

Grapevine

Fan to sell largest private Elvis Presley collection for love

When Elvis Presley sang "I Can't Stop Loving You," he might have been singing it for Jim Curtin. Because Curtin just can't stop loving Elvis — and that has caused him no end of trouble. He is Elvis' most loyal fan and owner of the largest privately held collection of Elvis memorabilia. Now, in order to win back the woman of his dreams, he has to get rid of every one of the tens of thousands of items he possesses. But Curtin, who is the ultimate romantic, believes it will all be worthwhile.

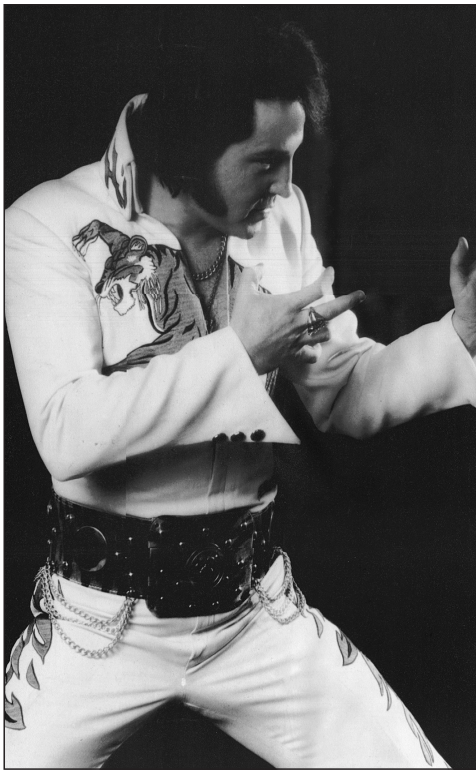
He first met Renata Ginter when she wrote to him after buying an Elvis calendar he had produced. They met, and the rest, as they say, is history. Except, it all began to go wrong because of Elvis. Curtin thought he could love them both equally, but Renata had different ideas. Eventually she left Jim, and all he had were his memories of happier times, and his memorabilia of Elvis.

Curtin has tried everything possible to win back his lost love. He has sent flowers and gifts, offered a flawless diamond, made endless phone calls and sent hundreds of letters — to no avail. Ginter's family and friends all told him that in order to have a chance of getting her back, Elvis had to go.

That is just what Curtin has now decided to do. His entire phenomenal collection will be auctioned off in January and is expected to raise approximately \$5 million. He has been an avid Presley fan since he was a child and has more than 25,000 photographs, 50,000 items of memorabilia, 1,000 reels of never-before-seen super 8 footage and three costumes worn by Elvis (one of which was given to him personally by the King). (See page 9 for more details.)

Curtin evolved from being a star-struck fan to a serious collector, follower and finally a friend of the great entertainer.

At first, his love of Elvis was an escape from a desperately unhappy childhood. His father was an alcoholic and was never able to support his family. Curtin remembers moving house more than 30 times, on several occasions he came home from school to find the bailiffs had taken all the furniture. As a kid, shining shoes to earn a few pennies, he would



Courtesy of Regency-Superior

Jim Curtin

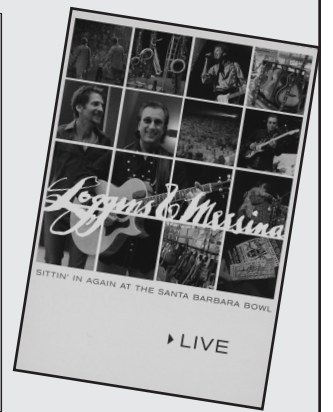
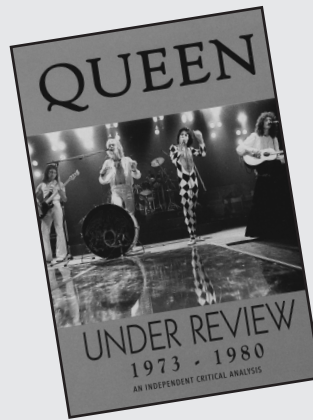
hear Elvis being played on the jukeboxes in the bars and cafes where he worked. Curtin purchased his first Elvis record — "Return To Sender" — when he was 12 years old, and after that, there was no stopping him. He bought every record ever released in the U.S., then discovered different versions were sold abroad, so he promptly started acquiring those.

The first time he saw Presley on stage was Nov. 8, 1971. Curtin recalled, "He was like a god, walking out on stage. He had something no one else had — sex appeal, style, looks, voice, feeling. He sang from the soul. I knew the guy was unbelievable. The chemistry was so powerful, it overwhelmed me."

