

Bolton On-Line Updates

Published on-line by the Michael Bolton Platinum Club

June 2004 – Issue 81 Page 1

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to the June issue of the Bolton On-Line Updates.

As you know Michael is now on tour and we are waiting for more dates. Please, don't miss out on your fan club priority seats by forgetting to renew your membership. You can get all the info and renew directly from the fan club website located at www.michaelboltonclub.com

Thanks, to all of you who have sent your pictures and write-ups. Please don't forget to send your reviews and pictures that you would like to share with your Bolton Buddies in upcoming issues of the Online Updates to MBPlatinum@aol.com so they can be included.

Best Wishes,
Gail
Editor



Photo: Sally Freeman

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Official Fan Club Site:

www.michaelboltonclub.com

Michael's website:

www.michaelbolton.com

Great Fan Photos of Michael:

www.michaelboltonphotos.com

Michael Bolton Charities website:

www.michaelboltoncharities.com

Orrin Bolton's Fan Site

<http://members.aol.com/Anna4374/index.htm>

UK Radio Interview:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/essex/features/essex_eleb/index.shtml

MBPC Site

Don't forget to check out the new fan club site at www.michaelboltonclub.com.

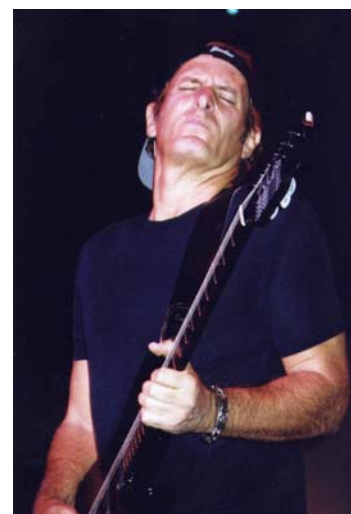


Photo: Robin Sterner

Bolton On-Line Updates

Published on-line by the Michael Bolton Platinum Club

June 2004— Issue81 Page 2

2004 TOUR SCHEDULE

At the time of the publishing of these Updates, the following dates have been confirmed and the fan seating arranged. Please check the tour section of www.michaelboltonclub.com for all the info on ordering fan club seating.

Date	City	Venue
June 10, 2004	Mt. Pleasant, MI	Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort
June 13, 2004	Pala, CA	Starlight Theater- Pala Casino
June 17, 2004	Jacksonville, OR	Britt Pavilion
July 1, 2004	Bow, WA	Skagit Valley Casino
July 3, 2004	Las Vegas, NV	Las Vegas Hilton
July 4, 2004	Las Vegas, NV	Las Vegas Hilton
July 28, 2004	Verona, NY	Turning Stone Casino
July 30, 2004	Atlantic City, NJ	Harrah's Casino
July 31, 2004	Atlantic City, NJ	Harrah's Casino
September 15, 2004	Detroit, MI	DTE Center
September 17, 2004	Holmdel, NJ	PNC Banks Arts Center
September 18, 2004	Wantagh, NY	Jones Beach
September 20, 2004	Boston, MA	FleetBoston Pavilion
September 21, 2004	Columbia, MD	Merriweather Post Pavilion
October 8, 2004	Lincoln City, OR	Chinook Winds Casino
October 9, 2004	Lincoln City, OR	Chinook Winds Casino

