

SOUNDS IN THE SUN

BY MARY MOOK

Supernova: Five years ago a small, plump British singer/piano player descended on the American pop music scene with whirlwind force. With a resonant tenor, stylish keyboard technique, and a facility for crafting clear vibrant melodies, Elton John probably could have reached the top of the rock pile on sheer musical ability. But he worked up a Jerry Lee Lewis routine that included flipping himself up on the keyboard in a pumping handstand that did not interrupt his pounding rhythms by a single beat.

Later, decked out in enormous silver reflector goggles and outrageous trick suits that popped light bulbs and wriggling snakes, he invented theater rock. He became the spirit of perpetual Halloween.

Today, at 28, John has produced eleven albums, nine of which are certified platinum (more than one million copies sold). The record contract he signed with MCA last fall is the largest ever, \$8 million. An appearance as the Pinball Wizard in the film version of The Who's rock opera *Tommy* brought dozens of movie offers. Elton John is undoubtedly the most successful rock star of the '70's.

In June, Elton wrote yet another chapter in pop history. His new LP, *Captain Fantastic and the Brown Dirt Cowboy*, entered all three trade charts (*Billboard*, *Cashbox* and *Record World*) one week after its release—at number one. Yeah!

To the magical X factor of talent, Elton adds a thick gloss of hard-working professionalism. He does his homework, listening to what other musicians are doing. John's carefully wrought music blends a variety of musical influences. *Captain Fantastic*, a musical diary of

cut, "Tell Me When the Whistle Blows," recalls the Beatles' "Come Together."

John grew up in Middlesex, England. His parents intended him to be a banker, but Elton persuaded them to let him study piano at London's Royal Academy of Music. When, at 19, he joined Long John Baldry's Bluesology, he overcame what he thought was his biggest career handicap: the name Reginald Kenneth Dwight. Baldry and saxophonist Elton Dean loaned him their first names. Presto, Reg Dwight became Elton John. Between tours and recording sessions, Elton plays tennis and oversees his own Watford, England, soccer team. He is also a collector—of cars, clothes, records, and paintings—which he stashes in his homes in England, the French Riviera, and Beverly Hills.

Rising Stars: Tim Moore, *Behind the Eyes* (Elektra/Asylum). Moore won last fall's American Song Festival (see "CO-ED Wants You To Meet," January 1975). Apparently he put his \$30,000 prize money and new piano to good use. "Second Avenue," the single from his first album, *Tim Moore*, sailed into the charts before Christmas. On this new album Moore's baritone and solid piano accompaniment are heard to advantage in "Lay Down a Line to Me," a catchy ballad. "I Think I Wanna Possess You," a funky rhythm and blues number, sparkles with a tasty bass solo by Will Lee.

The McGarrigle Sisters (Warner Bros.)—Anna and Kate, that is. Until now these gifted singer/composers from Canada have listened to others make hits of their songs. Linda Ronstadt recorded Anna's "Heart Like A Wheel"; Maria Muldaur sings both Anna's "Cool River" and Kate's "The Work Song." The McGarrigles learned harmony singing Stephen Foster songs with their mother, while their father accompanied at the piano. Anna is small and shy, peers gravely out at the world through her bangs. Kate, the tall one with the mischievous smile, is married to urban folk singer Loudon Wainwright III. On their first LP, "Foolish You" is a strong example of the McGarrigles' good-natured French-Canadian reggae. (Pronounced "ray-gay," this Jamaican folk rock sound is identified by an emphatic bass line and between-the-beat drumming.)

Coming: Our featured musician next issue, suggested more than any other rock star by CO-ED readers: John Denver.

Do you have any favorite musicians you'd like to hear about? Write Mary Mook, CO-ED, 902 Sylvan Avenue, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632.



ELTON JOHN

Elton's songwriting career with lyricist Bernie Taupin, is a good example. The opening bars of the title song echo "Please Be With Me," from Eric Clapton's 461 *Ocean Boulevard* album. Another