He decided he had to make some special gesture to show the depth of his feelings for Elvis. Despite earning only \$99 per week, he designed and commissioned a \$2,000 Gibson guitar, which had "Elvis Presley" and two crowns inscribed on the fretboard. Young Curtin headed to Las Vegas in September 1974, and with the help of Vernon Presley, who had taken a liking to this dedicated fan,

(Please see Jim Curtin page 61)

GRAPELEAVES



News & notes: Guitarist Link Wray (76) died of heart failure at home in Copenhagen, Denmark, Nov. 5, 2005. Wray learned to play guitar growing up in North Carolina. Link and his brothers Vernon and Doug played country music until they were struck with the rock 'n' roll beat. The group worked up a raunchy, guitar-driven instrumental that was called "Oddball" and recorded it. Archie Bleyer released it on his Cadence Records, retitled "Rumble." It was released in the spring of 1958 as by Link Wray And His Ray Men, and it became a Top 20 hit. Further recordings were made, but Bleyer refused to release them. Wray and his group signed to Epic Records, which thought Wray could be as popular as Duane Eddy. Wray was left to cut more rowdy instrumentals as long as he threw out an occasional pop bone. Wray's guitar-playing style — the loud, distorted sound of power chords — directly influenced nearly every rock guitarist who came after him.

On the bookshelf: The music of Robert Plant, Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham is given a comprehensive look in Keith Shadwick's *Led Zeppelin — The Story Of A Band And Their Music 1968-1980* (Backbeat Books, ISBN: 0-87930-871-0). The 320-page book focuses on what matters most about Zep — their music — and forgoes the all-too-common concentration on offstage antics and misbehaviors. Instead, readers are treated to numerous rare photographs and given insight into the band's songs and sound... *Studio A — The Bob Dylan Reader* (W.W. Norton, ISBN: 0-393-32742-6) is a collection of some of the best writings about the mercurial singer/songwriter, arranged chronologically from 1961 to present. Editor Benjamin Hedin's selections include musings by music critics Lester Bangs, Ralph Gleason, and Greil Marcus; novelists Michael Chabon and David Gates; poet Allen Ginsberg; playwright Sam Shepard; and musicians Bono, Bruce Springsteen, and Johnny Cash... Blues fans will want to check out the revised, second edition of *The B.B. King Reader — 6 Decades Of Commentary* (Hal Leonard, ISBN: 0-634-09927-2). Editor Richard Kostelanetz has gathered writings about the blues great, including the first-known article from a Memphis newspaper in 1952, along with interviews (one with King and John Lee Hooker together), reviews, notes on early recordings and analysis of King's guitar style.

For couch potatoes: *Queen Under Review*

1973-1980 (Music Video Distributors/Chrome Dreams) is an independent look at one of rock's most singular and enduring acts. Rare live and studio footage along with band interviews and reviews and criticism from music journalists examine Queen when the band members were, arguably, at the height of their creativity... Music partners Kenny Loggins and Jim Messina reunited for a tour in the summer of 2005 — their first in nearly 30 years — and a California performance was recorded and is presented in *Live: Sittin' In Again At The Santa Barbara Bowl* (Rhino), a 20-song collection including "House At Pooh Corner," "Back To Georgia," "Kind Woman" and "Angry Eyes." There's also bonus footage of the duo's 1973 *Midnight Special* performances with "Danny's Song," "Your Mama Don't Dance," "Sailin' In The Wind" and more. In Dolby Digital 5.0 Surround, Dolby Digital stereo and DTS formats... From Image Entertainment comes Daryl Hall & John Oates, *Our Kind Of Soul Live*, with 17 songs, three bonus tracks and an interview. The duo perform tunes in tribute to their Philadelphia roots including "I Can Dream About You," "Rock Steady" and "Used To Be My Girl." The DVD is formatted for DTS 5.1 Surround, Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround and 2.0 stereo. Also from Image is Ray Charles, *50 Years In Music*, a tribute that features Charles performing solo ("What'd I Say," "Just For A Thrill" and "Can't Keep A Good Man Down"), and Stevie Wonder, Randy Travis, James Ingram, Michael McDonald, and Gladys Knight and others singing songs made famous by Charles along with several duets. Extras include behind-the-scenes rehearsal footage.

For analog kids: Two important jazz and blues releases will be reissued on 180-gram vinyl in early 2006: *The Best Of Muddy Waters* (Speakers Corner/Chess, Jan. 13) and *The John Coltrane Quartet, Africa/Brass* (Speakers Corner/Impulse, Jan. 30). Waters' best-of includes "Hoochie Coochie," "I Just Want To Make Love To You," "Honey Bee" and "I Can't Be Satisfied"; *Africa/Brass* finds Coltrane deviating from a normal quartet formation and bringing in trumpets, four coranglans (English horns), baritone sax, two euphoniums and a tuba. The rhythm section also gets a boost as two bassists, Art Davis and Reggie Workman, are used to emphasize the beat.

— Todd Whitesel
(Wray obit by Freddie Patterson)