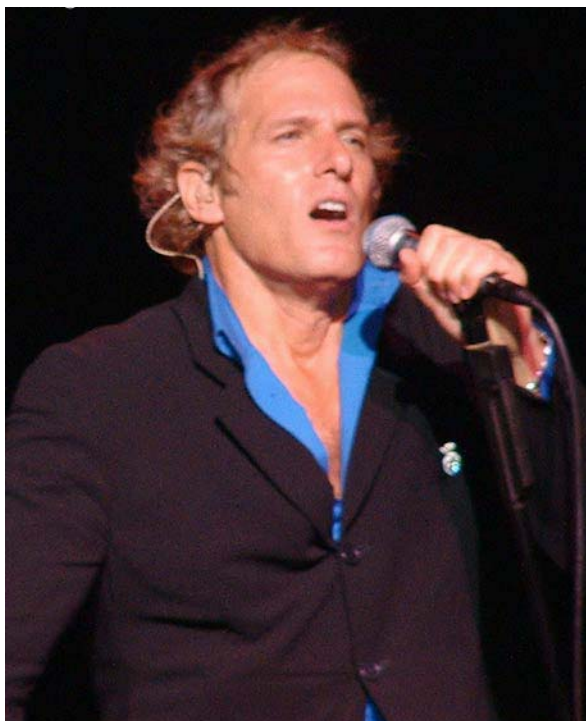


Photo: June Vearling

Bolton On-Line Updates

Published on-line by the Michael Bolton Platinum Club

June 2004 – Issue 81 Page 3

Cubs' tradition can be a little hard to take

Published May 20, 2004

Jerry Greene

Mike Ditka.

He's the one.

No matter how many personalities accept the daunting challenge of leading the crowd in a stirring rendition of the chorus to "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" during the seventh-inning stretch at the Chicago Cubs' Wrigley Field, Ditka will always be the one.

"He's the best."
"He's the worst."

So said Cubs Marketing Director John McDonough, the man most responsible for keeping "singing the seventh" alive at Wrigley after legendary announcer Harry Caray died before the 1998 season. Hundreds of athletes, actors, singers and o (including one dinosaur in Barney) have taken their shot -- and most have failed.

"It's usually really bad. Abysmal," said McDonough. "But we didn't want perfection. Now people call the park and ask: 'Who's pitching -- and who's singing?'"

fans complain about the "guest hosts," thinking a good idea has become abused. But while McDonough respects their views, he's convinced most fans like it.

"We wanted to make it fun for Cubs fans," McDonough said, "and we wanted one more unique aspect to the Wrigley Field experience along with the bricks and the vines, the scoreboard and the bleachers."

Ditka put the post-Caray tradition "on the map," according to McDonough with his 15-second screaming attack on the song a few years back. But "global exposure" came last year when Ozzy Osbourne attempted to sing it apparently without a clear understanding of what planet he was on.

"Hey," said McDonough, "nobody got hurt."

According to the Chicago Tribune, here are the lyrics as interpreted by Ozzy:

"One -- Two -- Three. Let's go out to the ball game. Let's go out to the bluhhhhn. Take me a ee-yan-eeya [wordless humming] the field. I don't care if I ahh-uhn ack."
And so forth.

' have been others. Football guy Steve McMichael turned the song into a verbal attack of the umpire. Boxer Joe Frazier got started and froze, couldn't finish. Comedian Jackie Mason, uh, well, McDonough really didn't want to discuss Jackie Mason.

Not all are bad. The singers are often quite good. Many think Kenny Rogers gave one of the all-time best renditions, **while Michael Bolton turned the song into a love ballad -- but he could turn the phone book into a love ballad.**

Joe Rios of the Cubs staff handles most of the "guest host" bookings and, so far, has never had a no-show. However, more than one host were barely able to perform.

As McDonough so perfectly phrases it: "You can't believe how intoxicating it can be."

Yes, we can.

We've heard it.



Photo: Brenda Wood

Bolton On-Line Updates

Published on-line by the Michael Bolton Platinum Club

June 2004 – Issue 81 Page 4

The following is a translation of a review that ran in Uno Mas Uno in Mexico City:

The Romanticism of Michael Bolton Penetrates the Heart of Music Fans

Mexico, May 26, 2004: The U.S. singer, Michael Bolton, seduced the body and soul of thousands of his Mexican followers who gathered in the National Auditorium in this capital last night to witness an event filled with memories and romanticism during the great concert Bolton offered in his second visit to Aztec territory.

The lights of this imposing hall on Reforma Avenue gave off a special brilliance to mark the appearance of one of the great pillars of the romantic movement of the 80's. He made an extensive sweep with his musical trajectory from the past to songs from his recent album titled "Vintage".

