

Ask ELO leader Jeff Lynne about the new group, The Electric Light Orchestra, and he'll smile and say: 'I don't know, you can try to make it up, try to put some good things in, but JUST DON'T MENTION THE MOVE AND THE OLD ELO OR ROY WOOD OR ANYBODY LIKE THAT. Just write about this group as it is at the moment, that's all we want. *On The Third Day* is the best album we've ever done, so let's just talk about that one and start from there, just pretend it's the first one we ever made.'

History is all right, but you've heard it all before, so this is just about the Electric Light Orchestra Mark III, the latest and finest in a line of ELOs which have all strived for a difficult (but as the new band proves, attainable) goal.

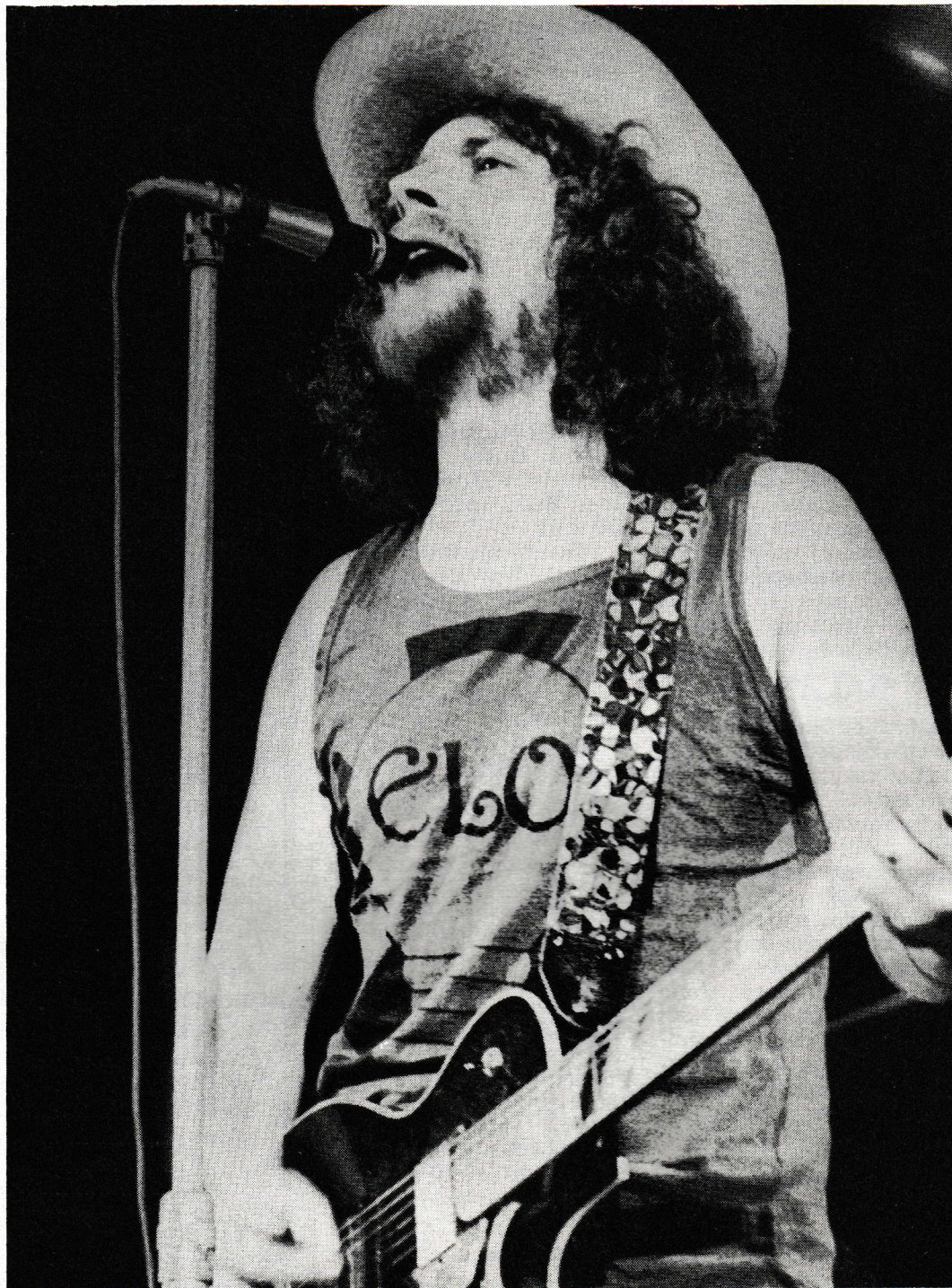
This is not to say that Jeff was displeased with the last album. 'It was just a step forward from the one before that. But this one is what I want to do, this sort of more melodic stuff. And the next one will be even more melodic, I should think, I've already got half of it in my head at the moment.'

