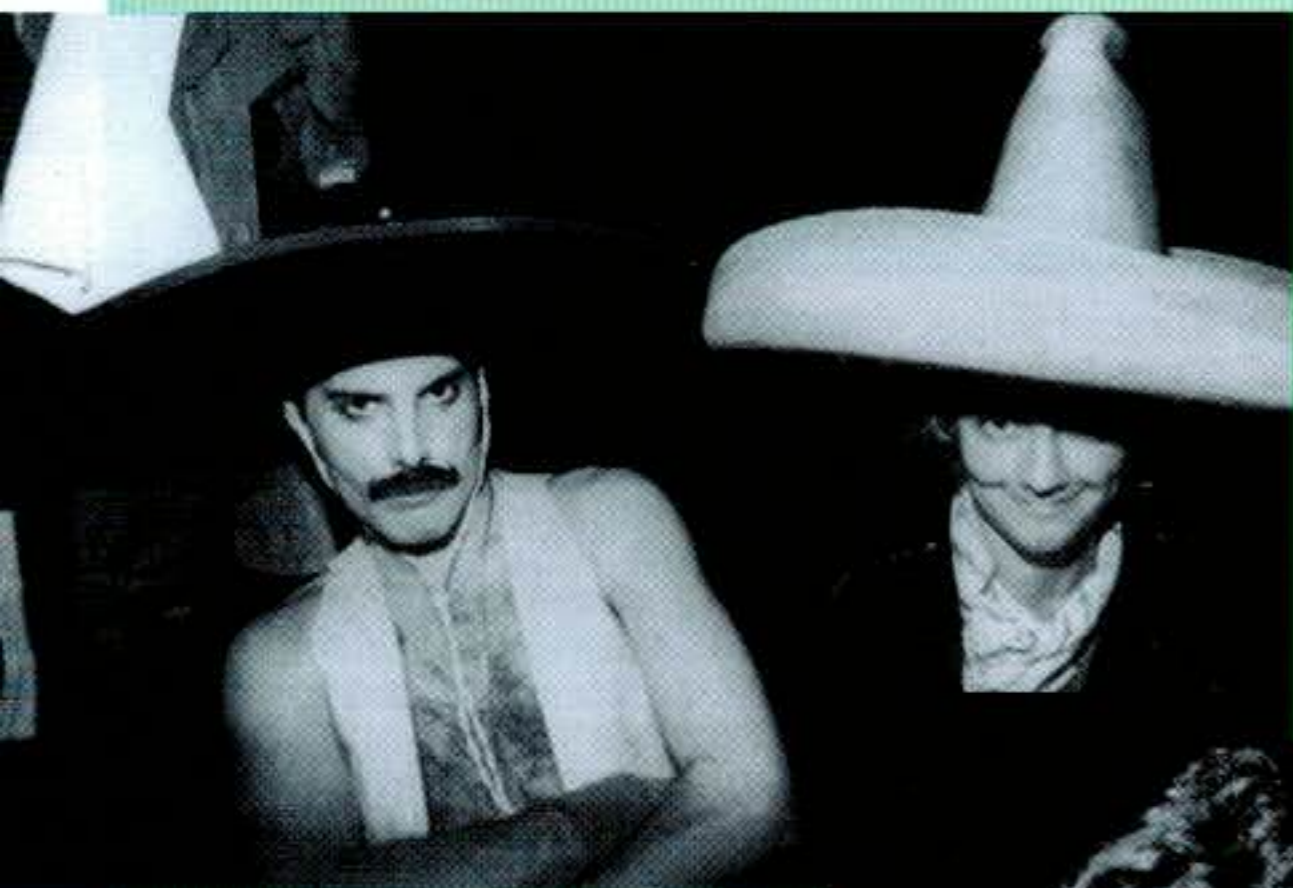


A New Day for Queen's *Night at the Opera*

LISTEN TO **QUEEN'S** highly theatrical *A Night at the Opera* album in its original stereo mix, and it's clear that the group's 1975 masterwork was barely contained by the traditional two-speaker sonic spread.



Richly textured, painstakingly crafted and flamboyantly realized, its aural pomp and circumstance command an appropriately super-sized soundstage.

On November 22, Hollywood Records issues a 30th anniversary edition of *A Night at the Opera* befitting a Queen. The digipak contains a remastered CD and a DVD with revamped DTS 5.1 surround sound, featuring the first 5.1 mix of the album's instrumental coda, "God Save the Queen."

Recycled more times than a Steven Seagal movie plot, it isn't the first *Opera* reissue to be trumpeted, nor is it the first surround-sound treatment; a 5.1 mix in DVD-Audio and DVD-Video was released in 2002 by DTS Entertainment. In the set's booklet, Queen guitarist **Brian May** boasts, "This is quite simply the best *Night at the Opera* ever produced. Never has the record-



■ queen

ing been so carefully balanced, so carefully cleansed of clicks and pops."

The 5.1 mixes created for the 2002 DTS release by May, original album co-producer Roy Thomas Baker and engineers Elliot Scheiner and Justin Shirley-Smith were updated by soundsmith Kris Fredriksson and remastered by the legendary Bob Ludwig. "They readdressed every track that was done for DTS," Charlie D'Atri, director of marketing and special projects for Hollywood Records, tells **ICE**, "and, given the time and space and the evolution of the technology, they tweaked throughout."