During his hour-and-a-half concert, the international star and social activist did a 360-degree musical turn to pay homage to the legendary songwriters George and Ira Gershwin, Sammy Cahn, Marilyn and Alan Bergman, and Michel Legrand. With melodies from the 40's and 50's such as "All the Way", "A Kiss to Build a Dream On", "When I Fall in Love", "Smile" and "The Very Thought of You", Bolton won the sincere applause of the public, which confirmed once more the magnitude of his talent.

Winner of two Grammy awards and recognized world-wide for his humanitarian efforts for those less fortunate, Bolton many times thanked those in the audience for coming, and showed his pleasure in returning here. He recalled that "in the two times I have come here, I've felt at home. Thank you for everything, Mexico. I love you" and then launched into "Fools Game" one of his first hits in 1983.

Throughout the entire recital, one heard that his potent voice ignored the passage of time to soar with power and splendor through a set of some twenty songs encompassing pop, rhythm and blues, soul, soft rock, opera and, of course, ballads. Accompanied by six musicians, three back-up singers and four American flags, the blond knight-errant in a black suit showed his elegance with new versions of classics like "How Am I Supposed to Live Without You" which at one time was a hit for Laura Branigan.

Likewise, the singer-songwriter put energy into "How Can We Be Lovers", "When I'm Back on My Feet Again" and the famous "cover" of Percy Sledge's "When a Man Loves a Woman". Notwithstanding, one of the most sublime moments occurred when he showcased his voice in the aria "Nessun Dorma", by Puccini, and his fans rewarded him with a standing ovation.

Michael Bolton, age 51, has recorded 22 albums as a soloist and sold more than 52 million copies world-wide, said the classical style of opera was the most difficult to control.

On this subject, he shared with those present his experience in 1997 when Luciano Pavarotti invited him to sing a duet. "I was very emotional; I'm a tenor, but never had to sustain a high note with vibrato. I felt intimidated so started to study and, with time, understood that all was practice and technique" he commented.

For the second part of the concert, he returned to the stage in youthful attire, wearing jeans and T-shirt. In spite of himself, Bolton wasn't able to avoid blushing over the numerous and creative overtures he received from the female fans in the audience.

Then he sang "Soul Provider", "Time, Love and Tenderness" and "The One Thing".

His concert had a phenomenal finish with "Love is a Wonderful Thing", "Missing You Now" and "Go the Distance".

Michael Bolotin, born Feb. 26 in 1953 in New Haven, Connecticut, better known in the musical world as Michael Bolton, will continue his touring in the U.S., where he plans to visit cities in Texas, Florida, Washington, Nevada and California.

Bolton On-Line Updates

Published on-line by the Michael Bolton Platinum Club

June 2004 – Issue 81 Page 5

Michael Bolton Appreciates Mexicans

Mexico, DF:-The singer of rock, pop and opera Michael Bolton, who will be presented May 25 in the National Auditorium, assured us that he likes to visit Mexico because the public isn't shy about really getting into the music when they like something.

"I would like to come more often to your country. I was delighted to see that Mexico was on the itinerary. In the show you'll hear When a Man Loves a Woman and How Can We Be Lovers, and also I'll sing arias such as Nessun Dorma, the great piece by Puccini," he said.

In recalling his early years in music, the US singer assured us that he likes interpreting all kinds of music from hard rock to opera. "I've enjoyed all I've done in different styles; it's gratifying to play in all genres, each one has its unique quality, and I've always found something powerful in music expressed in different forms. "Rock is the hardest on the voice because you can't use any technique; basically, it can tear up your throat; in the blues, you have to permit the voice to flow in accordance with how you feel the song, something that comes from gospel, born out of sadness.

