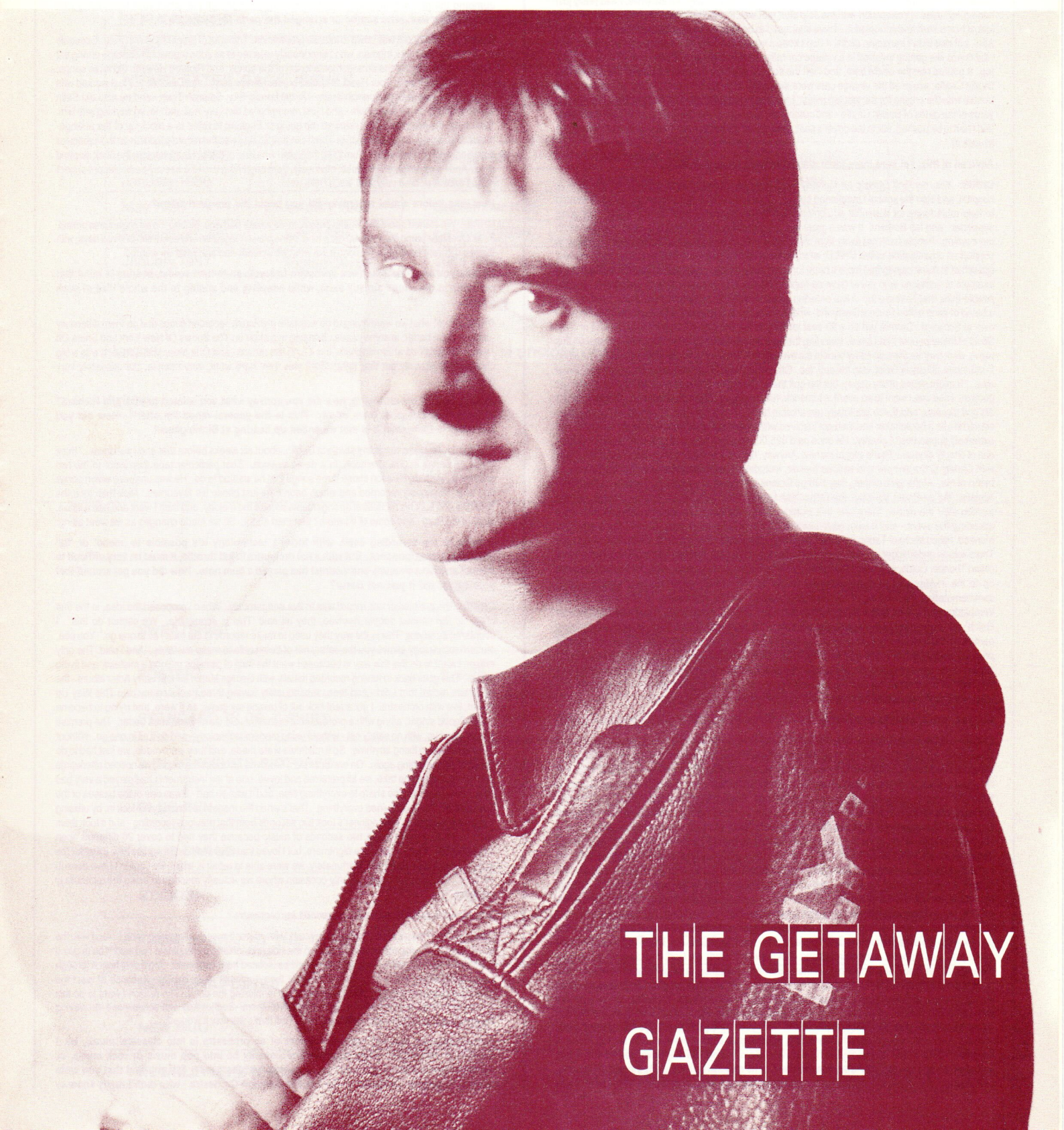


THE NEW *Chris de Burgh* CLUB

P.O. BOX 276 LONDON E2 7BW

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THE GETAWAY  
GAZETTE

Greetings, and welcome to the latest edition of the Gazette, the first since May 1995. As promised in that very issue, this newsletter contains all you need to know about Chris's new album, **BEAUTIFUL DREAMS**, which is released in the UK on **NOVEMBER 6**. As ever, and in familiar Gazette style, we conducted a **world exclusive** interview with Chris about the album - even before he'd spoken to A&M Records about the project in any great detail - in which he talked about the songs on the album, track by track, the preparation behind it all and an awful lot more. What you are about to read is the full, unedited and verbatim transcript of our conversation with him - including his views on his spectacular 'acoustic and with orchestra' live debut at Birmingham Symphony Hall on September 9 - so we'll waste no more space with preamble and simply allow you to read on. We opened up the interview by catching up on Chris's news between issues of this magazine...

**Prior to our last interview, you had recently returned from playing a concert in Bulgaria - what happened next?**

**CHRIS:** I did some things like a gig in a rugby club during March in aid of the school that my children go to, Aravon School, in South Dublin. I performed solo for about 30 to 40 minutes, some of my own things and also a few classics. I was actually trying out a few things - like Roy Orbison's 'In Dreams' and a Beatles' song that I kind of felt that I wanted to record. That went great and, to my amazement, people got up and started dancing to that. I was quite taken aback, because I thought it would be more of a concert vibe. I'd actually followed a very good '60s rock band, made up of some of the parents in the school, and everybody was in the dancing mood so they all jumped up and started dancing, which was quite interesting. That raised a few funds. On March 17 which was, of course, St. Patrick's Day, there was a tribute show on the Gay Byrne Late, Late Show. It was a tribute to a guy who has raised a lot of money for famine victims in Africa, so I sang, at the piano, The Simple Truth and Borderline. That went down great; I really enjoyed doing that, actually. All the while, I was really just honing my ideas in connection with the solo stuff that was forthcoming. And then I just caught up in lots of home stuff and school stuff. I was supposed to be in Bucharest in Rumania at the end of the April, but that didn't transpire, sadly. I don't keep a very good diary at the moment, I'm afraid!.. But I did things like getting involved in a vintage car rally. That was great, and I drove a 1957 Jaguar soft top. It poured rain the whole time, and I left the soft top down for the entire journey. We returned to Dublin Castle, where all the vintage cars were supposed to go back to, and this car had tremendous trouble with the engine for the last ten miles. I was really nursing it the last bit, and it got to within 50 yards of the gates of Dublin Castle - and completely expired. Even the RAC couldn't get it working, and I had to be pushed, still in the driver's seat, through the gates because I was damned if I was going to walk it!..