For Hollywood, it's a chance to market the album to more than just early format-adopters. "Only a small audience has ever been able to hear [the DVD-Audio] mixes," he notes. "By doing it on DVD, it opens up the whole world."

The program also contains a proper 5.1 mix of "God Save the Queen" from the 16-track master, which was thought to be lost. "I think it had been mislabeled," says D'Atri, "but they turned it up about six months ago." Digitally restored vintage promo clips for "Bohemian Rhapsody" and "You're My Best Friend," a new video for "Good Company," plus live performance footage and photos comprise the visual content of the DVD, which was produced by Simon Lupton, Rhys Thomas and Fredriksson. Commentary culled from archival and new interviews with the band round out the extras.

With a reconstituted Queen (with ex-**Free/Bad Company** vocalist **Paul Rodgers** filling in for the late **Freddie Mercury**) packing them in on the road, are there plans to re-imagine the rest of Queen's storied catalog, especially *A Day at the Races*, 1976's follow-up to *Opera*? "You gotta see how [*Opera*] does [commercially]," says D'Atri. "Obviously, that would be another one that we would take a hard look at. That 30th anniversary will come up."
—Michael Amicone

ICE COOL FACT

Queen is now the champion of the U.K. album charts, having recently surpassed former leader the Beatles, according to David Roberts, editor of *British Hit Singles & Albums*, published by Guinness World Records Ltd. The group has logged 1,322 weeks on the chart, 29 more than the Fab Four.

blues

← from page 31

René Austin, performs 11 songs, including "The Next Right Thing," "Texas Flower," "Take Me Off the Road" and "Wake Up Call," while Piazza & co. do "Sinister Woman," "Hear Me Knockin'," "Goodbye My Lover," "The Stinger," "Murder in the First Degree," "Tough & Tender," "Movin' in a West Coast Way" and "Southern Lady" ■ The Masked Weasel label has some of **Charles Brown's** most famous early recordings, including the classics "Driftin' Blues," "Trouble Blues," "Merry Christmas Baby" and "I'll Be Home for Christmas," plus 10 other vintage tracks, as part of a retrospective arriving November 15 under the title *Black Night* ■ The Blue Horizon, Epic, Sire and

Castle labels have repackaged, over the last 30 years, much of the blues-based material recorded by the **Peter Green-Jeremy Spencer-Danny Kirwan** lineup of **Fleetwood Mac**. Now Sanctuary has pulled together 35 tracks for the three-CD *Fleetwood Mac: Men Of The World - The Early Years*, arriving November 8. Though nothing is previously unreleased, Disc 1 provides an overview of the early studio sides done for producer Mike Vernon, the second disc covers the experimental phase that led to *Then Play On*, and Disc 3 pulls performances from a three-night stand at the Boston Tea Party in February 1970. ■

icecubes

Elton John takes another trek down *Peachtree Road* on a Special Edition due from Rocket/Universal Music November 22. Along with the dozen original tracks of the 2004 release, the deluxe package features three bonus cuts, "The Letter," "Merry Christmas Margaret Thatcher" and "Electricity," as well as a DVD of a November 2004 concert at the Tabernacle in Atlanta with EJ performing nine *Peachtree Road* standouts. November 8 brings **The Police's** *Synchronicity Concert DVD (ICE #222)* on A&M Chronicles. The 17 selections, shot in Atlanta during the band's final (1983) tour, are augmented by the theatrical trailer of the concert film, which was originally directed and edited by Godley & Crème, and a 1984 interview with the trio in Melbourne at the last show it would ever play ■ Live-r than you'll ever be: The natural habitat is proving irresistible to **Jimmy Buffett**, **Duran Duran** and **Michael Franti & Spearhead**, each of whom has concert sets on deck. Mr. Margaritaville's *Live in Fenway Park* drops November 8 on his Mailboat imprint, filling two CDs and

a DVD with music from two September '04 Boston shows. DD's *Live from London*, arriving November 1 via Rounder/Zoe, captures the band's original lineup performing last April and May at Wembley Stadium; a single-DVD package features footage of 20 songs, while a special edition adds a 10-song live CD. Franti and friends' *Live in Sydney*, arriving November 15 from MVD, is a DualDisc documenting their 10-song October '03 concert at the city's Hordern Pavilion ■ Fans of the version of "Woo-Hoo" delivered by Japan's **5,6,7,8's** in the film *Kill Bill* may want to check the original. That's do-able October 25, when Collectables reservices the **Rock-a-Teens'** 1959 LP, *Woo-Hoo* ■ Sundazed issues more vinyl LPs of performances from the 1950s *Town Hall Party* TV series on November 22 - *Live at Town Hall* sets by **Eddie Cochran** (1959), **Gene Vincent** (1958, 1959) and **Merle Travis** (1958, 1959) ■ Add to the list of hurricane-victim benefit albums *Our New Orleans*. The Nonesuch set, arriving November 22, features newly recorded songs by such members and affiliates of the NOLA music community as **Allen Toussaint**, **Dr. John**, **Irma Thomas**, the **Preservation Hall Jazz Band** and **Randy Newman**. ■