The 51-year old singer, who has recorded 18 albums as a soloist, admitted that his greatest challenge has been to interpret opera. "The classic style is more difficult to control. When Pavarotti invited me to sing with him, I listened to him while I was preparing. I was very nervous about singing with him. I'm a tenor, but I've never had to sustain a high note with vibrato, and on hearing it, I felt intimidated and began to study. I found that I could sing these notes, that it was a question of practice and technique. "But, at the same time, when I sing my own songs, I have to be careful not to use this technique, because you don't want to sound like a trained vocalist; the same with the blues or rock. Thus, it's an interesting experience, almost schizophrenic, you have to pay attention to the type of music and perform accordingly" said Bolton.

The singer, who has written songs for Kiss, Cher, Joe Cocker, Kenny Rogers, Barbra Streisand and Marc Anthony, among others, also sang with Placido Domingo on the Christmas in Vienna CD, and remembers that on this occasion, he felt less nervous than when he was next to Pavarotti. "It was a phenomenal experience, similar to that with Pavarotti, although on that occasion (with Pavarotti) I was more terrified, very nervous because it was the first time I performed classical music and besides, I was just learning Italian. I was shaking. But both Pavarotti and Domingo are marvelous people" he remembered.

Excited about returning to Mexico after three years, he indicated that in his role of social activist, he's also interested in our country. "I have my Foundation and in addition to cancer research, we're also helping women and children who have suffered domestic violence.

Bolton obtained a Grammy on two occasions for Best Male Pop Singer; in 1990 for How Am I Supposed to Live Without You (from the album Soul Provider) and in 1992 for When a Man Loves A Woman (from Time, Love and Tenderness).

In 1998 he released My Secret Passion, featuring the arias he had studied with two musical specialists, one of whom was Bill Schumann.

In more than a 20-year career, Michael Bolton has earned fame for his style of singing pop, rhythm and blues, soul and soft rock; his ballads have remained in the subconscious of more than one generation, but for him this is not sufficient.

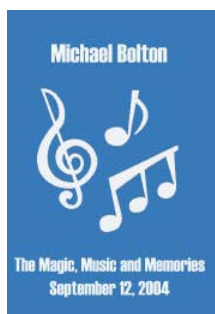
In one week he will return to Mexico to sing in the National Auditorium on May 25. The singer-songwriter-and-producer indicated that he has in mind a big project -- a CD/DVD Live which will include his best known songs, and on which, given the right chemistry, he will record duets of new songs with artists from various countries. And he is already seeking a good Mexican artist. "I'm planning to release a CD and DVD of my greatest hits in concert, based mainly on my last tour, and then select new themes which I've written to put in as an extra." Bolton commented that he would like to have duets from different areas; "If there is a Mexican artist with whom I feel that I can do something good, I'll record it for the CD. I can sing a little in Spanish, French and Italian."

Interviewed by telephone (he was traveling on the freeway near New York during this chat) he said "Spanish is a beautiful language for ballads. I would like to do duets with artists my age, or with others who grew up with my music. I'm looking for the songs and the appropriate voices," he said. The singer mentioned the recent use of one of his old songs in a CD of hip-hopper Kanye West (with the voice of Jay-Z). He was inspired to think that maybe he could enter this genre. "My song (Maybe it's the Power of Love) which I made years ago with my heavy-metal band, Blackjack, was recorded by Kanye West and Jay-Z. It was an enormous hit, selling one million copies in two weeks in the United States, and I think that I could direct my music toward the world of Hip-hop, The melodic sense of rap is interesting for its messages."

Bolton On-Line Updates

Published on-line by the Michael Bolton Platinum Club

June 2004 – Issue 81 Page 6



THE EIGHTH ANNUAL MICHAEL BOLTON FAN RECEPTION THE MAGIC, MUSIC AND MEMORIES

Hi Everyone!

