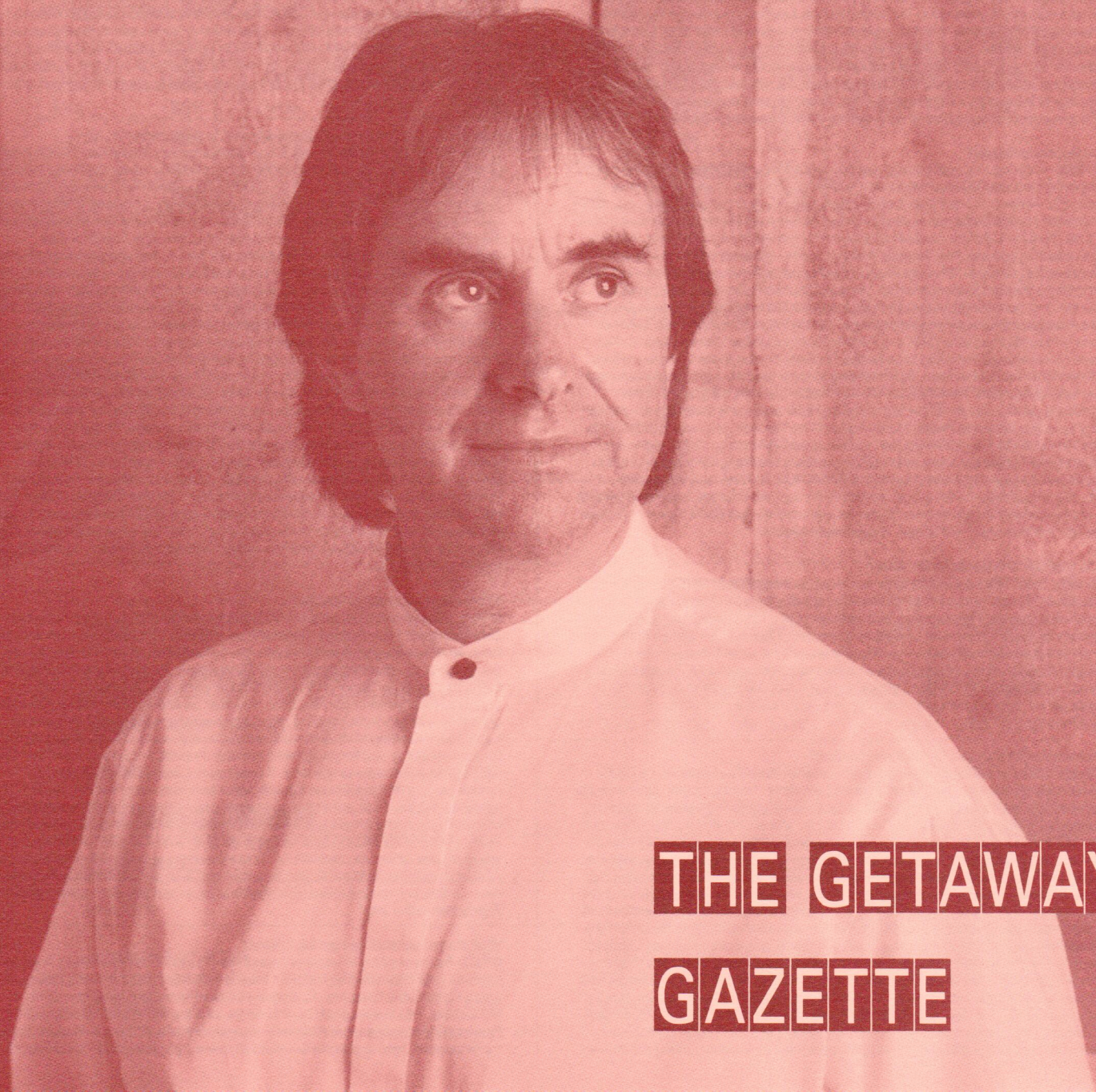


THE NEW *Chris de Burgh* CLUB

P.O. BOX 276 LONDON E2 7BW

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THE GETAWAY
GAZETTE

Hello, and welcome to yet another issue of the Gazette, our first since April, 1997. As indicated then, the idea for this edition was to time publication to co-incide with any concrete news concerning Chris's previously mentioned 'very special new album' and, as you will see from the postcard enclosed, we are pleased to be able to announce the release of both a new single* and a new album. Also as promised, we managed to track C de B down and conduct an exclusive interview with him about the album, and we are happy to reproduce that conversation - in all its verbatim glory - elsewhere within this newsletter, but we'll kick proceedings off, as ever, by catching up on Chris's latest news...

Believe it or not, the last interview we did was in September, 1996, in Canada - so we need to fill in the gaps between then and now...

