaise. The River in Reverse, a decidedly post-Katrina and yet conveniently timeless project co-helmed by Costello and Toussaint, is a record that perfectly captures the feeling of disappointment that arises when the most advertised of expectations aren't met. It's easy to apply these types of emotions (and, therefore, the album itself) to the tenure of the times—and of course, Costello and Toussaint know what they're doing here. Mr. Costello, a well-tested musical chameleon, managed to sound at home in Mr. Toussaint's world. He sang the hymn-like plea "Freedom for the Stallion" with sensitivity and authority, stamping one aside — "it's a doggone sin" — with a definitive sense of exasperation. He did nearly as well with "Tears, Tears and More Tears," a lovelorn plaint that has acquired a double meaning since the devastation in New Orleans.

In a studio recording of Nieve's opera *Welcome to the Voice* (2006, Deutsche Grammophon), Costello interpreted the character of Chief of Police, with Barbara Bonney, Robert Wyatt, Sting and Amanda Roocroft, and the album reached No. 2 in the Billboard classical charts. Costello later reprised the piece on the stage of the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris in 2008, with Sting, Joe Sumner of Fiction Plane (Sting's son) and Sylvia Schwartz. Also released in 2006 was a live recording of a concert with the Metropole Orkest at the North Sea Jazz Festival, entitled *My Flame Burns Blue*. The soundtrack for *House M.D.* featured Costello's interpretation of "Beautiful" by Christina Aguilera, with the song appearing in the second episode of Series 2.

Costello was commissioned to write a chamber opera by the Danish Royal Opera, Copenhagen, on the subject of Hans Christian Andersen's infatuation with Swedish soprano Jenny Lind. Called *The Secret Songs* it was unfinished. In a performance in 2007 directed by Kasper Bech Holten at the Opera's studio theatre (Takelloftet), finished songs were interspersed with pieces from Costello's 1993 collaborative classical album *The Juliet Letters*, featuring Danish soprano Sine Bundgaard as Lind. The 2009 album *Secret, Profane & Sugarcane* includes material from *Secret Songs*.

On 22 April 2008, *Momofuku* was released on Lost Highway Records, the same imprint that released *The Delivery Man*, his previous studio album. The album was, at least initially, released exclusively on vinyl (with a code to download a digital copy). That summer, in support of the album, Costello toured with The Police on the final leg of their 2007/2008 Reunion Tour. Costello played a homecoming gig at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall on 25 June 2006. and, that month, gave his first performance in Poland, appearing with The Imposters for the closing gig of the Malta theatre festival in Poznań.

In July 2008, Costello (as Declan McManus) was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Music from the University of Liverpool.

From late 2008 into 2010, Costello hosted Channel 4/CTV's series *Spectacle* in which Costello talked and performed with stars in various fields, styled similarly to *Inside the Actors Studio*. Between its two seasons, the show compiled 20 episodes, including one where Costello was interviewed by actress Mary-Louise Parker.

Costello was featured on Fall Out Boy's 2008 album *Folie à Deux*, providing vocals on the track "What a Catch, Donnie", along with other artists who are friends with the band.

Costello appeared in Stephen Colbert's television special *A Colbert Christmas: The Greatest Gift of All*. In the program, he was eaten by a bear, but later saved by Santa Claus; he also sang a duet with Colbert. The special was first aired on 23 November 2008. Costello released *Secret, Profane & Sugarcane*, a collaboration with T-Bone Burnett, on 9 June 2009. Burnett previously worked with Costello on *King of America* and *Spike*. It was his first on the Starbucks Hear Music label and a return to country music in the manner of *Good Year for the Roses*.

Costello performing in tribute to music legends Chuck Berry and Leonard Cohen who were the recipients of the first annual PEN Awards for songwriting excellence, at the JFK Presidential Library, in Boston, Massachusetts on 26 February 2012.

