

ELLIOTT MURPHY - BIOGRAPHY

"I bought my first guitar when I was twelve. It was bright red and not very good. I think my father whispered to the clerk that this might just be a phase, so let's not break the bank. My mother didn't want me to have a guitar at all. She thought my grades would go. She was right."

So began Elliott Murphy's foray into rock and roll; a journey that has seen the ups and downs of the world and has brought him forth as one of the true poetic writers in popular music.

A smart, rebellious kid, growing up in Garden City, Long Island, Elliott James Murphy liked surfing, music, girls and F. Scott Fitzgerald. His was a show business family; his father ran the Aqua Show, a water-ballet restaurant/nightclub at the site of the 1939 World's Fair. Duke Ellington and his band played there.

Murphy would go into New York at night, haunting the clubs in the Village, seeking out the Velvet Underground, being part of the 'scene'. His band won the New York state Battle of the Bands. He quit school and went to Europe.

With brother Matthew, he got a part in Fellini's ROMA. "It was easy," he said once. "I just told the secretary I'd been into leather for ten years and I got the part." He travelled more; to Italy, Key West, San Francisco, returning to New York in 1973, hanging out at Max's and The Mercer Arts Center. He wrote the liner notes on the classic Velvet Underground 1969 LIVE l.p. He put together a band, Elliott Murphy's Aqua Show, and they started playing out. They got an adulatory writeup in PENTHOUSE ("Murphy, flaxen haired and exuding confidence... as tight and strong as any group on record...").

AQUASHOW, Murphy's debut, was released in November of 1973. The critical response was immediate and overwhelming. He had a writing style all his own; poetic imagery, verbal pyrotechnics, smooth and passionate guitar playing.

Huge writeups appeared in ROLLING STONE, NEWSWEEK and elsewhere. Albums followed in 1975 (LOST GENERATION - "When the sun rises on Elliott Murphy," wrote Paul Nelson in ROLLING STONE, "it rises on one of the best.") and 1976 (NIGHT LIGHTS). LA TIMES critic Robert Hilburn named two songs on NIGHT LIGHTS the two best songs of the year not heard on conventional top-40 radio.

1977 brought JUST A STORY FROM AMERICA, which spawned a major hit, "Anastasia," in Europe. Murphy's sales had lagged in America, although his press had continued to be adulatory, and he soon found himself without a record label.

"It was a hard period," he later recalled. "I spent a year living on Long Island researching the effects of gin and tonic."

"Elliott Murphy's back and means business!" blared BILLBOARD, in its glowing review of 1980's AFFAIRS. Murphy had formed his own production company and released the e.p. on his own label in America, using independent distributors. Although distribution was primarily limited to the Northeast, sales were impressive. "My brother, Matthew, really ran the company," says Murphy, "and we just worked the record until he had to go back to work as Talking Heads road manager."

Murphy toured Europe, finished his novel about rock and roll, COLD AND ELECTRIC, parts of which were featured in ROLLING STONE, and worked on follow up songs. In 1982, MURPH THE SURF came out in Europe, where it was snapped up by the critics and touted as "this era's HIGHWAY 61 REVISITED."

PARTY GIRLS/BROKEN POETS followed in 1984, again bringing Murphy praise,

especially in countries such as Italy and Spain, where, prior to this, no Murphy record had been released in years. In America, although available only as an import, PARTY GIRLS received uniformly warm press notices from the likes of INTERVIEW Magazine to being nominated for Album of the Year by the New York Music Awards.

1984 had also seen the establishment of the Elliott Murphy Fan Club in France (with their publication "Talkin' About Elliott") and The Elliott Murphy Information Society in the U.S.A. The summer of that year, Murphy played to an overwhelming response at the famed Montreaux Jazz festival.

A bootleg of that show appeared in 1985, ELLIOTT MURPHY BAND LIVE AT MONTREAUX, joining at least two others, MISTER BLUE and TALKIN' ABOUT AMERICA. Murphy also continued writing, penning articles and short stories for ROLLING STONE, MUSIC-SOUND OUTPUT, THE RECORD and SPIN. His regular shows at New York nitery Tramp's became semi-legendary, bringing in fans from Europe and writers from around the country. Performing with long-time bassist Ernie Brooks (of the original Modern Lovers and later the Necessaries) and drummer Jesse Chamberlain (ex-Red Crayola) as well as keyboardist Art Laboriola, the shows garnered such raves as "a serious writer working in a pop idiom... a pop talent worth following" (NEW YORK TIMES) and "Some of the finest rock and roll being made in America today." (MIAMI NEWS).

"Out for the Killing" and "Texas" emerged in the spring of 1986. Produced by Talking Heads keyboardist Jerry Harrison (who was a member of Murphy's band in the mid seventies), the songs gained exceptional reviews in Europe. "Sumptuous and poignant," wrote the premier rock paper ROCK ET FOLK in its August issue. "Murphy has attained his zenith here," cried ROCK FM, calling the songs "a black orchid against Wall Street. A must!"

With a retrospective of unreleased material, APRES LE DELUGE, released to its members this spring by The Elliott Murphy Information Society, Murphy's material once again began to be heard in America, culminating in the recent release of MILWAUKEE, his latest album. Co-produced by Murphy, Ernie Brooks and Jerry Harrison, with engineering by David Vartainian (of Violent Femmes fame) MILWAUKEE is getting uniformly excellent reviews.

Released in America on the independent EMIS label, and in Europe on Alpha, New Rose, Runner and Himilaya, MILWAUKEE is a testament to intelligent, mature rock and roll. Elliott Murphy has written great music for over a decade now, and his creative abilities show no signs of abating. Keep an ear to the ground and an eye on his activities. Elliott Murphy is a name you'll be hearing from for a long time to come.

**ELLIOTT
MURPHY
INFORMATION
SOCIETY
BOX 253
NORTHAMPTON
MA. 01061 USA**