CHRIS: "Has it really been that long? Goodness... Well, I have my diary right here in front of me - for 1997, at least - so let's just go through everything. OK, we covered the Canadian tour in the last Gazette, but I would say that I still have the applause from the Montreal show ringing in my ears. I don't think I've ever received such a response - in what is one of the greatest cities, for me - ever before. It was just absolutely outstanding. The impression I got was that, in Canada, the love affair still continues and, although I hadn't been there for seven years, I thought that the affection and the love for the music was as strong as ever - if not stronger. I had a brilliant tour, I really, really enjoyed it, and to be perfectly honest, I can't wait to go back. And I won't leave it another seven years before I do so! Having said that, the reason for the long gap between tours was that I had been to Canada an awful lot during the '70s and '80s, and I just felt it was maybe a smart move just not to go there for a while. Also, there was a lot of work going on elsewhere in the world. But I loved the Canadian tour, and that ended in October. I'm trying to think whether I did anything professionally in November or December... You may have to check with the office on this, because I really can't remember. I think that time was largely spent discussing the new album, and what we were going to do next. No! Wait a second! I was in Europe! What am I talking about? I did a European tour - a wonderful European tour. The first show was in Stuttgart, with a full orchestra and choir, in the Schleyer Halle - which is a very big hall. It was clear that the German people really also like the intimate part of the show, where I do 90 minutes solo, just talking to them, and then come back with the orchestra, right after. That format is a great success there, and it really emanated from our summer shows in the UK - the last of which was up at Stirling Castle, for the Dunblane appeal. The European tour was either with a full orchestra, or with a string quartet. I really liked the string quartet shows as well, because that - again - is an intimate way of presenting somebody who, in the past, was just a dot in the distance, with the band and the huge show. Now, here we have the same guy singing the songs in, basically, the way that they were written; with the one instrument. For me, it was a catharsis - as well as for the audience, I believe. We did a lot of shows around Scandinavia and Eastern Europe, all of which were fantastic, but the last three shows in Germany and Switzerland - Munich, Dortmund, Zurich - were completely memorable. They were three orchestra shows in three consecutive days, and they were absolutely tremendous. The Dortmund show, in particular, was staggering. Indeed, many people who had been to a lot of my shows before were moved to write to me; quite a few people wrote and said 'We've never seen such a great show before, and we absolutely loved it.' Well, so did I - and it's quite clear that the German people, who have been loyal to me for so many years, really like that new style or being approachable, and being the guy that they've seen on stage so many times in a different way. I did a show in Mannheim around the 20th of December, and then immediately flew the next day, via Johannesburg, to Mauritius..."

To perform a concert?

CHRIS: "Not as such but, oddly enough, that's exactly what I ended up doing. I'd gone there to spend Christmas and New Year's there with my family and, the previous year we were there, I'd sung a bit with the local band, The Rising Sun Band, which plays at the hotel we stayed at. When I arrived this time, the hotel management proposed the idea to me that I do a concert for all of their guests, because a lot of guests came from places that I was well known - like France, Germany, the United Kingdom and, even, America. So they put up this enormous marquee on the first fairway of the golf course. Of course, it was as hard as rock, so there wasn't a problem with that, and about a thousand people showed up. The management of the hotel put on a fabulous five-course dinner with chandeliers and candelabras and beautiful floral displays. Everybody got dressed up, and there was a stage at the far end. I did the first part of the show, about an hour, solo - and was then joined by The Rising Sun Band for about another 12 songs, some of which were mine, and some of which were more classics, like Pretty Woman, Hotel California and Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest Word, that sort of thing. And this band was absolutely fantastic; really tremendous musicians. I remember one particular incident; we were doing the end of Hotel California - which, if you recall, The Eagles had Joe Walsh playing this blistering guitar solo on - and the local guitar player, literally from the island of Mauritius, was...stunning. I pushed him to the front to take the solo, and he was just...red hot. Absolutely amazing. All the people were dancing and I noticed that, as we continued into this and he was hitting notes that you wouldn't believe, all the guys stopped dancing and just looked at him. And then everyone stopped dancing and just *looked* at this guy. He was hardly moving, just his fingers, but he was incredible - and I guarantee that if this guy played in any band or in any studio in the UK, then people would go 'My God! He's good.' And he was. Absolutely phenomenal."

Did you have to rehearse for the show?

CHRIS: "Yes. I went to the band's home, which was just a tiny little room across the other side of the island. We were all packed into this tiny room, including three girl backing singers, and it was just tremendous fun. They want me to do it again this year!... I came back in January, and I'm actually looking at my diary now, for anything of note here. I went to a few rugby matches in the early part of January and February - you'll have to bear with my while I flick my way through this... England versus Ireland...oh, yes, I've got something here. I got a new home, I bought a lovely house in a beautiful part of Wicklow, which is south of Dublin. I won't be moving in for quite a while yet, but I spent a lot of time working on architect's plans and stuff for that during January and February..."

You say architect's plans - is this a new building?

CHRIS: "No, it's a very old Georgian house, surrounded by acres of land and with spectacular views of the Wicklow Hills. We'll be moving there...sometime. I'm not quite sure when; obviously when it's finished! However, on the 26th of February I flew to London in the evening. It was my brother's birthday, co-incidentally, and I hadn't told him I was turning up. I rang him on the way from the airport, saying that I was in Dublin - but everybody in his house knew that I was about to show up with some champagne. So I banged on the door - and he was just about to go to bed, at about 11 o'clock at night! We ended up having a wild party until about 3 o'clock in the morning. Later that morning I went to see my friend David Wynne, who's a world-renowned sculptor, and he had a fabulous exhibition in The Mall Gallery, just outside Buckingham Palace. I went to see that exhibition and then straight to the airport from there, to catch a flight to Bangkok. It was just Peter (Oxendale) and I in the First Class cabin, and I remember singing rock 'n roll songs - and the girl from Thai International was dancing. It was just the two of us up front, and it was hilarious; that's the only way to fly! And as we were actually in flight, the captain called down to say the the Halle Bop comet was visible in the night sky. That was the first time I saw it, and it was very faint but it was very distinct. Obviously, from 39,000 feet it was quite easy to see. So I arrived in Bangkok - to be met by TV - and spent half a day there doing promotion and stuff, because I was to do a show there later in the month, and then caught another plane for Australia. I arrived in Brisbane,

