

“REMEMBER WHEN ROCK WAS YOUNG: THE ELTON JOHN EXPERIENCE” SHOW NOTES

Cape Symphony presents “Remember When Rock Was Young: The Elton John Experience” on Saturday, May 18, 2024 at 3:00 PM and 7:30 PM and Sunday, May 19, 2024 at 3:00 PM at the Barnstable Performing Arts Center.

Cape Symphony

[Carolyn Watson](#), Guest Conductor
[Cape Symphony Musicians](#)

Guest Artists

[Craig A Meyer](#), Piano and Vocals

The Rocket Band:

Michael Lamond – Bass
Doug Jacobs – Guitar
Mark Carbone – Drums
Pat Strawser – Keyboards
Kelly Fletcher – Vocals
Richard Mallory – Vocals
Shawn Megordan – Vocals

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Please note the program is subject to change.

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About Today's Program

Sir Elton John's discography has left an indelible mark on the music industry and popular culture. From poetic ballads to electrifying anthems, his songs have touched millions of people across continents and generations. John's songwriting partnership with lyricist Bernie Taupin is one of the most enduring and successful in history; they were both inducted into the Songwriter's Hall of Fame in 1992.

From the poignancy of "Your Song" to the exuberance of "Crocodile Rock," each of these songs is a testament to Sir Elton's unparalleled talent as a songwriter and performer. His melodies continue to resonate with audiences around the world, uplifting and uniting us all.

Here are some of his best, brought to life for you by Craig A Meyer, The Rocket Band, and your Cape Symphony Orchestra. Enjoy the memories and excitement they bring back for so many!

THE BITCH IS BACK

Elton John, Orch. David Yackley

Released in 1974 on the album *Caribou*, "The Bitch Is Back" exudes defiance and self-assurance in a good-natured parody of John's celebrity lifestyle. It is said to have been inspired by lyricist Bernie Taupin's wife's comment about Elton being in a mood.

The song hit number one in Canada, number four in the United States, and number 15 in the United Kingdom. Some radio stations – including New York's WPIX – refused to play it because of the word "bitch." Oh, how times have changed.

"The Bitch is Back" has been covered by Tina Turner, Rihanna, and Miley Cyrus, among others.

PHILADELPHIA FREEDOM

Elton John, Orch. David Yackley

This song was inspired by Elton John's friendship with star athlete Billie Jean King, who was part of the "Philadelphia Freedoms" pro tennis team. It captures the spirit of resilience and determination that characterized King's career, her partnership with Elton John in tireless civil rights activism, and the city of Philadelphia itself.

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“Philadelphia Freedom” plays in the city’s Franklin Institute IMAX theater before every show, and its lyrics are on the walls of Philadelphia’s Hard Rock Café. In 1975, its exuberance and patriotism resonated perfectly with an American audience gearing up to celebrate the country’s bicentennial.

GOODBYE YELLOW BRICK ROAD

Elton John, Orch. David Yackley

Released to critical acclaim as the title track of the 1973 album, "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" is a powerful ballad of self-discovery and liberation. Lyrics by Bernie Taupin reflect on the pressures of fame and the longing for a simpler, more authentic life. With its soaring chorus and anthemic refrain, "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" resonates as a rallying cry for independence and authenticity, inspiring generations to chart their own course and pursue their dreams without compromise.

The song spent two months atop the Billboard Top 100.

BENNIE AND THE JETS

Elton John, Orch. David Yackley

Get out your electric boots and mohair suit! “Bennie and the Jets” is listed in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame’s 500 Songs That Shaped Rock, along with “Your Song.”

“Bennie and the Jets” was John’s first hit on the R&B charts, leading to his 1975 guest appearance on *Soul Train*. The song has been covered by Beastie Boys, Pink, and others. Mary J. Blige used its piano chorus on her 1999 single “Deep Inside,” for which Elton John and lyricist Bernie Taupin are both credited as co-writers.

