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"It's
very
inspiring,
sometimes,
to be
apart"
Dave
Stewart

eurythmics



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Despite their desire to be an “alternative duo that made strange records”, Dave Stewart and Annie Lennox have become one of the most successful, commercial pop phenomenons of the decade. Hence the simultaneous audio-visual release of *Eurythmics’ Greatest Hits*.

Interview: Martin Townsend

When the Eurythmics’ ‘Greatest Hits’ goes on sale, on record and video, the first people in line at the record shop are likely to be Dave Stewart and Annie Lennox themselves . . .

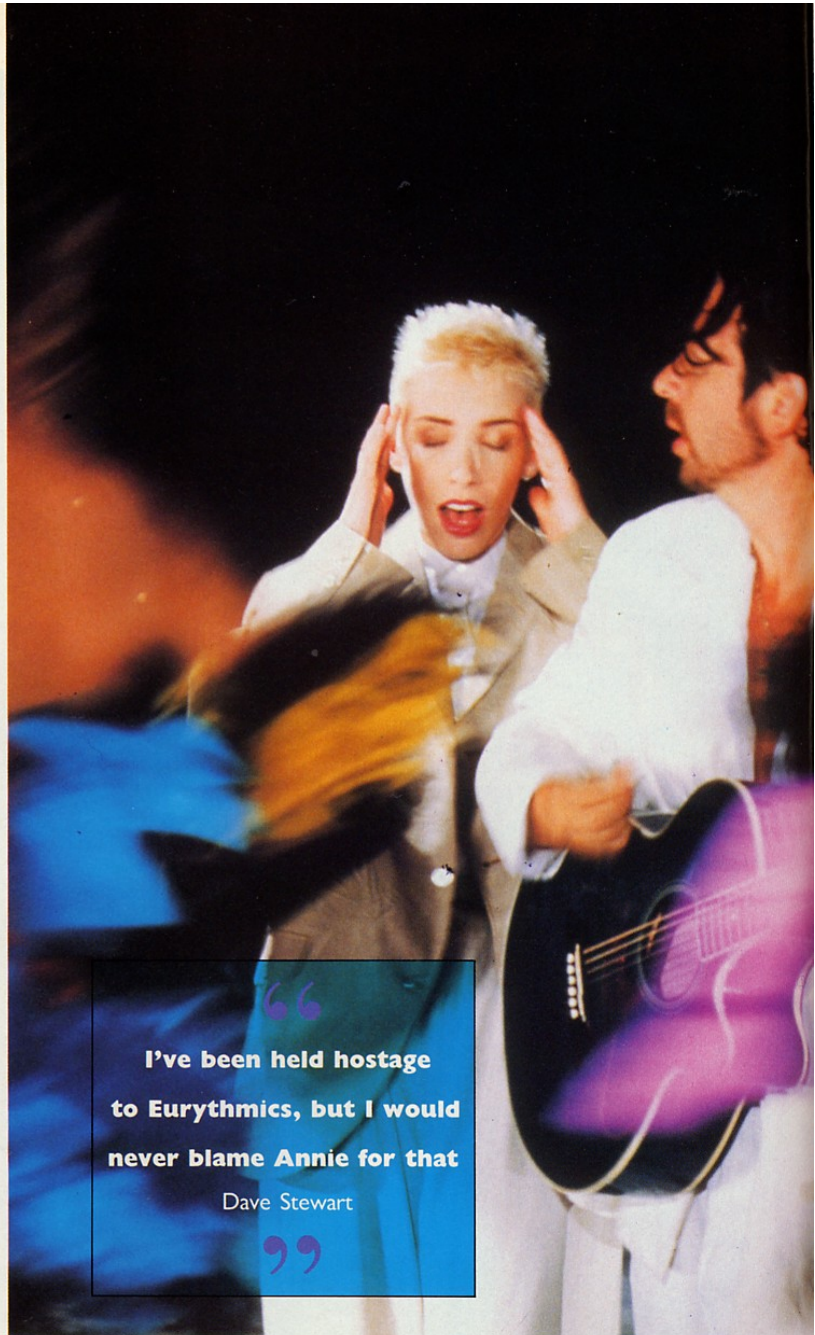
“Honest, I haven’t got any of the stuff at all, and neither has Annie,” laughs the irrepressible Stewart. “You’re given copies of the records when they come out, then someone drops round who wants one . . . and you end up giving them all away. It’s daft, really.”

Such laidback generosity is typical of the calm, affable Stewart, but it doesn’t mean he’s not intensely proud of Eurythmics’ achievements. “I’m pleased that the new LP is a *real* Greatest Hits,” he says. “I’m always buying other people’s and then finding they only actually had *three* hits. I watched the video of ours the other day and there’s something like 22 in a row. It was amazing seeing how it developed.”

Dave tends to talk about Eurythmics in the past tense a lot these days, and with his concentration on outside projects and Annie’s decision to take time off to start a family, it might seem as if the partnership’s future is in doubt. But he views their time apart as a necessary lull.

“What you have to remember is that we lived together as a couple then we broke up and became a successful band, so you’re talking about 14 years, non-stop, living on top of each other. It’s enough to drive anyone mad. But we’ll come back to it refreshed. The thing is with Annie and I that we meet each other and no matter what’s going on we tend to just write songs really quickly and very easily because we just spark off each other in that way. We’ve made so many albums – eight of them in nine years. Most bands would have struggled to make four in that time.”

The band have certainly enjoyed a whirlwind career since their beginnings as first The Catch,



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then The Tourists nearly 12 years ago, but, Dave says, they never really aimed for worldwide success . . .