**Amid all of this, I'm sure there must also have been some golf stuff...**

**CHRIS:** Yes, my Golf Classic on Monday, May 8, which raised around €65,000 for a children's hospital, and also the school I mentioned before, which is a charity. It's a super school and I wanted to help raise funds for essential equipment. Ian Woosnam came over for that again - my great supporter - and Ian Botham. It was a great day out, actually. I had a lot of fun - and I sang again in the evening. People can't get away from me singing over here in Ireland!.. I then went to London to support an organisation called CHILD, which is for childless couples, infertile couple, and I made a speech at that just saying that there's hope for everybody, really. I was saying that my wife is a living example of someone who never gave up hope of having kids, and was able to have them. A lot of people think that having a kid is like ordering a taxi. It's not as simple as that. I also went up with a friend of mine called Dermot Desmond, who is a director of Glasgow Celtic Football Club, on a trip over to Scotland. Dermot laid on a 90-seat jet to fly to the Scottish FA Cup Final at the end of May. So all of these people that I knew, including the ex-Prime Minister Charles Haughey, jumped on this plane, went over for the day, came back in the evening and attended a wonderful barbecue in the night. Fortunately, Glasgow Celtic won the cup, too. Otherwise it would have been a bit of a bummer! What else... It might sound pretty dopey, but the golf thing...it's one of those sports that I like to try and get good at. I see that I went to an event in Limerick, run by a guy called J.P. McManus. He has had two big golf classics, and these are totally remarkable because this is a man, a very wealthy man, who started life as a bookmaker and then got involved with all sorts of other business deals - but he's also extremely supportive of charity. He once paid €25,000 to play a round of golf with Ian Woosnam at one of charity dinners. That's a lot of money. Anyway, he had a two-day golf classic, in which I played with Christy O'Connor Jr and various friends, including Robert Sangster and Charles Benson, a friend of his. At the gala dinner, they had politicians falling out of your ears. There was the Prime Minister, the ex-Prime Minister, the Opposition Leader and many, many famous people. At the auction after the dinner, there was this picture - it was cartoons of various celebrities who were attending the event - and it must have been worth about €500 or, at best, €1000. But a guy from Monaco, called Michael Tabor, paid five...hundred...thousand...pounds for it. €500,000, at auction! There was an underbidder who was prepared to go up to €490,000. Anyway, this guy Tabor had a horse called Thunder Gulch, which won the Kentucky Derby in March of this year. Now, McManus had come up to me in May and said, as a special favour to him, would I ever consider writing a song commemorating the winning of the Kentucky Derby - which, in America, is just huge. It's like Wimbledon and a Test Match all rolled into one. So I wrote a song called 'The Balled Of Thunder Gulch', which involved getting all the horses right in the right positions at the right time with the right names. It was actually very tricky to do, but kind of fun to do. We recorded that in July, as a special private commission, and this guy Michael Tabor received a copy of it. I think he's going to put a limited amount out on CD for his friends. That's one the fans will never hear! I actually performed it that night of the auction, for this guy Michael Tabor - who had just spent half a million pounds. He was very emotional indeed, hearing his big win being commemorated by me...

**Are you sure it wasn't something to do with the huge amount of money he'd just spent?**

**CHRIS:** Ha-ha! Possibly... I next went to Jersey, for the Jersey Open, in June and then on to Gleneagles. Lots of other stuff was happening in between; I was doing a lot of work for this new project, trying to select tracks, getting to the core of why I wanted to make this record - because I was a bit iffy about it at first, but I got into it as we went along. But at the beginning of July, I was invited by Jackie Stewart to go up to Gleneagles for one of his golf things. It was pretty nerve-wracking. I was involved in a team with Kenny Dalglish, who was with me in a pair, and then the opposite pair was Prince Andrew and Captain Tim Lawrence, Princess Anne's husband. There was just eight golf teams going out, and about 500 people watching the first tee, plus cameras from the BBC and Sky Sport - and I was the last person to tee off. And I have never been so nervous in my life. My legs were wobbling like jelly. So I smacked the ball, fortunately, I didn't hit it into the crowd, and it went straight down the fairway. My caddy, a dour Scotsman, gave me a five iron for my second shot, which was to an elevated green. You could just see the top of the flag. So I closed my eyes and hit and hoped. The ball sort of flew over the top and disappeared, and there was sparse clapping from the crowd. I got up there, and there were three ball on the green; two of them were on a fringe - and one of them about three foot from the pin. I went to the edge of the green and Prince Andrew said 'No, no, no, no. That's your ball over there by the pin.' So I tapped it in for a birdie three. What a way to start! My God, that cheered me up! But it was great fun, and Sean Connery was there, Bernard Gallagher...a whole host of celebrities and professional golfers and royalty and so on had been invited, and a TV programme was made of the event. That was enormous fun and, again, I got into the dinner and there, inside the tent, where there was about 700 people, underneath a spotlight was a big white piano. And I said to Jackie Stewart 'What's that for?' And he replied 'Well...just in case you felt like singing...' So I did Lady In Red, Missing You - and I wound up with Danny Boy, which I gave a great preview to by saying 'This is a song about a father saying goodbye to his son, who is emigrating. He may never see his son again, and when his son returns...the father may be dead, or he may still be alive...' By the end of the song, half the room was in tears! I could see the eyes being dabbed, and I gave it everything I had! It was

one of those things.