Taupin told *Rolling Stone* that he “saw Bennie and the Jets as a sort of proto-sci-fi punk band fronted by an androgynous woman.” In live performances, Elton John sometimes closed it with the iconic five note sequence from John Williams’ score for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

THE ELTON BROADWAY SUITE

Elton John, Orch. David Yackley

Elton John has lent his prodigious songwriting talent to several Broadway productions. This stirring medley encompasses “The Circle of Life” from *The Lion King*, “Written in the Stars” from *Aida*, “Electricity” from *Billy Elliot*, and “Can You Feel the Love Tonight” from *The Lion King*.

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TINY DANCER

Elton John, Orch. David Yackley

Originally released on the 1971 album *Madman Across the Water*, “Tiny Dancer” was inspired by lyricist Bernie Taupin’s first visit to California, and his (then) wife, Maxine Feibleman, a former ballerina who sewed patches on Elton’s jackets and jeans (“a seamstress for the band”).

At 6 minutes 12 seconds, the song was too long to succeed immediately in the U.S. as a single, though it eventually became one of John’s most popular songs and a pop music radio staple. *Rolling Stone* includes it in their list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time, and it was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2020.

TAKE ME TO THE PILOT

Elton John, Orch. Ryan Whyman.

Recorded in London in 1970, “Take Me to the Pilot” was released as the A-side of a single (“Your Song” was the B-side, and eventually the more popular tune).

Neither Elton John nor Bernie Taupin have ever been able to explain what the song’s lyrics mean exactly, but everyone agrees they sound great!

~Intermission~

FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND/LOVE LIES BLEEDING

Elton John, Orch. David Yackley

“Funeral for a Friend” and “Love Lies Bleeding” were written separately, but recorded together. The medley is the opening track to the 1973 double album *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*, and was often performed as a show opener on live tours.

John is said to have composed “Funeral for a Friend” while considering what kind of music he’d like played at his own funeral (may it be a long time coming).

Metallica raised the roof covering this song at Washington, D.C.’s DAR Constitution Hall in March 2024 when Elton John and Bernie Taupin were honored with the Gershwin Prize for Popular Song.

DON’T GO BREAKING MY HEART

Carte Blanche and Ann Orson, Arr. Almost Elton John and the Rocket Band

Different songwriters, you say? Actually, no... Carte Blanche and Ann Orson are pseudonyms for Elton John and Bernie Taupin! A charming duet performed by John and English singer Kiki Dee, this

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song was a nod to Marvin Gaye's Motown-style duets of the time. It was a number one single in the UK for both John and Dee, and a number one for John in the States.

In his 1977 appearance on *The Muppet Show*, Elton John performed this song with Miss Piggy. He wore a dusty rose mirrored jumpsuit; she, a deep lilac bedazzled gown with matching feather boa ("eat your heart out, Kiki!"). Awkward embraces ensued.

CANDLE IN THE WIND

Elton John, Orch. David Yackley

"Candle in the Wind" is a threnody written in honor of Marilyn Monroe, who had died in 1962.

Bernie Taupin has since said the song "could just as easily have been about James Dean, Jim Morrison, Kurt Cobain... anybody, any writer, actor, actress or musician who died young... it's a beauty frozen in time."

Rolling Stone lists "Candle in the Wind" as one of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time.

In 1997, John performed a rewritten version of the song as a tribute to Diana, Princess of Wales. *Guinness World Records* lists this version as the second-best selling single in the world, with 33 million copies sold. (The first? Bing Crosby's "White Christmas," with 50 million.)

LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS/PINBALL WIZARD

Elton John, Orch. David Yackley

"Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" is a Beatles song from their 1967 album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, inspired by a nursery school drawing by John Lennon's son Julian. Elton John released a cover version as a single in 1974, with Lennon (as "Dr. Winston O'Boogie") on backing vocals and guitar.