and the whole trip had taken 28 hours of flying. Oh, it's a hell of a long way. I got off the plane at Brisbane, feeling like death, and of course there were cameras, TV crews, radio people and the Press...blimey! Anyway, I recovered and, the next day, I was on stage! I arrived in Brisbane at midday on a Saturday, and on Sunday evening I was doing the first show in Brisbane. That was followed by a show in Sydney, from where we took a trip up the Gold Coast for a couple of days off. Sydney was great - all of the shows were tremendous, I have to say; I really enjoyed Australia. It's my third trip to Australia, the previous visit being in about 1988."

Of course, we actually bumped into one another on that most recent tour, at a TV studio in Sydney. I was accompanying Status Quo on a tour of Japan and Australia - to write a report for their fan club, and it turned out that both you and Quo were recording appearances on the same TV show...

CHRIS: "Yes, that's right. I had met Francis Rossi and Rick Parfitt previously, at one of those charity lunches for Nordoff Robbins, and that's why I wanted to go and say 'hi' when I discovered that they were in the same TV studio. That was great, I enjoyed chatting with them. Of course, shortly afterwards, Rick Parfitt suffered serious heart problems..."

That's right - but I can confirm there was no connection between that and you meeting them, Chris!

CHRIS: "I'm glad to hear it! Anyway, on Saturday, March 8, I went from Brisbane to Melbourne for the warm-up, the practice day, of the Melbourne Grand Prix. Somebody had foolishly booked me into Adelaide for the day of the Grand Prix, not Melbourne! I had to play a show in Adelaide, which I greatly enjoyed, but I also saw the Grand Prix. I saw a lot of people I knew there, too, like Eddie Irvine, a friend from Ireland - who actually came to the concert we did in Melbourne on March 10, with his sister, Sonia. I also met Michael Schumacher, who I've met before, and Eddie Jordan and his team - who are great fun. I had a really good time there and, actually, I was Eddie Jordan's date at the Melbourne Gala Ball, which is a huge ball for about a thousand dignitaries and racing people. They had a band playing, and about five people, top people, including the guy who ran the event, Will Walker - a very important man - came up to me and said 'You'll get up there and sing 'Lay In Red' for us, won't you?' I said 'I'd love to.' So, five different people approached the guy who was running the event, and he said no to every one of them; 'No. No - absolutely not.' Blanked me out. I couldn't give a damn at the end of the day, but the other people were furious. There was even a piece in the paper about it, two days later, because this guy had just flatly refused - and it would have been a three-minute track, with a guitar. But these things happen; you get these jobsworths around - and this definitely was a jobsworth, this guy. Actually, I don't know if he's still got a job, come to think of it; saying 'no' to the organiser of an event like that was not a smart move. So, following Melbourne, we then went across to Perth - which is one of my favourite cities in Australia. I absolutely love it there. We stayed at a place called Observation City Hotel. It's on the beach at Perth, and it's one of the most stunning views. The hotel was built by Alan Bond to watch the Fremantle race where Australia II won The Americas Cup series, about ten years back. The suite I was in, which I've stayed in before, has a big white piano and is absolutely fabulous; views to die for, really beautiful. Diane came out there and joined me for a week. I did three shows in Perth, big shows, because it's really the top place for me in Australia. I really enjoyed being in Perth, it was great to get back and, again, I'm sorry I had left it so long between trips to Australia. I received a fantastic reaction everywhere down there."

Have you any idea when you might be returning to Australia?

CHRIS: "Not sure, but I guess it all depends on this new record... On Monday, March 17 - which, as you most certainly know, it St Patrick's Day - I flew with everybody to Hong Kong. Arrived in Hong Kong at about 11 o'clock at night, got collected, taken down town, had a very nice meal in a restaurant and then, of course, had to wind up at an Irish pub at 2 in the morning. And the place was...hopping! I had a couple of large pints of Smithwicks, which we know over here as Kilkenny. The night was absolutely insane! The bar was one of the most...now, how do I put this politely?...one of the most lived in, used bars I've ever been in. You wouldn't find anything like that in Ireland - drinks sloshing all over the floors - but it was a fun night. I played a show in Hong Kong, and had the chance to look around, and I enjoyed Hong Kong a lot, actually. After Hong Kong, we travelled to Singapore and I played a big concert in the Botanic Gardens. It was open-air and, I believe, a free concert which was paid for by the civic authorities. They expected maybe 800 people but, in the event, about 8000 people showed up. The setting was a bit like Crystal Palace Bowl; there was a small lake in front of the stage, and I performed across the lake - and, at one point, took a microphone all the way around the lake for the karaoke bit of the show. I got a fellow - it was his birthday - so he sang a song, and everybody sang with him. Fantastic. I went out that evening to an amazing place, down by the riverside, where they've put up cafes and restaurants and pubs and bars and discos and stuff. There's a couple of things I remember clearly about that night... First among them was the Chinese restaurant we went to, and sat outside. They had a big box with live lobsters, that you could choose to eat - not that I eat seafood - and underneath was a box with...live frogs. Yes; you could select a frog and have it cooked the way you wanted it. So I stayed away from that... The other thing I recall about that night is that we had the distinction, at 3 o'clock in the morning, of being the last people to leave; 10,000 people had come and gone - and we closed the place! There was about five of us, and the police came and said 'Would you mind leaving now - the place has closed.' This was all in one day. It was a busy day..."