**You obviously enjoy entertaining, which is a very good thing for an entertainer. I'm not saying that anyone can get you up there in front of a piano, but it's clearly something you don't mind doing and that you do enjoy...**

**CHRIS:** Well I do enjoy doing it because, when I'm not on a tour or something and I'm playing the piano and singing, just to myself, I'm thinking 'God, you're not bad, you know?' You should be out there, spreading this stuff around.' That happens to me quite a lot when I'm singing to myself; I'm thinking 'Keep in shape - somebody might be interested in hearing this...' Then, on the 3rd of July, at 10am, I started recording - with the orchestra in Whitfield Studios in the West End of London. And it was totally remarkable, arriving at the studio at 10 in the morning to see a 42-piece orchestra all sitting there waiting to play - waiting for me to sing. It was the most intense six days of recording I've ever had, but after six days - with two final days, making eight altogether, of post-production to what we'd recorded - the whole thing, 13 songs, was recorded. And that makes up the Beautiful Dreams album. At the end of that week, I was totally, absolutely knackered, but thrilled with the way it had gone because most of the tracks were done in one go. In fact, they were all done live - and that is the important thing to remember - with just a sound balance attempt, just to get all the sound right. Then, after maybe a couple of those run-throughs, I would sing; do a performance. More times than not, the first time that I did a full performance - that was the one that wound up on the record. Nothing added; a full, live performance from beginning to end, strings orchestra and choir, in three particular examples. Getting the whole thing done in one was absolutely fantastic. 10 til 6! The whole recording process took 60 hours, instead of four months or three months, and then the mixing took 12 days after that. That's the way to do an album; in three weeks...

**Jumping the gun slightly here, one of the things that struck me about your Symphony Hall performance was...who scored or arranged the parts for orchestra?**

**CHRIS:** Well, a lot of it was down to intense preparation. I did a lot of preparation with Peter Oxendale on the piano. And Nick Ingman, who I erroneously referred to as John Ingman (!) on stage during the Birmingham show, did the arrangements to ten of the songs, and Richard Hewson did three songs; Carry Me Like A Fire In Your Heart, In Love Forever - a new song - and Discovery. I last worked with Richard 20 years ago on Spanish Train. He did Lonely Sky, Spanish Train - and he also did Satin Green Shutters on my first album - and I just remembered him very well and I loved working with him. Obviously, the pre-production involved me going to England to listen to a mock-up of the arrangements and saying 'Yes, I like that,' or 'Don't like that...' So I was the record producer on this particular occasion, and produced the album in as much as I was kind of the last buck person; the buck stopped here. And I was delighted because, obviously, from beginning to end it was my particular pet project - and I think it worked very well.

**How long before actual recording did you begin the pre-production?**

**CHRIS:** We started about two weeks before, three weeks perhaps, getting the arrangements sorted. Peter Oxendale came over and we did a lot of piano playing together, and spent two or three days, with the two different arrangers, working it out what we actually had and what we wanted.

**How do you organise a 40-piece orchestra to create an in-tune sound, bearing in mind that melodies in the songs already exist, while adapting and adding to the whole idea of each track?**

**CHRIS:** Well, what we were trying to do was take previously recorded songs and do them differently - and do them better, in some cases. Bringing in a choir on The Snows Of New York and Shine On - which we didn't do at Birmingham, but it's on the record - and One More Mile To Go, it was a big challenge to actually get that right. So it was very hard work, very intense, but ultimately very rewarding.

**Moving back to the arranging, how did you convey what you wanted to Nick and Richard? Did you hum things to them or say 'This is the general mood I'm after'? How did you articulate to them what it is that we ended up hearing at Birmingham?**

**CHRIS:** I went into a recording studio in Dublin, about six weeks before that and I put down...I think it was 15 songs in one afternoon, in a demo session. That particular tape then went to the two arrangers. Richard Hewson chose three songs that he wanted to do. He was unaware which songs had been previously recorded and which hadn't; he just chose his favourites. Nick then took the structure and built his orchestral arrangements around the melody, and then I went and had a listen. Most of it, I liked - and some of it I wasn't that mad about. So we made changes as we went along.

**Turning to the recording itself, with today's technology it's possible to 'mend' or 'fix' mistakes in a performance. But with a full orchestra in full throttle, it must be very difficult to correct anything because one violinist has played a bum note. How did you get around that problem, or did it just not occur?**

**CHRIS:** The premise of this record was to live dangerously. When I proposed the idea, in the first place, to the various people involved, they all said 'This is impossible. We cannot do this.' I countered by saying 'This is the way they used to make records in the past - all in one go.' You see, modern technology allows you the safety net of being able to make mistakes. And I said 'The only reason I want to do this this way is because I want the thrill of perhaps making a mistake, and living with it.' This goes back to having recorded initially with George Martin for that Larry Adler album - the Gershwin record that I did - and then, subsequently having three tracks on my own This Way Up album, live with orchestra. I got a real kick out of raising my game, as it were, and trying to become a really good singer, along with a professional orchestra. So we all performed better. The premise was to stand up, with no safety net - without using modern technology - and do it all in one go. Without coming back and fixing anything. So if mistakes were made, and they were made, we just had to do the whole bloody thing again. On one occasion, however, on one of the tracks, we noticed afterwards that the recording, the take, we all preferred and loved, one of the instruments had played a very bad note. It was a semi-tone sharp to everything else, and it was so bad - it was one of the basses or the bass cellos - that it just ruined everything. That's when the modern technology did kick in; by utilising a previous recording, the engineer's took two seconds from that previous recording - and it took them eight hours to replace those two seconds of music because they had to cover 26 different open microphones. It was a complete nightmare, but I loved that take and I didn't want to lose it just for the sake of one badly played note. Fortunately, we were able to repair it, which we couldn't have done in the past. That was probably the only occasion where we actually resorted to using the technology available.