“All Annie and I really wanted was to be a self-supportive, alternative duo that made strange records and had our own audience that would appreciate our way of looking at reality,” he explains. “That’s what we wanted to do. And all of a sudden there was this massive thing which we were not expecting *at all* . . .”

The peak years for the Eurythmics were 1983 to ’85, and the hits they crammed into those two years – from ‘Sweet Dreams’ and ‘Love Is A Stranger’ to ‘There Must Be An Angel’ and ‘Sisters Are Doin’ It For Themselves’ – would have made a complete career for any other group. Those 24 months, says Dave, were

overwhelming.

“It was like being hit by a tornado,” he laughs. “We were touring at the time, all sorts of things were happening in each other’s personal lives . . . and there were so many countries we were successful in. You didn’t really have time to recognise how much that was earning or how successful you were – you were just playing concerts that were absolutely packed.

“I remember getting so many gold albums that it got to the point of ridiculousness. I had something like 160 gold albums. I didn’t know where to put them in the end so I just stuck them on the ceiling.”

The sheer size of their popularity ultimately came home to them in a concert in a place called Sweetwater in New Zealand. A staggering

It takes two



62,000 fans turned up to see them, causing so much congestion that it took the band six hours to get through the crowds and anywhere near the venue. As they took the stage and launched into 'Here Comes The Rain Again' the sky was split by forked electric lightning . . .

"We were completely jet-lagged, it was pouring with rain, there were ambulances driving through the crowd. It was just complete chaos," says Dave. "And when I think about those years now, it all seemed like that."

For every spectacular peak they've attained, though, there have been corresponding lows. The loss of Annie's first child cast a shadow over recent years, and during the mid-80s she suffered throat problems that were not mere newspaper exaggeration.

"Quite a few times she came near to giving up completely, but in the end we worked out a plan with our manager which meant we'd play for two nights, then take two nights off or whatever. It meant you couldn't make anything like as much money on tour because you had all the same expenses on those days off, but it did mean that Annie never lost her voice."

Of course there's always been a lot more to Eurythmics than the music. In the early 80s they were the first band to really exploit the medium of video to project their songs – a historical accolade which Dave still finds very amusing.

"It was really funny because at the time we really started to make an impact with our videos we were actually fed up with the whole idea of visual presentation. We wanted to be like twin


clones, so we went to this really awful suit shop and bought two of the most unflattering grey suits with terrible trouser widths – everything wrong on purpose. We took these photos where we were like Gilbert and George or something – married in this awful taste – and suddenly it all went the other way round, like we were making some kind of fashion statement."

Over the next decade, Eurythmics' videos became gradually more elaborate and inventive, but Dave maintains that it was always done with tongues firmly rammed in cheeks. "We played with video," he laughs, "almost to the point of ridiculousness. Like when we suddenly became very wealthy and successful we did the song 'There Must Be An Angel' and I played Louis XIV throwing gold coins around."

Over the years, of course, the name Eurythmics became gradually more identified with Annie Lennox, Superstar, than the idea of an experimental duo. To the point, in fact, where it could be argued that Dave's career in the band was being "held hostage" to Annie's personal happiness. It's fortunate perhaps, that he's had enough success out of the group now – with his spin-off group, The Spiritual Cowboys, with Candy Dulfer and with his Anxious Records label – that he can survive and perform without Eurythmics.

"It is kind of hard being in a group after a while if the other person in the group doesn't want to do so many things," he admits. "But you can't be held back because of that, you've got to be allowed to do things. In a way you might be correct that I've been held hostage to Eurythmics, but I would never blame Annie for that. If somebody doesn't want to do something, they don't want to do it."

The future looks very bright for Eurythmics, though. Annie, who happily gave birth to a child just before Christmas, is working on a solo album, Dave is finishing the second Spiritual Cowboys LP, and the personal satisfaction of both group members must bode well for a reunion of Eurythmics.

"You know, times change," muses Dave. "You go through peak periods where everything is in line – your music, the fashions, the times you're living in – but at the moment Annie and I feel like if we ever make anything again, it might be nothing like anyone imagines. It might be totally orchestral, for instance, or . . . who knows what? And that's why we're having a break from working with each other. It's very inspiring, sometimes, to be apart." 

DISCOGRAPHY

Be Yourself Tonight	RCA/BMG (All formats)
In The Garden	RCA/BMG (All formats)
Revenge	RCA/BMG (All formats)
Savage	RCA/BMG (All formats)
Sweet Dreams Are	RCA/BMG (All formats)
Touch	RCA/BMG (All formats)
Touch Dance	RCA/BMG (All formats)
We Two Are One	RCA/BMG (All formats)
Greatest Hits	RCA/BMG (All formats)
<i>Eurythmics Greatest Hits (95 mins) is available on BMG Video.</i>	

EURYTHMICS



greatest hits



EURYTHMICS : greatest hits

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REVIEWS



● EURYTHMICS

Greatest Hits

(BMG, 95 mins)

If the album was a tribute to just how aurally exciting the Eurythmics can be when they set their minds to it, this video is a tribute to just how visually superb Dave Stewart and Annie Lennox are. This is a monumental video with 21 hits from 'Sweet Dreams' to 'Angel' linked together with specially created audio and video samples. Almost from the word go Dave and Annie were involved in every aspect of their career from the songwriting and production, to stage attire, to the scripting and production of their videos. As a result each video is a nice little self-contained unit, but whether it's Annie strutting her stuff in platform boots on 'Right By Your Side', Dave dressed up as a god in 'There Must Be An Angel (Playing With My Heart)' or the dark and moody scenery of 'Here Comes The Rain Again' one constant thread remains, and that is this duo's attention to even the minutest detail. A fine testimony to a fine band, and here's hoping they'll return afresh before long.

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