Where did you go from Singapore?

CHRIS: "We went back to Bangkok, and did a show with the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra - which was tremendous. That was very exciting and, I believe, a live album has been made of that show; me with the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra. As I understand it, it's for release in South East Asia only so...a bit of a collector's item in Europe there. Next we went to Taipei and, I have to say, I really enjoyed Taipei - probably more than any other city that I was in. There's a gentleness about people in the Orient there. You know, the Buddhist thing gets very violent in one respect, and very gentle in another. I love, for example, in Thailand where they put their hands together and they bow their heads to make a greeting - very gentle. They're not into raised voices and shouting - and they really loved my music. I was told that at every show I did, there was basically a lot of native people there. It wasn't, as I expected, a lot of Europeans or Australians; 70 or 80% would be local people, which is very surprising. And they're very restrained - but, every time, every show, I got people up and dancing and jumping and shouting and waving. Everywhere I went, people said 'We've never seen people react that like here before - ever.' So I obviously struck a chord, and we go on great - and I really like Taiwan. From there, it was back home - after a very intensive trip. I was exhausted when I got back. I had actually been scheduled to play Ho Chi Minh City and Chiang Mai, but I didn't get to do those two, for whatever reason. I think you have to get licences to play those places, and they didn't come through. We'll try that another time."

What did you do when you got back home?

CHRIS: "I started working on tracks for the new album. I spent a lot of April writing. Then, having been hooked on the Melbourne Grand Prix, I went to the Monaco Grand Prix - and, subsequently, went to the Barcelona Grand Prix, the Silverstone Grand Prix and the German Grand Prix at Hockenheim. I made some great friends in the course of that and, in fact, I recently visited the Ferrari factory in Maranello, in Northern Italy, as a guest of the Chef D'Equipe - the team leader - of the Ferrari team. I also spent some time with Eddy Irvine, trying to teach him how to play the

guitar, but he's a lot better racing driver than he's a guitar player - so far! And I'm not very good at racing cars... So, flicking through the diary still...I did a TV show with Anthea Turner - and then recording for the album started in the UK on June 6."

If you don't mind, we'll talk in-depth about the album in a moment but, for now, let's continue with your diary, to bring us up to date...

CHRIS: "OK. Moving right along, my interest in golf continues and I'll be attending the Ryder Cup in Spain at the end of September, and I've been to the Irish Open at Druids Glen Golf Club - where I watched Colin Montgomerie break the course record. Co-incidentally, yesterday I was at the European Open - and I watched Montgomerie doing exactly the same there; break the course the record. So he said to me afterwards 'Please come to every golf tournament!' What else? Well, I've also backed a young, 22-year-old film-maker in Ireland called Graham Jones. Last year, he made a film called *How To Cheat In The Leaving Certificate* - over here in Ireland, the Leaving Certificate is like 'A' Levels - and it's a fantastic, 90-minute thriller. There was a big gala preview of the film in a cinema in Dublin, about 600 people came to it, and it just looked tremendous. So I'm thrilled for him, and the film will go on general release, hopefully, next year. I like supporting people like that, who clearly have some talent, although it's in an area that I'm not familiar with. I did the British Grand Prix at Silverstone, as I mentioned earlier, on July 13 and, after the Grand Prix, there was a huge concert that the Jordan people throw. Ten thousand people showed up, and I got up on stage - with Damon Hill on guitar, Eddie Jordan on drums, the drummer from Pink Floyd also on the drums and another band behind us. We just played, for about an hour-and-a-half, all the rock 'n roll classics. It was great fun. Damon Hill's wife got up and danced...the place was just a mess of people dancing. It was a great vibe. I really enjoyed that a lot. Next stop was the German Grand Prix, which I went to with my PA, Chris Andrews. They're a real drug, you know, going to these Grand Prix events. The people there just love motor cars and fast cars, and seeing these gorgeous machines in action is amazing. Also, having now visited the Ferrari factory in Italy and seen the way they test the engines for hours on end, and all the high technology that actually finally emanates into the mainstream of car manufacture - because this is the cutting edge of car technology - is staggering. And the speed of these cars, and the noise of these cars, if you've never actually heard them before, is something else. Television definitely doesn't do the experience justice whatsoever. Anyway...next I went to Birmingham, did a couple of days rehearsal with the orchestra, and our first show in the Classic Summer Concerts '97 series was in Bristol, on the docks, at the Canons Marsh Amphitheatre on August 1. Next, on August 2, I played Powderham Castle, near Exeter. Both of those shows were absolutely great, I really enjoyed each of them enormously - and we're going into the kind of mega-show business now. Anybody who reads this and was at those shows will remember that the show started at 8pm - and finished at 11.20 or 11.25pm; three hours and 20 minutes, with a short interval. That's...value for money! So, next we did the show at Ragley Hall, near Stratford-upon-Avon, on August 9, and that was sensational. As I talk to you (August 22) I've got two more shows coming up, at Hylands Park, Chelmsford on August 23 and, finally, at Loseley Park near Guildford on August 24 - and I know it will be very hard to beat the quality of that Ragley Hall show. I don't know...I'm just in my element on stage, and I know that people love to see it - and I really enjoy it."