**How do you set microphones to record an orchestra?**

**CHRIS:** Well, it was all just done in a big room, with microphones overhanging - and I stood with the string players. I stood sort of behind them to the side and, initially, the engineer had said 'You're going to go into a sound booth to sing, where you will be isolated from the music. You'll only hear it through your headphones, and if you make a mistake then it doesn't really matter - because at least the orchestra got their bit right.' And I said 'No - you're missing the point. The reason I want to do this is because I want to stand with the orchestra. With them! So that they can actually see me waving my arms around and singing - and hear me.' And that's the way it worked.

**I would imagine that the average member of an orchestra is into classical music, be it modern or otherwise. They might not necessarily be into pop music or rock music, or whatever you prefer to call what you do - was that the case? Did you find that you were singing to people - member of the London Session Orchestra - who didn't really know or**

## appreciate much about your genre or music?

**CHRIS:** A lot of these people are the top players from the Philharmonics and, I suppose, that because they are highly trained and far more gifted as players than most people in my profession, there's a lot of envy over the fact that they don't earn anything near the amount of money that people in my field do. In the past, I've noticed that this is a bone of contention. Nevertheless, I was totally up front with these guys. I spoke to them and I told them jokes and I talked to them and explained what I was trying to do. I got a lot of empathy from the players, and the leader of the orchestra, Gavin Wright, was very much into it. He loved the emotional songs and he was very interested, on behalf of the orchestra, in how the whole thing sounded. So I think what happened initially was that the musicians did probably think 'Here comes another pop singer, who can't sing in tune', but I showed them, within minutes, that I could hold the notes and I could perform every bit as well as they could - possibly better - in a live situation. I wasn't at all phased by the fact that these 40 or 50 people were playing on my record. Basically, I rose to the occasion.

**In terms of the speed at which the album was recorded, were you helped by your choice of material, in that you were recording mainly songs that you'd either recorded yourself before, or that had been recorded by others? In the future, should you care to repeat the exercise, but write completely new material - you might not have the luxury of the speed factor.**

**CHRIS:** There are different challenges involved with recording classics like *In Dreams*, *Girl and Always On My Mind* - in as much as you are under tremendous pressure to make your version better than the original, if possible. So that actually required a lot more thought than just doing them the way that they had previously been recorded. Secondly, to do stuff like *Missing You*, *The Snows Of New York*, *Missing You*, *Shine On*...again, they had been previously recorded - but we weren't just repeating what we had done before. There was no point in doing that; the point was to try and do them better. And that required a lot more thought. Finally, the three new songs had not been recorded before and they required production and imagination. So the speed of it all actually came simply from two things; very good preparation and, secondly, the decision to do everything at once and not having to rely on the usual technique of building from the bottom. You see, people who listen to records are usually unaware of how long it takes and how...incredibly boring the whole process can be. And that's what was getting to me, to be honest. In the final analysis, I was getting thoroughly bored with making records. Whereas this way was brilliant because you got everything live, you weren't relying on technology - and you got everything on tape in one go. For the future albums, if this one does well, I've got an absolute bucketload of other songs that I loved to record. You know, previous records of mine - plus, obviously, I'll write some more songs - and the shortlist of classic songs to record is not short at all. There's another song I'd love to have done for this album, Elvis Presley's *In The Ghetto*. There's a whole pile of them that I would have liked to have done. But...maybe next time...

**Looking to the future and the impact of this album, regardless of any commercial success. In terms of its success, personally, for you as an exercise, do you expect the experience to have an influence on how you record in future? I'm not saying that an orchestra is now going to pop up on every album you ever do - although if that's the case, then fine - but do you feel that you've learned anything from the new album that you can now take forward with you in terms of how you might record from now on?**

**CHRIS:** The key thing I learned is that you don't have to spend four months in a recording studio making an album. With good preparation, you can make a fast record without compromising the quality - and that's very important; to get that right. I think that one of the things that I probably did miss from *Beautiful Dreams* was the energy that I like to bring in to a concert performance. Although at the Birmingham concert it was clear that there's still a tremendous amount of energy in my music. Whether you can get that across with an orchestra is a moot point, but it's unlikely. On the next album I make, whether I will concentrate solely on just beautiful orchestral music...I will probably, in there, have a selection of more rock orientated tracks. But for that, I will do exactly the same thing, I think; I will have everything recorded at the same time.

**In other words, Beautiful Dreams has re-invented some options for you?**

**CHRIS:** Well it has, but the irony is that I'm only doing something that people were doing until they had the option of not doing it, i.e. taking longer making records. I think anybody who spends more than a couple of months making a record these days is a complete idiot - and there's no need because nothing is that important any more. Whereas, in the old days...I mean, The Beatles knocked off some of their albums in two days - and they still sound terrific, if a little dated, nevertheless. But the energy is there, and I think that you cannot meet the energy of a live performance with anything that is clearly put down with digital information and SMPTE code. SMPTE code is a digital code that runs other machines along with it - and you only have to listen to the garbage of The Pet Shop Boys, for example, to realise that everything has been run off SMPTE code. Loads of people do it. All of this techno stuff, that's all it is. Anybody can do it. A three-year-old can do it. This is why I have held that one of the worst things that's ever happened to modern music is the computer involvement in making records. What I'm doing is merely going back to the way that they used to make records, while trying to have a modern slant on it as well.

