Costello, Elvis (1955-) Encyclopedia Article

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Costello, Elvis (1955—)

Born Declan Patrick Aloysius McManus, British singer, guitar-ist, and composer Elvis Costello has been a mainstay of the popular music scene since his 1977 debut disc, *My Aim Is True.* The son of a jazz bandleader, Costello rode to prominence on the initial wave of British punk—and thanks in part to a stage persona that made obvious reference to Buddy Holly. A gifted lyricist with a flair for wordplay, he did his best work in collaboration with the Attractions, a virtuoso backing band anchored by Bruce Thomas (bass), Pete Thomas (drums), and Steve Nieve (keyboards). The band's early records, polished to a metallic sheen by producer Nick Lowe, combined Beatlesque pop smarts with an appreciation for American soul. The best of these are *This Year's Model, Armed Forces,* and *Trust.* Costello escaped from Lowe's clutches to record what is considered his masterwork, 1982's lyrically bruising, intricately textured *Imperial Bedroom.*

Further Reading:

Hinton, Brian. *Elvis Costello: Let Them All Talk.* London, Sanctuary Publishing, 1998.

Thomas, Bruce. *The Big Wheel.* New York, Faber & Faber, 1991.