Well, what you can't necessarily see - from where you are on stage - is how the reaction to you builds as these open-air shows progress. When you first appear, it's often almost a surprise - very little applause can be heard the further back you are in the audience - and then, added to that, sound diffuses into the night air but, at the end of the evening, every time, you have people on their feet and loudly applauding...

CHRIS: "Well, what happens is, if it's open-air, number one, if it's daylight, number two, and number three, people are drinking alcohol, to hold their attention is very, very hard. OK, I'm a professional - I know how to do it - but, nevertheless, it is difficult. Once it gets dark and the lights come on and you've got that focus of attention, then you can give it everything you've got - and by the end of it, of course, everybody is going wild. Well, people are going wild all the way through, to be honest. Those open-air shows are totally memorable. Another thing I should mention is that I had a week or so off in between the open-air shows, and I went to Italy. They have a wine festival every year at the place I visited and, last year, I performed a concert in the village square. This year, word got around - and about 2500 people showed up for the free wine and free food available from about 6pm. Around midnight, I went on stage and sang for about 45 minutes to rapturous applause and tremendous applause. It was great fun. I'm not that well known in Italy, but I'm certainly well known in the Comino Valley, where the festival was held."

OK, that brings us right up to date. Can we now look ahead to what you'll be doing between now and the end of the year?

CHRIS: "Well, first of all with a new single coming out, I'll be busy doing a lot of promotion around that, in terms of television. Something interesting is coming up on August 30; you may remember the Ohre River broke its banks earlier this year in the Czech Republic, and a lot of people were killed and made homeless. There's a big benefit concert, in the Czech Republic, which is going to be covered by television - and Mr Havel, the President will be there, and they've asked me to come along and sing a few songs to show support. So I'm going to be doing that and then, the next day, I'm out in Augsburg to do a major TV show for German television. On September 4, I'm going to Moscow for three or four days to attend the 850th anniversary of the foundation of Moscow - at the invitation of the President, and also the mayor. This is because, and it's hard to fathom, I am a major international star over there in Russia. Some of the celebrations are going to be happening in a football stadium, and some in a smaller theatre but, I believe, dignitaries from all over the world are going to be attending and there's all sorts of events planned. So that should be pretty interesting. What else...I've got a TV show in Berlin coming up - and then I've got a charity concert, in aid of The Crocus Trust, in London on September 22. Basically, the event is intended to bring more attention to bowel cancer. My aunt died of bowel cancer in January... The event is a really major thing; Richard Branson is involved and there will also be royalty attending. It's a major social bash, but it's also being held to raise money and awareness. Beyond that, I've obviously got the album release and, really, other than that what we're filling the diary up with is television performances and so on. I don't have any live things planned for the rest of the year, but these things do come..."

Finally, what about 1998? Any live work on the cards, or are you just going to wait and see what develops?

CHRIS: "We haven't got anything planned at the present, but I have to temper my interest with the fact that I know I'm not as young as I was. Not in terms of energy levels because, obviously, I've got lots of that, but in terms of commitment to want to keep on breaking new territories, to keep on performing on a regular basis. I need to be home. I've got this new house, which is a major project... After what, 23 years in the business, I need to spend a bit more time for me. I know that a lot of people all over the world love to hear me singing, and they want to hear the records and stuff - but I have to, basically, strike the usual balance between family life and touring life. At this point, I'm kind of aware that what I'm doing is really harvesting all the good and hard work that I've done down the years - and I want to, basically, enjoy myself a bit more than I have been. I've been working extremely hard for, well, 23 years..."

Well, I have to say, it's nice to hear you say that. But, from where I'm standing, if someone was to take a snapshot of you speaking for just five minutes now, the international aspect of what you're doing in your career at present is surely bigger and

wider than it ever has been...

CHRIS: "Well, I couldn't agree more, actually. You know, there's no way that a career can sustain itself - it goes in valleys and peaks - but I do believe that it's very hard to predict. Every record I make, I believe, is the best thing I've done. Obviously, I wouldn't do it otherwise. But I do think this Love Songs album is going to be a big record. It may not be *The Biggest Ever Of All Time* - for me or for anybody, for that matter - but I know that it's got a special appeal and I have a sneaking feeling it's going to be big stuff in America. I just have a hunch that something off this new album is going to crack it in America. Cracking America has never been a particular problem with me but, you know, it would be nice. Sometimes I look around me by default and think 'I am actually surviving, and as others - my colleagues - peel away, I'm beginning to find myself closer and closer to the top, to the summit.' To find myself spoken of in the same breath as Phil Collins and Elton John is a great thing for me - and people do. When I go to Russia, people say 'Elton John, Michael Jackson - Chris de Burgh.' And I think 'Crikey!' Then there's Canada, Australia, South Africa, South America...it is a worldwide thing. Certainly, when I get my statements involving radio play around the world, the places where I get substantial radio play is astounding. It is a worldwide phenomenon. Ha-ha!"