**Who first mooted the idea of an album like Beautiful Dreams - and why were you initially 'slightly iffy' about it?**

**CHRIS:** The idea evolved through various sources. Firstly, at the end of the last tour, on the 23rd of December, 1994, it became clear that the options of taking the big entourage, the 55 people etc, around the world for further concerts was being lost and that we had a problem. We were going to do South Africa, India and the Middle East, which I think I spoke about before, and that fell apart. Secondly, my keyboard player, Glenn, was very ill. Thankfully, he's recovering and he's a lot better but, nevertheless, the option of going out on tour with the band meant that, if we were going to do that, we would have to do it without Glenn. And I didn't really want to do that because he's been the first member and, I suppose, out of some kind of loyalty to him. I think it would have done him no favours at all to sit at home being ill, or in hospital being ill, to hear that the band has gone out on tour without him. I didn't think that was the right thing to do. I'd always hungered for another repeat attempt to perform with an orchestra. And part of me was saying 'You've got to think long-term here...' The business that I'm in of taking a band around, plus the huge lighting entourage, etc, etc, well that particular genre of touring is dying out. It isn't completely gone because, for example, the last week of concerts that I did of the *This Way Up Tour*, in Dortmund, Munich and Augsburg, were, I believe, in the opinions of the fans out there, the best concerts I've ever done. Certainly in terms of energy; those shows were more than three hours long. So we stopped on a peak, and it doesn't mean we're not going to pick up again, but I just it's nice to take a sideways movement and try something else. It isn't terminal; it's not, like...forever. I always thought of myself as a good solo artist, and I fancied the idea of performing with an orchestra. So, all those things gelled and, simultaneously, the managing director of A&M Record, Osman Eralp - a very nice man - picked up on all of this, I think, and then responded by saying 'Why don't you make this kind of a record?' I think some people thought it was going to be much more acoustic but the more I into it, I thought 'Well, I don't want to make a record that means overdubs, that means going back and recording stuff on top of other stuff. I want to do everything in one go.' Initially, I just didn't see the point of it. But I think the more I got into it, the more I liked the idea of it. Certainly, the product we've come out with I think is terrific.

**Why did you decide on the name 'Beautiful Dreams' for the album title?**

**CHRIS:** Various reasons. I came up with the title because it is the last couple of words in the Roy Orbison song 'In Dream'. Originally, I thought 'In Dreams' might be a good title, but then a switched

it to 'Beautiful Dreams'. In a way, it reflects the fact that I've always dreamed of making a record with an orchestra, and orchestral music is beautiful. It's a very positive phrase, beautiful dreams, like when you go to bed and someone says 'Sweet dreams', or 'Beautiful dreams'. It just felt right, and the people in the record company liked it, along with various others, so I was happy enough to go with it.

**How did it feel to be, as it were, master and servant on this record and actually produce it yourself?**

**CHRIS:** I wouldn't have done it any other way. In fact, prior to the recording of the album, the record company got in touch, they called my management company, and said 'Who's the producer?' And I said 'Tell them I'm the producer. What's the point in having another guy standing about, just repeating what I want?' You see, on this occasion this project is so close to me - and it's not a whole pile of new songs where you need creative input from elsewhere. The best thing about it was, it was like...I'm sure your readers would empathise with this; if you go into a restaurant and you're handed a menu that has got a choice of, say, 30 starters, 60 main courses and about 40 desserts - plus a wine list that's as heavy as *Encyclopaedia Britannica* - would they prefer that, or would they like to go into a restaurant where there's a choice of three starters, five main courses, maybe five desserts and an acceptable wine list? The parallel I'm trying to draw here is this; when I knew I was going to make a record like this, the choice was either to be accompanied by guitar plus orchestra, piano plus orchestra - or just orchestra. There was no other choice, because I wasn't about to get into synthesisers. So the moment I threw the synthesiser idea out of the window - where you can spend weeks looking for different sounds - the moment that I did that, then it was easy. I became the producer, right there.

**For you to actually choose 13 tracks - out of so many possible options available - must have been very difficult. How did you go about it?**

**CHRIS:** Well, because a lot of the inspiration for this album did actually come from A&M Records, and in particular from Osman Eralp, they wanted to have two particular songs on it; *Lady In Red* and *Missing You*. I said 'Fair enough - but I want to choose the rest.' Initially, from one section, there was resistance to doing covers. But I said 'No, that's the whole point; I want to do covers, I want to do favourite songs.' Some of the songs were ones of my own that I felt had been recorded incorrectly or without their full potential being realised - which I shall refer to in a moment. They just didn't sound the way I felt they should have sounded at the time, and because of - probably - time restrictions during recording they never wound up as good as I felt they could have become. Others were chosen because they are favourites and because I felt that we have now moved on, in some cases 15 years - maybe even longer - and they felt like they could do with a re-recording. Some of the songs I considered were actually so good originally that I wouldn't even consider trying to do them again; there was something magical about them. Finally, I already had three new songs in the bag, and I thought 'Well, why don't we record these in the same way?' That is, with orchestra. But the full criteria was that this was to be an album of personal choice of songs from me. The ethos was that everything had to be recorded in one go, with no fiddling about with technology. It had to be, basically, my choice - to stand or fall. It wasn't about coming out with a new album that the critics could get a hold of and savage and pull apart. This is what it is; a recording, with an orchestra...

## BEAUTIFUL DREAMS - SONG BY SONG

**MISSING YOU:** The opening track. I had previously performed *Missing You* on the piano quite a bit but, because it was recorded rhythmically, it wasn't possible to do it that way and give it justice. So I started slowing bits down and speeding other bits up, and then I thought 'Well, why not do it with the orchestra?' That's the way it came out and, I think, pretty successfully as well.