Costello appeared as himself in the finale of the third season of *30 Rock* and sang in the episode's celebrity telethon, *Kidney Now!*. The episode references Costello's given name when Jack Donaghy accuses him of concealing his true identity: "Declan McManus, international art thief."

In May 2009, Costello made a surprise cameo appearance on-stage at the Beacon Theater in New York as part of Spinal Tap's *Unwiggled and Unplugged* show, singing their fictional 1965 hit "Gimme Some Money" with the band backing him up.

On 15 May 2010, Costello announced he would withdraw from a concert performed in Israel in opposition to Israel's treatment of Palestinians. In a statement on his website, Costello wrote, "It has been necessary to dial out the falsehoods of propaganda, the double game and hysterical language of politics, the vanity and self-righteousness of public communiqués from cranks in order to eventually sift through my own conflicted thoughts."

Also in 2010, Elvis Costello appeared as himself in David Simon's television series, *Treme*. Costello released the album *National Ransom* in autumn of 2010.

In 2011, Elvis Costello appeared as himself once again, this time on *Sesame Street* to perform a song with Elmo and Cookie Monster, titled "Monster Went and Ate My Red 2", a play on (The Angels Wanna Wear My) Red Shoes. The same year, Costello performed "Taken for a Fool", live from Madison Square Garden with The Strokes.

On 26 February 2012, Costello paid tribute to music legends Chuck Berry and Leonard Cohen who were the recipients of the first annual PEN Awards for songwriting excellence, at the JFK Presidential Library, in Boston, Massachusetts on 26 February 2012.

In January 2013, drummer Questlove revealed that his band The Roots were currently making an album with Costello. The record is to be released in September 2013.

Personal life

Relationships

Costello has been married three times, the first time in 1974 to Mary Burgoyne, with whom he had a son, Matthew. Toward the end of his first marriage, Costello became embroiled in an on-again/off-again romance with Bebe Buell, then-girlfriend of Todd Rundgren (and mother of Steven Tyler's daughter Liv). Buell has said she was the inspiration behind some of Costello's most bitter love songs from the Armed Forces era, though Costello countered by claiming most of those songs had been written before he ever met Buell.

In 1985, Costello became involved with Cait O'Riordan, then the bassist of the English/Irish group The Pogues, while he was producing The Pogues' album *Rum Sodomy and the Lash*. They married in 1986 and split up by the end of 2002.

Costello became engaged to piano-vocalist Diana Krall in May 2003, and married her at the home of Elton John on 6 December that year. Krall gave birth to twin sons, Dexter Henry Lorcan and Frank Harlan James, on 6 December 2006 in New York City.

Vegetarianism

A vegetarian since the early 1980s, Costello says he was moved to reject meat after seeing the documentary *The Animals Film* (1982), which also helped inspire his song "Pills and Soap" (from *Punch the Clock*, 1983).

In January of 2013, Costello teamed up with Paul McCartney to create an ad campaign backing vegetarian foods produced by the Linda McCartney Foods brand.

Football

Away from music Costello is a keen football fan, supporting Liverpool, and has appeared on Channel 4's *Football Italia* as a pundit.

Humanitarian causes

Costello sits on the Advisory Board of the Board of Directors of the Jazz Foundation of America. Costello began working with the Jazz Foundation in 2001, and has been a featured performer in their annual benefit *A Great Night in Harlem* since 2006. Costello has donated his time working with the Jazz Foundation of America to save the homes and the lives of America's elderly jazz and blues musicians, including musicians who survived Hurricane Katrina.

Collaborations

In addition to his major recorded collaborations with Bacharach, the Brodsky Quartet, and von Otter, Costello has frequently been involved in other collaborations.

In 1985 he sang with Annie Lennox on the track ' Adrian' from the Eurythmics record 'Be Yourself Tonight'.

