

Arts & Entertainment

Costello's 'King' painful

By Chris McCubbin
Staff Reporter

The Costello Show (featuring Elvis Costello) "King Of America" Columbia

Record Review

Elvis Costello's new album, "King Of America" is a painful experience for those who've followed Costello's career for any length of time.

The painful part is watching Costello pour out the feelings of futility and purposelessness that are really all he feels he has any business to claim for himself in Declan MacManus' 10 years as Elvis Costello.

The Elvis Costello of 1986 has taken on the world, and not only did he not win, he was completely ignored. "I was a fine idea at the time," he sings on the album's first cut, "Brilliant Mistake" "Now I'm a brilliant mistake."

Costello's battle for his own sense of purpose is the recurring theme in "King Of America." In "I'll Wear It Proudly" he sings, "If they had a king of fools then I could wear that crown/and you can all die laughing 'cause I'll wear it proudly."

In "Jack of All Parades," he sings "And I was everybody's boy, but soon that thrill just fades..."

Costello's conclusion to his inner debate is frightening. In "Suit of



Courtesy of CBS Records

Lights" he says:

And I thought I heard the working man's blues/I went to work last night and wasted my breath/Outside they're painting tar on somebody/It's the closest to a work of art that they will ever get/And they pulled him out of the cold cold ground/And put him in a suit of lights.

Interspersed with Costello's confessional songs are several dealing with his more familiar themes of breaking hearts and social unrest, as well as a couple of surprises.

An excruciatingly slow, almost prayer-like cover of the Animals' "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood" provides what is probably the album's most beautiful moment.

Costello uses a wide variety of musical styles on "King Of America," concentrating on traditional American forms like country, blues and western swing.

"The Costello Show" consists of Costello's own band, the Attractions, and an amazing assortment of session men called the Confederates. The Confederates include T-bone Burnett, who co-produced the album with Costello. David Hidalgo of Los Lobos, James Burton, Elvis Presley's guitarist, famous session drummer Jim Keltner and others. The performances on this album are uniformly tight and beautiful.

This is far from being Costello's best album, but it definitely stands up to comparison to his early classics.

The Cucumbers rise above Jersey junkyards

By Charles Lieurance
Senior Reporter

Amidst Hoboken, New Jersey's rampant real estate speculation, I refab "luxury" condominiums, junkyards full of bullet-ridden, twisted automobiles and industrial garbage, grew The Cucumbers, a danceable pop outfit with a cheery spirit that defies their place of origin.

Concert Preview

The Cucumbers write songs about love, boys and girls together and boys and girls apart. The music is a sharply produced amalgam of Motown and alternative dance music. The Cucumbers' cover of the Presley classic, "All Shook Up" won them critical approval, if not accolades, from The Village Voice and other East Coast dictators of musical taste.

Lead singer and guitarist, Deena Shoshken chirps out pop ditties in a Jane Wiedlin-esque voice that compensates for its apparent lack of range with overwhelming cheerfulness. Enough cheerfulness to send the Bat Cave set shrieking up their stalactites.

There's nothing incessantly moody, psychedelic or politically dogmatic on either The Cucumber's EP, "All Shook Up" or their debut LP "He Who Betrays..." Shoshken made no apologies for this in a phone interview.

"Love songs are the most political of all songs," Shoshken argued when I asked her if love songs weren't a bit passe.

"It's something everybody experiences," Shoshken said. "We do straightforward, unglossy, to-the-heart songs, not drip and dross."

Shoshken says most alternative independent bands stay away from love songs because most songs in that tradition reinforce the unrealistic side of that emotion.

"Our songs are realistic," Shoshken said.

"Our message is that you shouldn't let society determine what you're doing or feeling."

Because The Cucumbers haven't scored big with a record company yet, John Williams, the group's bass player, has retained his job as a typewriter repairman. Jon Fried works as a proofreader in a publishing house as well as handling vocal duties and guitar for The Cukes. Yuergen Renner, the group's drummer, has a desk job.

All the members of The Cucumbers want to devote their time entirely to music, but the club scene in Hoboken and nearby New York are not as lucrative as the recent glut of new New Jersey bands and New York's reputation would suggest.

"There really aren't any places for a new band to play in New York," says Shoshken. "Most bands that want to make it there have come out to Hoboken so they can afford real apartments..."

Hoboken currently boasts a music scene to rival the great American music mecca, Athens, Ga. The compilation "Luxury Condominiums Coming Soon to a Neighborhood Near You" featuring Syd Straw, The Kilkenny Cats, Gut Bank and the Tryflies showed Hoboken is housing some mighty talent behind the waste dumps and plastic lawn flamingos.

The Cucumbers will open for The Replacements in the Nebraska Union Centennial Room tonight. Both groups are currently on the same record label but this is the first time they have shared a billing.

Gallery Selections by Greg Walgren



Oh, deer!

This photo by journalism major Greg Walgren captured our imagination and is this week's Gallery selection. The NRA would probably love it.

We welcome all black and white photos from UNL students and staff. No prizes are awarded, but the photographer is identified.

THE INCREDIBLE CHIL-CHI'S MEXICAN RESTAURANTE

TUESDAY

Margaritaville

1/2 Price Margaritas

WEDNESDAY

Taco Bar 8:00-12:00

75¢ Tacos

75¢ Draw Beers

\$3.00 Pitchers

Reduced Prices on Margaritas

THURSDAY

Student Night

1/2 Price Mexican Pizzas

75¢ Draw Beers

\$3.00 Pitchers

Reduced Prices on Margaritas



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