It is indeed, and the trick now - having let all of that loose - is that you have to figure out how to deal with all of that, don't you? You could be working 53 weeks a year, no question about it...

CHRIS: "No problem. Absolutely no problem."

Well what a wonderful thing to be able to say about your career after 23 years...

CHRIS: "It's brilliant. And I also have to say that to have my mental and physical health is fantastic, as well. To be able to still have the energy and the interest and commitment is also great..."

THE LOVE SONGS ALBUM

Ever since the fan club was launched, back in 1983 (gulp!), it has become a tradition to conduct and publish an exclusive, in-depth interview in the Gazette about any new album Chris releases. The Love Songs album is certainly no exception, and here's what Chris had to say about the project...

Where did the idea for a 'Love Songs' album come from?

CHRIS: "I don't really have a clue! I think it came from the record labels in the Far East - which is the biggest expanding market in the world, at the moment. I believe that they were very interested in having a collection of ballads. While we were out there on tour, after the Australian tour, we discussed it then. I was very positive about it, because it's always been something that I'd like to have done. So, when I got back to Ireland, I went through my list of songs that I've written - which is about 135, written and recorded - because I wanted to pull out 'me to you' love songs. Not songs about the general theme of love, but personal songs; whether it's about breaking up or meeting or the difficulties in a relationship. I was astounded to find that, of those 135 songs, only about 22 were 'me to you' love songs - like *The Lady In Red*, which many people still believe is all I've ever done. A tremendous number of my songs were story songs - like *Don't Pay The Ferryman*, *Spanish Train* and so on - but out of the 22, we whittled them down to about 12, and I decided that what I would like to do was write at least two new songs which were along the same theme. Obviously, this is a love songs album, so they would have to be love songs. So, I set to that, and as the idea grew, record labels in Germany, Canada, England - indeed, all over the world - they all felt, and I do, too, that...it's a weird thing, but this wouldn't have been a good idea two years ago, or even four years ago, but - right now - it just seems, and my feeling is, that this is going to be a big record. I've got a hunch that people are ready for such things, that they'll go for a ballad album like this. I've also just heard, for example, that in America - where they have this ASCAP Award (the Association of Composers and Publishers) - they do a compilation of the Top 20 most played records on American radio, across a year. Well, *The Lady In Red* got that award first in 1988, and has subsequently won the award five times. In 1995, it didn't get into the Top 20 but, to my amazement, we just - yesterday - received a call to say, yes, *Lady In Red* is, again, one of the Top 20 most played records in America. Which is absolutely extraordinary. It's outrageous! The Americans don't know who I am, but they certainly know who *The Lady In Red* is. I just feel that, also, with all of these lady singers, balladeer singers, like Mariah Carey and Celine Dion, that people worldwide are probably more aware than they have been for a long time of the ballad, the big ballad and the love song. So I've got a very strong feeling that this album is going to work."

OK. I'm going to move on now to the comments I wrote down when I listened to your new songs, and some of those you re-recorded, to find out whether or not I've got an indication of what's going on with the material. Maybe you can expand on my comments. So, we'll start with 'In Love Forever'. The first thing I noted about this - as, indeed, I did with every song I heard - was...who produced it? The production is so clean, so clear. It's probably the best production that I've ever heard of your songs, it sounds so professional, so state of the art...

"I know exactly what you're saying. I remember I took my car for a long drive down to my mother's place, a few months back, and because I was in the frame of mind of compiling this record, I put six of my CDs into the CD player and I listened to them all on the way down, and on the way back - which is a two-hour journey each way. One thing that really struck me was that the albums 'Into The Light' and 'Flying Colours' - both produced by Paul Hardiman - sounded head and shoulders better than anything else. They sounded really fantastic; not only the production, but the *sounds* of the production. I called Kenny (Thomson - C de B's manager) the following day and I said 'D'you know? I think the man for this job is Paul Hardiman.' He and I always got on very well and, of course, he produced *The Lady In Red*, *Missing You* and all of the other hits off those two albums. So we contacted Paul, and had a couple of meetings. I explained that what I was looking for was a contemporary sound. You see, having done 'Beautiful Dreams' with a full orchestra - which is a very...classical way of making a record - I wanted to have something that was very contemporary, without losing the ethos that I've always had to my own records. And that is 'Pay no attention to fashion.' Or, 'Pay half an ear to fashion', but not any more than that - and that's only because your own record is going to get played alongside the current hits. That said, what Paul did was he recommended a friend of his from America, called Lester Mendez, to become involved because he'd done a lot of work in this particular style, with people like Celine Dion. I was very happy about this, and I met Lester - who is an absolutely fantastic guy, and a tremendous musician. So, basically, we steamed ahead in London, for six weeks in June and July, and we got on with recording. Now, you've mentioned 'In Love Forever', which was written for 'Beautiful Dreams', and Paul and Lester - it was not my idea - both felt that this song could be treated in a completely new way. I was very happy to go along with this; anything that they suggested, that was fine with me. Meanwhile, I'd written three new songs - which I'm sure you want to come round to. So, 'In Love Forever' sounds fresh and spirited and contemporary, and it also allows the vocal to breathe. People who have heard it, and the eight new recordings, say they've never heard me singing better."

Let's move on to 'So Beautiful', the first of those new songs - and also the new single.