### INCREDIBLE

The third ELO album is, indeed, an incredible work, occasionally reminiscent of side two of *Abbey Road* in terms of form, but musically speaking close to a *Revolver* (Jeff's favourite Beatles' LP) sound. Side one is a continuous chain of songs, very complicated with many instruments running in and out. Yet the work was not recorded in sections, as it would seem at first listening, but all at once (first with the basic rock section and the strings and additional instruments added later).

Side two is an application of the ELO's newly-adopted musical policy, which Jeff terms as 'short songs, more songs, and just more variation'. The album is entertaining to listen to, to be sure, and a very exciting and varied work with a mixture of heavy guitar and cellos going over as smoothly as one would put together a cymbal and bass drum.

# JEFF LYNNE ON THE THIRD E.L.O.



▲ Jeff Lynne - 'It's the best album we've ever done'

The new album features a slight change in personnel. Wilf Gibson has been replaced by Mik Kaminski and Colin Walker has stepped out and his shoes have been filled by Hugh McDowell. Jeffrey elaborates: 'We sacked Wilf, and Colin left to get married and his wife wouldn't let him play anymore in the group because she wanted him home all the time.

'Mik's really great, we tried about 30 people out and he was the only one any good. They were growing progressively worse throughout the day we were listening to them. It was getting terrible and really silly; there were people who couldn't play and things like that, old blokes of 40 coming up in evening suits, tuxedos and all that, just scraping away.

## RONDO

'Suddenly, like a breath of fresh air, Mik came in and went into a fantastic rondo. I gave him a few things to play, some of the things we did, and he played them just like that. It's a good thing, he really enjoys the music we do, he really enjoyed playing the new album things and he's a great bloke as well.

'Hugh had left Wizzard about three months ago and hadn't got a job. We tried about four cello players who were all either mentally retarded or they couldn't play very well. Then we got Hugh, and he's very good. We had about two days' rehearsal with the new material, and then recorded the album like a group would play on stage for the long medley side.

'I'm really pleased with that side, actually. It needs a bit of listening to, probably, but I think you'll find it a lot better than the last one. I've decided that I like writing good tunes, anyway, so that's where I'm at now. I want to write really nice tunes again. I'll probably do a solo album next year, with loads of 'em on it.'

Perhaps the hottest news that's hit the world of oldies-but-goodies fans since Richard Nader is the recent association between Jeff Lynne and Del Shannon. 'We did three tracks and Del's got

the tapes now, in Los Angeles. I should be finishing those up when I go to L.A. We co-wrote two of them and co-produced the session, just me and him really put it together. We all played on the backup, Richard Tandy, Bev Bevan, Mike D'Albuquerque, and myself.

## VOICE

'Originally he was on tour in England playing the night-clubs. He came to one in Birmingham called Barbarella's, and he's always been my idol, you know that. I sort of forced myself to go speak to him, and then suddenly we were best of pals in five minutes, all having a drink and a laugh together.

'He said he was going to be in Newcastle next week and to come and see him, and I did. He came to my house up in Worcestershire and my farm and we wrote these songs together, we just got to be good friends and it worked out great. I'm really proud to do stuff with him because I still think he's got a marvellous voice, his voice now better than it ever was, and his songwriting is really good, too. The record won't definitely be on UA, it'll be on whoever pays the most money.'

Yes, the Electric Light Orchestra has finally got to the point where they can hold their heads up and proudly claim that they can do exactly what they want musically. Now it's only a question of whether they can make the commercial impact that they do deserve.

## BETTER

Jeff sums it up nicely when he explains that: 'After all the bother and aggravation with starting up with the Electric Light Orchestra and all the problems, it's gradually becoming nice to work. We went through a funny sort of period which obviously constricted my songwriting, but I think now it's just getting better and better. I've got millions of ideas all the time now and I really enjoy it, it's a pleasure to work, really. And that's what we all want now, isn't it?'

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