In 1987, Costello began a long-running songwriting collaboration with Paul McCartney. They wrote a number of songs together, including:

"Back On My Feet", the B-side of McCartney's 1987 single "Once Upon a Long Ago", later added as a bonus track on the 1993 re-issue of McCartney's *Flowers in the Dirt*

Costello's "Veronica" and "Pads, Paws and Claws" from *Spike* (1989) (Also, McCartney plays Hofner bass but does not have a writing credit for "This Town" – the opening song for the album.)

"So Like Candy" and "Playboy to a Man" from *Mighty Like a Rose* (1991)

McCartney's "My Brave Face", "Don't Be Careless Love", "That Day Is Done" and "You Want Her Too" from *Flowers in the Dirt* (1989)

"The Lovers That Never Were" and "Mistress and Maid" from *Off the Ground* (1993).

"Shallow Grave" from *All This Useless Beauty* (1996).

Costello talked about their collaboration:

When we sat down together he wouldn't have any sloppy bits in there. That was interesting. The ironic part is, if it sounds like he wrote it, I probably did and vice versa. He wanted to do all the ones with lots of words and all on one note, and I'm the one trying to work in the "Please Please Me" harmony all over the place.

In 1987, he appeared on the HBO special *Roy Orbison and Friends, A Black and White Night*, which featured his long-time idol Roy Orbison, and was invited back to *Saturday Night Live* for the first time since 1977.

In 1988, Costello co-wrote "At the Other End (of the Telescope)" with Aimee Mann; this song appears on the Til Tuesday album *Everything's Different Now*.

In 2000, Costello wrote lyrics to "Green Song", a solo cello piece by Svante Henryson; this song appears on the Anne Sofie von Otter album *For the Stars*.

In 2005, Costello performed with Green Day frontman Billie Joe Armstrong. They played both Costello and Green Day songs together, including "Alison", "No Action", "Basket Case" and "Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)".

In Fall 2005 Costello performed with Allen Toussaint in New York City at some Hurricane Katrina Relief Concerts and produced the studio album, "The River in Reverse." Also, Costello had a collaborative history with Mr. Toussaint, beginning with a couple of scattered album tracks in the 1980s.

In 2007, Costello collaborated with the Argentinean/Uruguay an electro-tango band Bajofondo on the song "Fairly Right" from the album Mar Dulce.

In 2008, Costello collaborated with Fall Out Boy on the track "What a Catch, Donnie" from their album Folie a Deux.

In Jenny Lewis' 2008 release, Acid Tongue, Costello provided vocals for the song "Carpetbaggers".

In November 2009, Costello appeared live with Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band at Madison Square Garden and performed the Jackie Wilson song, Higher and Higher.

In December 2009, it was announced that Costello would be portraying The Shape in the upcoming album Ghost Brothers of Darkland County, a collaboration between rock singer John Mellencamp and novelist Stephen King.

In February 2010, Costello appeared in the live cinecast of Garrison Keillor's Prairie Home Companion, singing some of his own songs, and participating in many of the show's other musical and acting performances.

In April 2011, played the song "Taken For a Fool" with The Strokes in Madison Square Garden.

On 30 April 2011, played the song "Pump it Up" with The Odds before the start of a Vancouver Canucks playoff game at Rogers Arena in Vancouver BC.

Artistic significance

Costello has worked with Paul McCartney, Tony Bennett, Allen Toussaint, Lucinda Williams, Kid Rock, Lee Konitz, Brian Eno, and Rubén Blades.

Costello is also a music fan, and often champions the works of others in print. He has written several pieces for the magazine Vanity Fair, including the summary of what a perfect weekend of music would be. He has contributed to two Grateful Dead tribute albums and covered Jerry Garcia/Robert Hunter tunes such as "Ship of Fools", "Friend of the Devil", "It Must Have Been the Roses", "Ripple" and "Tennessee Jed" in concert. His collaboration with Bacharach honoured Bacharach's place in pop music history. Costello also appeared in documentaries about singers Dusty Springfield, Brian Wilson, Wanda Jackson, Ron Sexsmith and Memphis, Tennessee-based Stax Records. He has also interviewed one of his own influences, Joni Mitchell. He was instrumental in bringing Sexsmith to a wider audience in 1995 by championing his debut album in Mojo magazine, even appearing on the cover with the album.