My notes say 'Well produced...a C de B love song in microcosm; all the elements of your ability to write a love song are there.' What I took from that song is that it seems to be about a man celebrating being in love...

CHRIS: "Yeah... It's about a guy, he's not wet behind the ears, but he thought he'd been in love before and, suddenly, this person steams into his life - and he's just in a state of shock. In fact, the first verse says it all, that's all you need to know about it: 'I'm lying here tonight, thinking of the days we've had. I never thought that the world could be so beautiful...' It's just that feeling of 'Wow! This is happening!' It's a very memorable melody, and I was very pleased with this one. I hope it does well."

The next song I heard was 'Forevermore', which will be the new single in Germany. My jottings say 'It seems to be a declaration of monogamy and faithfulness. A song about someone being happy about being true to one person.'

CHRIS: "Well, no. I wouldn't say, necessarily, that that's what I had in mind. What I had in mind was a situation where two people have been together for a long time... You see, the hardest thing to say in a love song is something honest and believable. Everybody knows when that is being achieved; you can't pull the wool over people's eyes when it comes to love songs because they all been in it or out of it, or want to be in it or want to be out of it. This is just about a guy who's had a nightmare that his girlfriend or his wife has been killed, or has left him or they've fallen apart. Either way, he has lost his love - and he's so shaken by this dream that he gets up, goes downstairs, and it has shaken him out of his...I was going to say torpor. He's had this terrible dream, and he's suddenly realised that he has been taking his partner for granted. 'Maybe,' he says, 'I don't say it as often as I should, but you are my lover, you are my friend.' It's just a pantheon, really; it's a statement of love and affection to somebody. A lot of men have a problem telling their wives what they feel, and this guy - for whatever reason - has been shaken out of it by this terrible dream. And then the second thing is that, because his eyes have now been opened, he goes out in the evening and he notices that people are staring at his lady, and that she's looking great. So then he says it again, his words, in celebration."

The final new song is 'It's Me (And I'm Ready To Go). On hearing it, I wrote down 'A BIG song. Traditional C de B filmic epic...orchestra, crescendo, finale, climax...

CHRIS: "Everything!"

Yes, it's the whole lot - and the guitar solo is absolutely stupendous.

CHRIS: "Yeah, it's amazing, isn't it?"

Finally, it struck me as a song about a man ready to commit to a relationship.

CHRIS: "Well, I'll tell you, this is a very complicated song, because I had the idea of the chorus years and years ago and I didn't feel comfortable with whatever verse I put around it. The key is 'It's me - and I'm ready to go.' Now, that's the title, but it's also the key to the whole song - and I had to work out, backwards, ready to go *where?* Why is it *me?* So, what it is, it's a guy and a girl and, on two separate occasions, she has had an experience that has made her ask questions and wonder about the future of, not only their relationship, but of herself, mortality, the world... It's a big thing that's happened to her, and in trying to work that out, I put her and her lover in a cathedral. She's reading the names of those who have passed away, and she turns around to me - or her lover - and says 'What's it all about?' She turns to him and says 'I need somebody with me in my life.' And then the first chorus comes in and, almost like taking an aspirin to remove a headache, he just says 'Don't worry - I'm here. I'm here for you, and I will always be here for you.' And then they move to a certain place, where Ernest Hemmingway wrote 'A Farewell To Arms'. One of the things about that book is that it's always raining; rain always represents doom and gloom. She's read this book, and so has he (in this song) and they go to this famous cafe in Northern Italy where Ernest Hemmingway apparently used to go - and maybe wrote some of Farewell To Arms. So, anyway, she's been very moved by this place and, again, she's moved to ask him questions: 'Who will be the one apart who will teach me of conviction, all the way to the heart?' And then he says, with great passion - which is why my voice jumps the octave - 'It's me.' It's very dramatic; it's almost like it's from a musical. That's always the idea I had - it's like walking down a street and glimpsing in a window, and seeing action; you're not quite sure what's going on, but it seems valid and there seems to be a big story behind it."

Moving on to 'Separate Tables'. There is a spoken passage of French words at the beginning of the song - would you care to translate?

CHRIS: "Yes. 'Darling, it's 11 o'clock at night - and I miss you. I think about you all the time. All the time...' It was my idea to do that although, originally, I had this idea of a radio in the background or traffic noise - just to set the scene - and then I got the idea of the French. The song is obviously about two people who are separated and, maybe, one of them is French! Let's say the girl is French. The thing is, 'Separate Tables' was recorded for the 'Power Of Ten' album, and even shortly after the record was made, I was unhappy with the production. I just didn't think it did the business, and I thought the song got lost. I thought the tenderness was lost, the point was lost...it's just one of those things that does happen, occasionally, in making an album; you kind of get carried away with a certain style of production. This time, as you know, I did all the co-production on this record and I just really felt that this particular tune deserved another crack of the whip."

I've always found 'Separate Tables' to be a very mournful song. It's very melancholic, lyrically and melodically...

CHRIS: "Well, again, Lester - with his American ears - he thought this song would just be a smash in America. Again, it wasn't my idea to record it. That came from Paul and Lester; they said 'We love the song - and we'd love to have another go it.' So, we did it - and I'm very pleased. Actually, though, I wouldn't say the song was mournful... It's more hopeful than the original ever was. The song is just, once more, about a very normal thing to say: 'I think about you when the morning comes, I think about you when all my day is done. Wondering what you're doing now - are you lonely, too?' It's just an out and out statement; 'Jesus, I miss you! God, I wish we could get back together again...'"