**GIRL:** By The Beatles. Always been a big favourite of mine. It's one of the lesser-known Beatles' songs, I think, it's not one of the all-time hits. I don't think it was ever a single, for example, but it's a song that I used to sing a lot when I was younger. If I get a chance to make another album like *Beautiful Dreams* - like 'More Beautiful Dreams' - I will definitely choose another Beatles song, from the more obscure part of their publishing and songwriting repertoire. The interesting thing about this song, I suppose, for me is that we did it in The Beatles way; all live and with a string quartet, two acoustic guitar and bass. I think it worked very well - and I also added a little piece at the end, which I made up myself, to give it a personal flavour, I suppose.

**CARRY ME (LIKE A FIRE IN YOUR HEART):** Now this would be a track that I felt faintly disappointed with when we recorded it originally. It just wound up too electronic and too lacking in emotion - and I've been dying to record it again, as a result. I think you'll find that the way we've done it is very emotional now. And as I actually explained to Peter Oxendale, the music director on this project, what I wanted overall to do was have songs with strong lyrics that could be taken along with the music in a much more powerful way. So it's a lyric-driven album, coupled with the orchestral backing, and this version of *Carry Me (Like A Fire In Your Heart)* works far better than the original. I think people who know the two hopefully will agree.

**DISCOVERY:** It's from the album 'At The End Of A Perfect Day.' This isn't a lot different, but it's a surprising track and, again, I love the lyrics on this one. We all agreed at the time, when we recorded it, that it would make a great video because you can actually see all the things happening - and the arrangement by Richard Hewson is lovely. It's very nice indeed, it colours the song beautifully and, again, the remit was to bring the lyrics out with the emotion that's suggested by the music - and vice versa.

**THE SNOWS OF NEW YORK:** Originally from the 'This Way Up' album. I wanted to have a choir on this when we first recorded it but, again, due to time problems we recorded it in the studio just with a few voices, not a full choir. It wasn't until I started playing this song live, and getting a really powerful reaction from the fans that I realised I'd like to have another go at it. We used to end the show with this one, and it was just terrific - with great visuals by Andy Doig - and I think everybody who saw it live would probably have barely recognised it from the album. Again, I felt that it hadn't been properly recorded. I felt that at the time, in fact, but sometimes you get so into an album that you don't have the ability, the mental strength, to say 'Look - this isn't good enough. Ditch it; let's do it again.' You know, because you're working to deadlines and stuff. But anyway, I'm pleased that I re-recorded that one. The song just became that much more powerful as a result of having performed it live. This sometimes does happen; you take a song into a recording studio and you work with it, but it's in its infancy. Some of them reach maturity in the studio, and some of them do not until you've taken them out onto the streets. That's why sometimes some of the songs on live albums can sound far better than they actually do on the original recording. It's a natural progression. So I was very pleased with *Snows Of New York*.

**IN LOVE FOREVER:** This is a new one, and it was chosen by Richard Hewson, who was sent the tape of the demos and, as I said previously, didn't know whether any of them were pre-recorded or not. But he liked this one, as he did *Discovery* and *Carry Me (Like A Fire In Your Heart)*. This was written about six months ago, and I'm very pleased with it. It's very slicky, and when we were recording it originally we thought about adding some extra percussion but, in the event, it just didn't work so it never made it on to the record. This was one of the very quick ones to record and I'm pleased with the result. Very pleased. What's it about lyrically? Well... the way I'm going to explain what I'm about to explain is...having suffered at the hands of the media last year, to some large degree, where they started telling me what I wrote songs for - including *Blonde Hair Blue Jeans* and *Lady In Red* - and then following what happened to Phil Collins, when the media started telling him why he wrote the songs, they started looking for all the explanations, so I'm actually going to remain completely silent on this one. For the simple reason that I can't wait for someone out there to tell me why I wrote this song. I

know why I wrote it - but for the first time ever, I'm not going to explain why. I'm going to leave it as a complete mystery because I'm fed up of people in the media telling me why I wrote songs. They will look for clues everywhere, but to help them out...In Love Forever, quite simply, explains what happens when somebody has an argument with somebody else. As far as I know, it may not be based on a true-life situation. Or perhaps it was! Anyway, I'm keeping schtum about it...

**SHINE ON:** This is one of those tracks which I loved, particularly loved the lyrics, but I didn't feel it had been correctly recorded. When listened to the Rupert Hine production, I thought it was very poor. I was disappointed and, actually, the disappointment didn't come from having performed it a lot live - because we didn't perform it live. I just felt it could have been a lot stronger. Some producers are in the habit of being very aware that other producers are listening to their material - not necessarily the general public - and making things a little too esoteric and difficult to understand. I felt that this song was one of those tracks which should have been done in a very obvious way. This song came from the Power Of Ten Album and I felt, at the time, that it really wasn't coming through as strongly as it should have done - which is why I wanted to do it again. This was done with a choir, as well.

**LADY IN RED:** This starts off with a little piano thing, played by Peter Oxendale. Just a chord. There's not a lot I can say about this except that, because it is such a popular song, I just hope that people like this version as well. Because it's not often that the original recording artist of an original song re-records that song in a fairly different way. For example, this version has no inner rhythm - like on the original record - or that smoochy 'Oooh' sound. I like it a lot, actually, and I really enjoyed performing it with the orchestra. Again, using a lot critical dynamics, dynamic shifts in tempo, movement within the song - which you cannot get when you're using modern machinery. So it's clear that this is all done live. You can't do it otherwise. It's a good performance.

**IN DREAMS:** A favourite song from way back. It's a difficult song to sing because it's got a very wide dynamic range starting, I think, with the lowest note being a G. Then it goes all the way up to a high G at the end. So this demanded a lot of concentration while I was recording it. On his original, Roy Orbison did it in a very skip way, almost Spanish style, and I wanted to do it just straight ahead. I think I did it justice - I hope I did, anyway.