"Pinball Wizard" was written by Pete Townshend and released on The Who's 1969 rock opera album *Tommy*. Elton John performed it for the film adaptation of *Tommy* in 1975. John's version uses the piano as a centerpiece in place of the acoustic guitar in the original.

YOUR SONG

Elton John, Orch. Ryan Whyman

"Your Song" was originally recorded by the American rock band Three Dog Night, for whom Elton John was an opening act in 1970. They declined to release it as a single so that John could have a shot at making it a success. The song became John's first international Top 10 chart single.

A pretty, romantic, and relatable love song, "Your Song" was released to high praise. It ran up the charts, and is widely thought to be one of John's greatest. It has touched countless people. John has

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played “Your Song” at almost every live performance during his solo career, including a performance in Central Park in 1980 dressed as Donald Duck, and at Madison Square Garden with Billy Joel at The Concert for New York City soon after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Rod Stewart, Lady Gaga and others have covered the song, which was certified 2x Platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America in 2018.

CROCODILE ROCK

Elton John, Orch. Ryan Whyman

Recorded in 1972, “Crocodile Rock” was a pre-release single from the album *Don’t Shoot Me I’m Only the Piano Player*. It was John’s first number one single in the U.S.

“I remember when rock was young,” the song begins in a misty-eyed but tons of fun look back at early rock n’ roll. “I wanted it to be a record about all the things I grew up with,” John said in the notes for the 1995 reissue of *Don’t Shoot Me*.

Elton John performed “Crocodile Rock” in a sequined bathing cap and yards upon yards of bright feathers with Dr. Teeth and the Electric Mayhem on *The Muppet Show* in 1977. Crocodiles sang the chorus in perfect falsetto.

SATURDAY NIGHT’S ALRIGHT FOR FIGHTING

Elton John, Orch. Ryan Whyman

This was the first single from John’s best-selling 1973 album *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*. Lyricist Bernie Taupin has said it was inspired by fistfights in his local pub in his wild teenage days: “Don’t give us none of your aggravation, we’ve had it with your discipline...”

“Saturday Night’s Alright For Fighting” is a high-powered, aggressive, energetic and just plain fun song, with piano playing that calls Jerry Lee Lewis to mind. It has been covered and sampled by many, including Queen, The Who, and Umberto Tozzi.

DON’T LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON ME

Elton John, Orch. Ryan Whyman

Written in just ten days and recorded in 1974 for the album *Caribou*, the poetic ballad “Don’t Let the Sun Go Down on Me” was released to a warm critical and popular reception, and soared up the Billboard chart to number two. Backing vocals were performed by Carl Wilson and Bruce Johnston of The Beach Boys, and Toni Tennille. The song was nominated for Grammy Awards for Record of the Year and Best Pop Vocal Performance – Male.

Elton John performed the song with George Michael at Live Aid in 1985. The version they recorded together in 1991 spent two weeks at the top of the adult contemporary chart, and was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Pop Vocal Performance by a Duo or Group.

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Tickets for “The Elton John Experience”

“Remember When Rock Was Young: The Elton John Experience” performances will be at the Barnstable Performing Arts Center, 744 West Main Street, Hyannis on Saturday, May 18, 2024 at 3:00 PM and 7:30 PM and Sunday, May 19, 2024 at 3:00 PM. Each show has all but sold out; only a few isolated single seats remain.

For more information and to purchase any remaining tickets, visit capesymphony.org, call the Box Office at 508.362.1111, email tickets@capesymphony.org, or visit us at 2235 Iyannough Road in West Barnstable, MA. The Box Office is open Monday – Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. During concert weekend, we can only be reached by email.

Only tickets purchased on Cape Symphony’s secure website or through the Cape Symphony Box Office are legitimate and guaranteed. Exchanges or credits can only be honored for tickets purchased on the Cape Symphony website or through the Cape Symphony Box Office. See our [ticket policies](#).

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