

New Releases



Elvis Costello and Burt Bacharach
"Painted From Memory"
Mercury Records
Grade: B

At first, the pairing of Burt Bacharach and Elvis Costello may seem like a novelty—a product of either Bacharach's resurgence or Costello's penchant for strange career moves.

But in reality, the musical ambitions of these seemingly distant figures are closer than one would expect.

Bacharach stands as one of the mainstays of comball pop music, most notably because of his prolific and readily popular sonic output in the 1960s. And Costello stands as one of pop music's least popular figures—a gifted but indecisive musical chameleon who has never stuck with a genre long enough to entrench himself in it as a recognizable force.

Both Bacharach and Costello have a talent for simple, lyrical pop tunes. And for at least one album, it's enough.

"Painted From Memory" is the result of a months-long collaborative effort between the two. And despite the distinctly Bacharach-esque instrumentation, the music truly does sound like it contains the touch of both musicians.

Piano and strings are the order of the entire album. Swelling choruses, light verses and things not too out of the ordinary go on here. Costello, who has recorded everything from classical to country to jazz, assumes the role of the lounge-stranded crooner.

And although this new persona may be just another temporary turn for Elvis, it's actually one that he might want to stick with for a while. He may be older now, but his voice still possesses the punk-inspired urgency that became a signature for Costello's late '70s/early '80s albums.

This beauty carries throughout the lover's laments and the sentimental dedications that fill "Painted From Memory," which is nothing more than a collection of short, sweet pop songs.

It doesn't break or cover much ground. But when you have the chance to listen to Elvis Costello and Burt Bacharach work together for almost an hour, who can complain?

—Jeff Randall

Cousteau's widow, son battle over how to keep legacy

NEW YORK (AP) — More than a year after Jacques Cousteau's death, the undersea explorer's widow and son reportedly are sniping at each other over how to carry on his work.

"I represent continuity of the name," Cousteau's 60-year-old son, Jean-Michel, said in the latest issue of Time magazine. "So I must be a voice for the oceans."

But Cousteau chose his widow, Francine Cousteau, to head the Cousteau Society, which holds the rights to his films, books and inventions.

She plans to build the 217-foot Calypso II to replace Cousteau's beloved Calypso, which sank near Singapore in 1996. Cousteau had begun work on the second boat before he died at 87 in June 1997.

Francine Cousteau, 52, also hopes to send out a Caspian Sea expedition and run a "Waters of Peace" program. Jean-Michel Cousteau calls the Calypso II "a joke," and says, "My father must be flip-flopping in his grave."

Female chess grandmaster encourages girls to play

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The world's first female grandmaster in chess said girls are still missing out on the game because they aren't taught it.

Susan Polgar, 29, became a grandmaster in 1991 and once beat the world's fifth-ranked player, Anatoly Karpov.

She spoke Saturday to the Pittsburgh Chess Club, which counts several nationally ranked girls among its membership.

"Even today in some countries, chess isn't something they teach girls," Polgar said. "It is improving, and once girls start to play, they've shown they have the talent to compete with men."

The reigning world women's champion, Polgar started playing chess before she even started school in Hungary because she was fascinated with the pieces.

Chan: There are few roles for Chinese in Hollywood

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — If you're Chinese in Hollywood, Jackie Chan says, the roles start looking real familiar.

"There are few roles for Chinese unless they specially write a script for us. Then it's cop, cop, cop, killer, killer, killer," the Hong Kong action star said Saturday in Taipei, where he's promoting his latest film, "Rush Hour."

Chan's first Hollywood produc-

tion in over a decade, "Rush Hour" grossed \$33 million in its opening week in the United States.

He plays a policeman in the movie, and Hollywood debuts this year by Chow Yun-fat and Jet Lee have cast them as hit men. All are veterans of Hong Kong's gritty movie industry that puts a premium on action and violence.

Chan, who was made an honorary officer by Taiwan's police force, also said he would donate \$29,000 worth of movie proceeds to a fund for families of officers killed in duty.

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