

# New York, N.Y.

By DAVID MCGEE & BARRY TAYLOR  
with special guest columnist PAT BAIRD

■ **ELVIS IS STILL KING:** Hardly your quintessential rock star (he doesn't wear blue jeans, he's not from the west coast and he's certainly not laid back) but **Elvis Costello** possesses star quality. It's apparent from his songs, his stance, his well orchestrated publicity campaign masterminded by Stiff Records' **Jake Riviera**, and it's all over his new album, "My Aim Is True," produced by **Nick Lowe**. El made his London debut at Dingwalls two weeks ago after being arrested outside of the Hilton earlier in the day for allegedly disturbing the peace. He was in fact giving a free concert for members of the CBS convention who enthusiastically applauded the abbreviated solo set. Elvis is a charismatic performer who may usher a few brief words to the audience but prefers to remain intent on his music. His group, which includes former **Quiver** bassman **Bruce Thomas**, and an unidentified drummer and keyboardist lays down a clean, economical accompaniment with pockets of dynamic interactions which turned the shoulder to shoulder audience into a mass of bobbing heads and bodies, urging Elvis through songs like "Miracle Man," "Less Than Zero," "I'm Not Angry," the dreamy "Alison" and the as yet unrecorded "Lipstick Vogue" and "Lip Service" which indicates that some of the best is yet to come. Among those not at the concert was the still hobbling "**Brahma**" who missed the bus because he's too slow. Elvis remains unsigned in this country, but interest is mounting and we hope to see a deal concluded in the near future.

NOW THAT THE BARON'S FINALLY OUTTA HERE . . . and doing God knows what on the perverted "backstreets" of Tulsa and maybe missing out on a semi-private Jukes/E Streeters party rumored to be taking place sometime this week at the Barnaget Light (and did you know The Baron a.k.a. Slash keeps a TULSA tee-shirt right in his desk drawer to whip on at the merest suggestion that a fellow Oklahoman like **Mary Kay Place** or **Dwight Twilley**, might amble into Nut Central) they've finally given this guest columnist a chance to get outta "the music publishing scene" to be a real guest columnist.



**CONTEST:** The dashing blond pictured here is someone who has been seen numerous times throughout the years in the pages of **RW** but has lately decided to paint a more worldly, and sophisticated pose (last seen in suit and tie but no shirt). A special N.Y., N.Y. trophy will be awarded to the first person who correctly identifies him.

■ **JUST WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS, ANOTHER RECORD LABEL:** This one's called Big Sound and it was started several months ago by rock scribe-musician-entrepreneur **Jon Tiven**. The first Big Sound record, a slickly packaged album titled "Bionic Gold" reached us last week and it is a potpourri of international groups and artists performing songs either written or produced by **Phil Spector**. Most of the artists, including **The Scratch Band**, **Fran Kowalski** and **Vince Whirlwind** are part of the Big Sound roster while guests include Canada's **Phillip Rambow** (formerly a member of **The Winkies**) and England's **Mick Farren** (a writer for the *New Musical Express* and sometimes **Deviant**) who contributes a punk rock version of "To Know Him Is To Love Him." A couple of the album's best tracks are by The Scratch Band whose "Then He Kissed Me" should rival the **Kiss** version that appears on the "Love Gun" album. Rambow performs the **Bob B. Soxx and the Blue Jeans** favorite, "Why Do Lovers Break Each Others Hearts" and the **Barry/Greenwich/Spector** classic, "All Grown Up." It's an ambitious and slightly offbeat collection of performers and performances ripe with humor but with an underlying dedication to the pop maestro that makes it a truly exceptional and worthwhile effort. You can contact Tiven through Big Sound's office at 175 Thompson St., Suite A, N.Y.C., 10012.

**SERIOUSLY NOW:** Readers of this column and its Coast counterpart are no doubt aware of the plight of singer **Jackie Wilson** who continues to make a very slow recovery from his coma in a New Jersey hospital. We were both surprised and sorry to learn last week that the Coast's recent plea for cards and letters netted merely one phone call and three cards. According to **Joyce E. McRae** who has been looking after Wilson, his speech therapy is about to be

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## Arista Signs Ray Parker



Arista Records president Clive Davis has announced the signing of Ray Parker to a long-term recording contract. Parker, along with his newly formed group **Raydio**, will have his debut album, "I'm Your Raydio," released in September. As a songwriter Parker's compositions have been covered by such artists as Rufus, Bobby Womack, Stevie Wonder, Boz Scaggs and Barry White. Pictured after the signing are, from left: Clive Davis, Parker, and Roger Birnbaum, vice president, west coast a&r for the label.

## Seattle Market Changes

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home office to Hackensack some 22 months ago.

Seattle-based Gull Industries has not been involved in the record industry before. The 19-year-old industrial conglomerate's principal holding is Gull Oil, which did approximately \$60 million in sales last year, according to Industries VP Russell Victor. "We recognize the need for diversification," Victor told **RW**, and added that the parent firm also owns an airplane parts manufacturing company.

Adding to the Northwest activity is the entry of the first Seattle Peaches Records store, a 17,000 square foot facility located in the city's university district. It will probably be in full operation by the end of September according to company president Tom Heiman. Peaches acquired the property and physical plant, which was formerly a car dealership, and has made structural changes in the main building which will allow Pacific Stereo, a sound equipment retailer, to rent the adjoining store area of approximately 10,000 square feet.

While the entry of Peaches has caused considerable speculation in the retail record community, especially among those who fear that Peaches will force prices down, another retailer has expanded into the affluent town of Bellevue, located approximately 12 miles to the East, with an estimated population of 65,000.

The Music Market, which in April opened its first Seattle store, a 7500 square foot facility, will open a 6500 square foot store in Bellevue in mid-August. Music Market is operated by Roundup Music Distributors, which is a division of Fred Meyer.

Roundup is headed by Lou Lavinthal and Stan Jaffe, former execs in the ABC Record and Tape Sales operation. Chuck Blacksmith, who was head buyer

for ABC Record and Tape, is also an executive with the firm, which replaced rack-jobbing by ABC and J.L. Marsh in the Fred Meyer stores.

The Music Market in Seattle has been selling most \$6.98 list price lps at \$5.29, while \$7.98 suggested list albums are usually tagged at a dollar more.

Further complicating the high level of activity in the Seattle market is the move of the Tower Records store to a larger location.

According to local business analysts and economic forecasters, the Seattle market will experience significant growth in the next 10 years, and Bellevue business consultants are predicting that their city will equal Seattle in population by the year 2000.

"The forecast for this area is pretty positive," stated David Bell, a Seattle business consultant. "Some of the reasons are that there is considerable construction activity, in residential, commercial and industrial fields and there is an increase in foreign trade. The Boeing Company is doing very well, and there are other industries that have come into the area in the last three to five years.

"I think the economy of the area is much stronger now," added Bell. "People are making more money, are more secure in their future, and are buying with more money. I think all of these have come together to provide a more optimistic atmosphere, and as a result, some very large malls and regional shopping centers are being built." Bell stated that at least five major enclosed malls were either being planned or presently being built in the greater Seattle area, and observed that Bellevue "is probably the most affluent area in the state of Washington."