**I'M NOT CRYING OVER YOU:** This is a song I wrote with Albert Hammond two years ago. We started recording it for the album This Way Up and Pete Smith, the producer, I don't believe ever got a full handle on it. He made the classic mistake of trying to push a round peg in a square hole by trying to make it modern-sounding as well as classic-sounding, and it just didn't work. It's always a tricky thing when you have a new song that sounds like it's been around for years. Indeed, a lot of people, when they heard it for the first time, said 'Who originally recorded that?' He wrote that? I said 'I did! And it wasn't originally recorded by anybody - this is new.' In fact, we had a full recording of it, with orchestra, for the This Way Up album, but I just didn't like it. It just didn't do anything for me. So we ditched that and I said 'Let's have another crack at it.' And I'm very pleased with the way it's turned out. Lyrically, the song is about a guy pretending he's no longer in love. Everything he says, like 'I'm not thinking about you...I'm not hanging around the telephone, I'm going out and having a wonderful time and my horoscope tells me I'm in good shape...', it's just garbage. He's missing her like hell. Everything he says...it's like the 10cc song, I'm Not In Love; you hear it and you want to stand up and shout 'Liar!' You can tell immediately that that's he's lying. At the end of this song there's a scene where it's pouring with rain and he's just walking, he says, 'For a trip down memory lane...' Of course he's going to have a look at her house. We've all done this! It's pouring with rain, he's looking into the window and she looks out and see him standing in the rain. It's a very emotional scene. I see that very powerfully; she's sitting in by the fire, reading a book, and suddenly there's this noise outside - and there's this figure, drenched in rain, and he's looking at her and she's looking at him. And he's trying to tell us that he's not missing her. Of course he is; he's madly in love with her! So it's one of those ironic songs, and I think it works great.

**ALWAYS ON MY MIND:** Always been a big, favourite song of mine, from Elvis Presley. I loved his version. Then, I suppose, one thing that riled me most of all was hearing the Pet Shop Boys - who did an absolutely horrific version of this wonderful song. If ever a song should be consigned to eternal damnation, it's their version of Always On My Mind. I thought it was crap - and you can quote me on that! The emotion of this song is just tremendous. The guy admitting that he's made her feel second best...it's very much, I think, a song that women can relate to on the level that they are frequently overlooked because the guys are rushing about and they say 'Oh, sorry - I forgot.' And I think guys can relate to it because they've been in that situation themselves. We're all guilty of it, and it's just a great lyric. I love it and I think I've done a very good version of it.

**SAY GOODBYE TO IT ALL:** The reason I did it like this, as I mentioned at the Birmingham concert, is because I performed it on the QE2 and I loved doing it that way. You see, we have a song here which is a showstopper, a stormer - with blazing electric guitars and drums going wild - and that's the way we did it for years and years and years. And, suddenly, I did it for the veterans on the QE2 - and a lot of them came up to me and said they were very moved by the beaches of Normandy stuff, and the sentiment. Because it is based on, loosely, Hemmingway's 'A Farewell To Arms' and some of that war poetry by people like Siegfried Sassoon, Rupert Brooke and Robert Graves. It was Graves who wrote that poem 'Forever England' - 'There is some corner of a foreign field which is...forever England.' So I was very pleased and very happy with the way this turned out.

**ONE MORE MILE TO GO:** Finally, there's another new song which, people tell me after my Birmingham performance, is another showstopper. Now, this comes as a big surprise to me because I wrote this song in about 1982. I remember playing this one to Rupert Hine in about 1983, when we were beginning to record the Man On The Line album, and he dismissed it. He said 'No, no - it's not very good.' I knew it was good, and I've just been waiting for a chance to do it the way it should be done. So, as the record producer on this occasion, I said 'Right - bring in the orchestra, bring in the choir. Let's do it the way I've always dreamed of doing it.' And, at Birmingham, it brought the house down. Lyrically, it starts off with me visualising, as usual, a very strong mental picture. It's a moonlit night...it's almost like Disney, actually. On the far left-hand side there's a train coming through a valley. This valley is completely covered in snow, and we see all the snow, and the moon shining and the lights of the train coming round, from left to right - and then, far below, where the camera angle of my mind is, there's a village, with lights twinkling in the distance. Then there's a guy whose returning, from where doesn't necessarily have to be explained, but he's been away a long time. Maybe he's been around the world, and he's returning to his girlfriend. It's just about the joy of returning home. When he gets to the station, he thinks that she's going to be there. Everybody else has gone - all the relatives have left - and she just waits for him. It's one of those emotional moments, as she steps out of the shadows, and there she is. They obviously run to each other and hug. And the last bit of the song is just revealing that it is, in fact, Christmas Eve. It refers to the fact that 'This is a magic night for every girl' and 'This is the night that all men dream of peace on earth...' It's basically saying, in another parallel, that as far as peace is concerned - we have one more mile to go. And that is Beautiful Dreams.

**Are you happy with it?**

**CHRIS:** Delighted.

So there it is, the new album by Chris de Burgh...by Chris de Burgh. However, our interview did not end there. With the memory of his debut live performance of many of the songs still very fresh in his mind, we asked him about that stunning Birmingham show - plus, of course, a few other bits and pieces, like...

**Obviously, there will be singles from the album. At this stage, can you say which ones?**

**CHRIS:** There will be a single, or more, and I think at the moment the smart money for the first one

tends to be pointing at I'm Not Crying Over You. But then...who knows? The last people in the world who really are the best judges of what a single is, are record company people, sadly. I think it's really down to the man on the street, and that's why the reaction at Birmingham tells me a lot about what people liked - because they were hearing for the first time. One More Mile To Go, for example, they heard for the first time - and they went nuts for it.