In 2004, Rolling Stone Magazine ranked him No. 80 on their list of the 100 Greatest Artists of All Time.

Also Costello had a long collaborative history with New Orleanian and Rock and Roll Hall of Famer, Allen Toussaint, beginning with a couple of scattered album tracks in the 1980s and skipping ahead to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina with the production of, "The River in Reverse".

Discography

Main article: Elvis Costello discography

Studio albums by Elvis Costello (included albums released with the Attractions and the Imposters):

My Aim Is True (1977)

This Year's Model (1978)

Armed Forces (1979)

Get Happy!! (1980)

Trust (1981)

Almost Blue (1981)

Imperial Bedroom (1982)

Punch the Clock (1983)

Goodbye Cruel World (1984)

King of America (1986)

Blood & Chocolate (1986)

Spike (1989)

Mighty Like a Rose (1991)

The Juliet Letters (1993)

Brutal Youth (1994)

Kojak Variety (1995)

All This Useless Beauty (1996)

When I Was Cruel (2002)

North (2003)

The Delivery Man (2004)

Momofuku (2008)

Secret, Profane & Sugarcane (2009)

National Ransom (2010)

Wise Up Ghost (2013) (with The Roots)

Costello has also released studio albums in collaboration with Richard Harvey, John Harle, Burt Bacharach, Anne Sofie Von Otter, Bill Frisell, Marian McPartland and Allen Toussaint, as well as five live albums: Live at the El Mocambo, Deep Dead Blue, Costello & Nieve, My Flame Burns Blue, and Live at Hollywood High. There have also been numerous compilations, box sets, and reissues by labels such as Rykodisc, Demon, Rhino, and Universal Music Enterprises.

Filmography

Actor

1979 film debut as "The Earl of Manchester" in Americathon

1984 as "Henry Scully" in the UK TV series, Scully

1984 as "Stone Deaf A&R Man" in "The Bullshitters", a movie made by members of the comedy troupe The Comic Strip, first aired on Channel 4.

1985 as inept magician "Rosco de Ville" in the Alan Bleasdale film, No Surrender

1987 as "Hives the Butler" in the Alex Cox film, Straight to Hell, starring Joe Strummer and Courtney Love

1994 as himself on The Larry Sanders Show in the episode "People's Choice"

1997 as a barman in Spice World.

1999 as himself performing "I'll Never Fall In Love Again" with Burt Bacharach in Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me

1999 as a younger version of himself in 200 Cigarettes

2001 as himself performing "Fly Me to the Moon" on the series finale of 3rd Rock from the Sun

2002 as himself on the episode "How I Spent My Strummer Vacation" of The Simpsons

2003 as Ben on Frasier, in the season 10 episode "Farewell Nervosa".

2004 as himself in the UK TV Dead Ringers New Year Special, apparently and reportedly having serendipitously entered a filming venue

2004 as himself in Two and a Half Men – Season 2, Episode 1

2006 as himself in Delirious

2006 as himself in Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby

2008 as himself in "A Colbert Christmas: The Greatest Gift of All!"

2009 as himself on the episode of 30 Rock, "Kidney Now!"

2010 as himself on Treme

Soundtrack

2003 Academy Award nomination for best original song, "The Scarlet Tide", in Cold Mountain

Bibliography

Costello, Elvis. A Singing Dictionary. London: Plangent Visions Music; New York, N.Y.: Exclusive selling agent for the United States and Canada, Warner Bros. Publications, 1980. ISBN 0-7692-1505-X. Sheet music, chords, and lyrics for works 1977–1980.