Can you tell us more about the other songs you re-recorded?

CHRIS: "We did 'In A Country Churchyard' with a full orchestra, choir - plus a children's school choir. 'If You Really Love Her Let Her Go' is done with a string quartet. Finally, on 'Lonely Sky', I found myself duetting with myself, 20 years before. In fact, I recorded 'Lonely Sky' in 1975, and 22 years later I left some of the high harmonies from that original recording - and sang with them on this new version. It sounds fantastic. We did a re-mix and a new vocal - and it just sounds fabulous."

And so to some general questions. Love has been a central theme in your songwriting, but it's not the only theme; it's an element. Beyond that, what you have - across all your albums - is a substantial body of work. With this record, you're just pulling material from one area of that...

CHRIS: "Absolutely. If somebody wanted me to do a story songs album, again, I'd be hard pushed to select songs - because there'd be a lot of them..."

We've spoken many times about the different ways your career can go, and this album is

yet another new direction, something else again. Is that how it struck you?

CHRIS: "Oh, very much so, yes. Very much so. I know that some people are going to say 'Hang on a second; we've got eight old songs, untouched, and five new recordings of old songs...' But the way we've done those new recordings has breathed new life into them."

In all cases where you did remix and re-record, was it done on that basis; that you felt each song has another slant to it. Not necessarily that the songs weren't done justice first time around, but that there was another, other, way of doing them?

CHRIS: "Well, you have to remember that doing a re-mix takes a long time. It's not the case that someone says 'Oh, let's re-mix a song and stick it out on a record. That's an hour's work.' It isn't; it's several days work to do a new vocal and a re-mix. It's a commitment to a song, because you think you can take more out of it 20 years later. And I think we did that."

Finally, given that the three news tracks, in particular, on this album are so strongly performed, so well produced and so well played on, this must tell you something about where you're going to go next with your next studio album. Or does it?

CHRIS: "Well, I have to say that, at present, I can't see myself doing a full studio album for really quite a long time. It's various things; working in a recording studio is not my favourite thing. I've got so much going on in my life right now that to take out five or six weeks and, basically, spend that out of the country - working 12 to 14 hours a day - would be to remove myself from lots of other things that I'd love to do. I regard recording very much as work. With the 'Love Songs' album, it was different - it only involved eight songs, and we did them very fast. To do a new studio album is going to take me a lot of commitment, a lot of energy and a lot of motivation. So, quite simply, I'm very happy to carry on with this record. I think it's the kind of record that will stay in the market place for quite a long time, because I think it's a classic record. Beyond that, I can't see the fire of creativity wanting to burn for a year or two, at the earliest. However, elements of the style of recording on this album are very exciting - and I will take that into my next studio project."

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NB: Where there are numbers in brackets after an address, these refer to the age of the Pen Pal.

If you would like your details included in a future list of Pen Pals, then please write your name and address **CLEARLY** and in **BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS** - specifying your age only if you wish - and send them in to the fan club P.O. Box. However, if we can't understand your writing, we obviously won't be able to pass your information on. Finally, just a brief note to point out that Pen Pals is an **international** service. We'd like to put as many people from as many different countries in touch with one another as we can - and don't forget that you already have one major shared interest; a love of Chris de Burgh and his music. So get writing!...

UNTIL THE NEXT TIME...

As ever, that draws yet another edition of the Gazette to a close. Due to the usual lack of space, we have been unable to include a couple of our regular features - notably **Person To Person** (your chance to 'interview' Chris by writing in with any questions you'd like to ask him) and **Collector's Corner** (for anyone wishing to buy, sell or swap any items of C de B memorabilia). However, fear not; both items will return in the next Gazette - particularly Person To Person, for which we are already sitting on a stockpile of your questions. If you have any more - or entries for Collector's Corner or Pen Pals - then please send them into the club P.O. Box. This is also where you should send any comments or criticisms about the fan club.

It's most unlikely that we'll have another newsletter out before the end of 1997 (so, not for the first time, may we at the club wish you a very early Merry Christmas and Happy New Year) but, in the next edition of Gazette, we'll certainly have caught up with Chris to hear all of his latest news - and, not least, to speak to him about what will most certainly be the great success of The Love Songs album.

So, until the next time, thanks for your continued support for Chris and the fan club which, we must remind ourselves once more, has now been running for... **14 years!** Which is quite possibly some sort of a record...

Don't forget to call **The C de B Hotline** to keep in touch with what Chris is up to in those l-o-n-g gaps between newsletters. The number to call is:

0891 334 225

NB: Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Please ask permission of the person paying the 'phone bill before making a call. This service can only be accessed if you are living in the UK.

PS: If you're technologically minded and equipped with a desire to fly down that information super highway known as The Internet, remember that Chris has his own, official, website. So, if you're on line, you can visit **The Official Chris de Burgh Home Page** on the World Wide Web by pointing your browser to <http://www.crl.com/~jderouen/cdeb>. The site has lyrics to all of Chris's songs as well as sound samples, a complete discography and much more. If you have access to the Internet - most definitely check it out.

*** Although released on the same date, in some European territories - notably Germany - Chris's first single from The Love Songs album will be *Forevermore*, and not *So Beautiful*.**