**The Birmingham show must have been very nerve-wracking for you, for many reasons. You were being filmed for TV, you were showcasing material that has never been played before and performing with an orchestra for the first time - to name just three of them. Were you concerned about how the audience would react?**

**CHRIS:** Well, people are not going to come to the show not wanting to come to the show! All I can say is that, certainly in the UK, I know for a fact that I can replicate virtually exactly what happened at Birmingham in terms of audience reaction - irrespective of whether they came via the fan club or from the general public. Because people who come from the general public are there to have a good time, as well. That's the UK. But when you turn to Germany, for example, where I'm much more regarded as a 'Major Rock Star' - along the lines of Tina or Rod and so on - the idea of seeing this guy that's usually a pin prick in the distance, belting it out at megawatts, sitting quietly on his own in a solo situation...that will have a tremendous impact, as well, but for a different reason. And then, moving on to territories like, say, the Eastern Bloc and Eastern Europe - or even the Far East, they don't know what to expect. They see a major star there, performing solo...like in Sofia, Bulgaria, they were just thrilled. So I think, all in all, this new idea is going to work great.

**Obviously, you must feel encouraged by the reaction you received in Birmingham - but were you at all surprised by it? For one thing, I've never seen you completely stumped by, and obviously unprepared for, the demand for an encore.**

**CHRIS:** I was...yes, I was surprised. I was overwhelmed, I have to say. I hadn't budgeted for an encore and...I didn't know what to do! I had actually said that I would leave the stage at the end, which is what I did. But they kept on roaring; they were still roaring after the last song. I was going up in the elevator, and I heard them roaring away. But, the thing is, we couldn't have done anything else with the orchestra. We only rehearsed so many, and it would have been mess to ask the orchestra to leave the stage while I performed one more song. So I thought 'Well, I'll leave them there and I'll perform one more.' There was also another part of it, which is that the orchestra was contracted to do one hour's work - and if they went over that, we were into serious overtime costs. I wanted to make sure that we were not going to overrun.

**You could actually sense that the orchestra was overwhelmed by the reaction, too. And I doubt very much if any, or any, of those musicians had been in the situation before.**

**CHRIS:** No, it's highly unlikely. And, certainly, Osman from the record company said that, of all the artists on his label - including American ones now and people in the UK like Sting - none of them could generate that kind of response from the audience. He was overwhelmed, too! The guy was shaking with emotion at the end. He was absolutely stunned. As for myself, that show would certainly rank very highly on my list of best concerts.

**There has been mention in previous newsletters of a tour, as per the Birmingham show, for next year - apparently. What's your official line on that, as of now?**

**CHRIS:** Dates have been booked, but I want to wait until the record has come out, and has been out for a while, before I make any decision about touring. I'm still uncertain of how I want to progress Beautiful Dreams as an album; whether I want to do it solo or with an orchestra - or whether, indeed, I want to do a lot of touring at all. I wanted to get the Birmingham show out of the way, see how it worked and then make a judgement. So, it's likely that I will be doing concerts in 1996 but, as of this point, I have very little information.

**Also, taking a 35 or 40-piece orchestra on the road is going to break the bank immediately...**

**CHRIS:** Yes, and the only way you can do that is by charging extremely high ticket prices - and that's not right.

## THE C de B HOTLINE

This is the premium rate telephone information service set up by the club, in addition to the one indicated on the reverse of your membership card. This service enables us to up-date information about Chris at a much faster rate than normal - but calls will be more expensive. The charges are 39p per minute cheap rate, and 49p at all other times. Unfortunately, this service cannot receive calls from outside of the UK - telecommunications technology has not yet quite mastered how to organise this - but we will be maintaining our original line, purely for members from abroad. Messages will only be put on either service when relevant, and the date the message was recorded will always be mentioned first to enable callers who have already heard it to hang up immediately, should they choose. The number to call is:

**0891 334 225**

## UNTIL THE NEXT TIME

That brings another fairly epic edition of the Gazette to a close. Due to the length and importance of our interview with Chris this time, we have had to suspend - due to lack of space - several of our regular newsletters features, such as Pen Pals and Person To Person (even though Chris did specifically ask 'Haven't you got any of those questions from members for me?') So make sure you keep those questions coming, and remember that Person To Person is your chance to interview Chris and ask him anything you like about his career, his life, his songs - or whatever else you can imagine, however trivial. As for Pen Pals, if you'd like to make contact with fellow C de B fans from around the world, please send in your name, address and age (if you wish) to the club P.O.Box address. Make sure you write everything **CLEARLY** and in **BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS** because, if we can't read it, we won't be able to pass your details on.

At this stage, we'd just like to say a sincere thank you to all who attended the show at Birmingham Symphony Hall. The concert was sold out - indeed, it was oversubscribed - purely on the strength of a fan club mailshot and messages on our phoneline services. We are immensely proud of that, and thank you for your sterling support - as Chris certainly does. Unfortunately, our mailshot did not extend to outside of the UK, due to factors too laborious to detail here, so we do apologise to any of our foreign friends who might otherwise have attended. It was not our intention to cause any offence.

In the next edition of the Gazette, which will be with you sometime in the New Year, we'll have the latest information from Chris, as ever. So, until the next time, order your copy of Beautiful Dreams now and, remember, please send any comment, criticisms, Pen Pal addresses, questions for Person To Person and so on to me, Mike, at: The New Chris de Burgh Club, P.O. Box 276, London, E2 7BW.

Again, thanks for your support - and a very early...Happy Christmas to you all!

**STOP PRESS:** As callers to the C de B Hotline will be aware, we had been holding back on the publication of this magazine until such time as there was confirmed news concerning tour dates by Chris. However, at the time of going to press, none were available. Therefore, and ultimately, we took the view that getting a new issue to you was paramount. However, there WILL be concert performances by Chris during 1996. What is more, as soon as details of these are available, the New C de B Club WILL be sending out a dedicated mailshot to members, advising you of how to buy your tickets to the shows IN ADVANCE OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC!!! So watch your letterbox...