

# Elton John: Sign of a Change

By THE MISSION SINGERS

Elton John, who wrote and sings Your Song, will be a musical symbol for 1971. He may not be the biggest star, but he'll do as a symbol, just as Love Story will do as a symbol of 1971 movies.

The reality that the symbol stands for is the fact that we're beginning to worry a little less about the splinter in the other guy's eye and becoming more interested and fascinated by the beam and gleam in our own.

A lot of people are commenting on this turn of events. Newsweek recently did a cover

story on "The Future of Rock." This story singled out Elton John, and some others, as precipitating a move away from rock as a cultural offensive, in which pop musicians used their music to point out the problems and hypocrisies of our society.

But now the audience seems more anxious to contemplate than to confront, to appreciate than to attack, to celebrate than to charge.

Elton John reflects this new mood. He delights himself by examining his own goals and moods: "It's a little bit funny, this feeling inside; not one of those you can easily hide."

Sure it's "just" a love song. But it's so different from My Boy Lollipop or 1,2,3, Red Light, Your Song is one of Elton John's attempts to describe himself and the place he has in his world.

Like the husband who always introduces his wife as "my best friend," Elton John is saying in his song: If anyone is going to get through life successfully and happily, then he's got to have someone who's more than a "wife" or more than a "lover," but a friend. "How wonderful life is when you're in the world."

Does that seem to be stretching the point a little? Not really, if you can accept the truth that Your Song is a positive reaction against the heavy messages of the past couple of years. The cause was buried sometime during the fight, and now people are trying to unearth it again. Your Song is a simple, personal statement on the basic foundation of any realistic goal, a friend.

Of course it's possible that we could all be escaping from the problems that are still overwhelming us. One commentator described the trend towards less inflammatory music and movies this way: six to ten years ago, when most people were pretty well off, they felt guilty about it; they seemed to be asking themselves, "What right do we have to be so comfortable while others are so uncomfortable?"

So all these reform movements started, and the popular arts reflected the new attitude. But now we find ourselves fatigued, economically, emotionally and mentally. So we no longer feel the strong urge to help others. At the same time, we turn away from music that encourages such social activity.

Well, all that is one man's opinion. Like any generalization, it's true and it's not true. It's true in the sense that the temptation to escape from our responsibility is now at a peak. It's not true in another sense, because we should always be looking inside our minds, our selves, in order to pinpoint our directions.

Elton John looks inside in a very happy, pleasant way. There's a Gospel story about two sisters: Martha, who was very active and busy, and Mary, who looked lazy but really did her work inside. Elton John is one symbol of the fact we are again coming to realize the value of looking inside ourselves. (Catholic Press Features)

# THE MUSIC BAG

Your Song

It's a little bit funny, this feeling inside,  
Not one of those you can easily hide.  
Don't have much money, but boy if I did,  
I'd buy a big house where we both could live.

If I was a sculptor, but then again, no —  
Or a man who makes potions in the traveling show.  
I know it's not much but it's the best I can do,  
My gift is my song and this one's for you.

And you can tell everybody this is your song,  
It may be quite simple but now it's done,  
I hope you don't mind, I hope you don't mind that I put down in words  
How wonderful life is when you're in the world.

I sat on the roof and picked up the moss  
But you are the verses, well they've got me quite cross.  
But the sun's been quite kind while I wrote this song,  
It's people like you that keep it turned on.

So excuse me forgetting but these things I do,  
You see I've forgotten if they're green or they're blue,  
Anyway, the thing is — what I really mean —  
Yours are the sweetest eyes I've ever seen.

(Copyright 1970 by Dick James Music.)

# Artur Rubinstein ... We Miss You

By FRANK CROCIATA

This is the second consecutive season in which pianist Artur Rubinstein has not appeared in Rochester. I question the wisdom of our otherwise sagacious local impresarios, not only because of his popularity here, and his advancing age, but because contrary to every precedent, he seems to be just now, at 85, coming into his most glorious artistic period.

I heard Mr. Rubinstein last Sunday in the Newark, N.J., Symphony Hall, a huge auditorium seating about 4,000. Every seat was filled, every standing space was filled, and the stage was filled with seats leaving space for his piano and the narrowest of paths leading to it.

When other pianists would consider retirement, or at least a slowing down of activities, Rubinstein seems to be increasing the demands upon himself. This was the second of four all-Chopin programs in the New York area. During the previous week he played two piano concerts with the New York Philharmonic, and the critic of the

Chicago Catholic paper mentions his performance last week of the Schubert B-flat Sonata.

He doesn't even spare himself in his program selection. In Newark his printed list included the F-minor Fantasy, two Ballades, four Preludes, two Mazurkas, and concluding with the B-flat Scherzo. He left no doubt that he is still the foremost interpreter of Chopin. His tempi have slowed a bit resulting in an even grander sweep and line. His plan was imperiously logical and his proclamation imperial.

Ovations were unrestrained, and among his encores he played the Chopin etude "the Black Keys" a fiendishly difficult exercise, with the dash and accuracy of a young prodigy who practices 10 hours a day.

Howard Taubman of the New York Times has called Artur Rubinstein "the last civilized man." There is a certain renewal of hope, in civilization and humanity that is an intrinsic part of Artur Rubinstein. We are not so rich artistically or spiritually that we can do without him for another season in Rochester.

On Sunday, Feb. 7, at 3 p.m. Samuel Jones will conduct members of the orchestra and the Opera Theatre of Rochester in the Rochester premiere of Gian Carlo Menotti's opera "Help! Help! the Globolinks" at the Eastman Theatre.

# Mazowsze Troupe Due at Eastman

The Mazowsze company of 100 singers, dancers and musicians of Poland, now on its third tour of North America, comes to the Eastman Theater Monday, Feb. 8.

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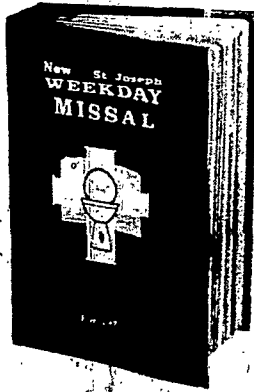
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