Once again I have the privilege of extending an invitation to each and every one of you, to join us at The Eighth Annual Michael Bolton Fan Reception! We have some fantastic surprises for you again this year, and it promises to be our best event yet! OK, OK, I'll let you in on one of the surprises now ... Auctioneer master, Tom Gross, has once again agreed to host our Live Auction!!! If you were lucky enough to catch Tom at last year's auction, you are familiar with his comic genius and skillful flair with the auction format. For those of you that have yet to experience a "Tom Event,"... Don't be left out again, make plans to be there! Here's the important information that you'll need to know so you can start making your travel plans --

Date: September 12, 2004

Time: 10am -- 2pm

Place: Stamford Marriott

Stamford, CT

Cost: \$38.00 (Money Order Only made out to Layne Seeloff)

Deadline: August 23, 2004 Send To:

Layne Seeloff

Michael Bolton Fan Reception

PO Box 13

Newfane, NY 14108

Menu: Imported and American Cheeses

Water Crackers & Sliced French Bread.

Seasonal Fresh Fruit

Crudite of Garden Vegetables with Two Dipping Sauces

Miniature Quiches

Assorted Finger Sandwiches to include Turkey & Swiss Cheese, Chicken Salad,

Ham & Cheese and Veggie

Selection of Miniature Breakfast Pastries

Cold Lemonade

Coffee, Decaffeinated Coffee and Imported & Herbal Teas



Joey and Tom Gross at the
2003 Fan Reception Auction

Come join us as we celebrate the magic, music and memories of Michael AND make a contribution to his charities at the same time!

See you in September! Dare To Dream,
Layne and the Fan Reception Committee

P.S. There is a Silent and Live Auction held at this event and if you are interested in donating items, please contact Sharon Oyster (OysterSA@aol.com for more info!! THANKS!!!

Bolton On-Line Updates

Published on-line by the Michael Bolton Platinum Club

June 2004 – Issue 81 Page 7



The 12th Annual Michael Bolton Charities' Benefit Concert & Celebrity Golf Classic

September 12th & 13th, 2004

WHAT: The 12th Annual Michael Bolton Charities' Benefit Concert & Celebrity Golf Classic

WHY: Proceeds from this event will benefit The Michael Bolton Charities, which was established in 1993 to assist children and women at risk by supporting such programs as: Prevent Child Abuse America, Kids in Crisis, Yale Child Study Center, The Domestic Violence Crisis Center and the UNCF. The MBM aims to serve as an instrument of compassion to give to those less fortunate children and women, a better chance for life. The MBC has also created "Safe Space" in New Haven, CT, which utilizes the arts to provide an environment designed to foster self-esteem, leadership skills, job training and awareness of social issues.

WHEN: Sunday–September 12th, 2004 – Concert/Cocktail Reception & Auction (*business attire*)
5:30 p.m. – Cocktail Receptions & Silent Auctions
8:00 p.m. – Benefit Concert & Live Auction

Monday – September 13th, 2004 – Celebrity Golf Classic

11:00 a.m. – Shotgun Tee Off
5:00 p.m. – Cocktail/Awards Reception

WHERE: Benefit Concert/Reception: The Palace Theatre – Stamford, Connecticut
Golf Classic: The Wee Burn Country Club – Darien, Connecticut

WHO: Joan Lunden is returning for her twelfth year as Mistress of Ceremonies for the Benefit Concert, which will feature special musical performances by "Michael Bolton & Friends" along with surprise celebrity guests.

HOW: Benefit Concert Reception: \$250 (Cocktail reception, silent auction and mid Orch. seats to concert) or \$500 (Dinner reception, silent auction and lower Orch. seats to concert)
Golf Playing Spot: \$600 per person
Golf Foursome: \$2000 (foursome only)
\$3000 (foursome plus a celebrity)
Golf Gallery Ticket: \$150 (limited tickets available – includes lunch & awards reception)
Two Benefit Concert Reception Tickets and One Golf Playing Spot: \$1500
Concert Only: \$50, \$75, and \$100 (tickets available in July through the Palace Theatre Box Office)
For more information on sponsorships or to purchase tickets, please call (203) 483-6463.

Bolton On-Line Updates

Published on-line by the Michael Bolton Platinum Club

June 2004 – Issue 81 Page 8

Reno, Nevada Reno Review by Marty McCarthy

Of the many venues I've been to for Bolton concerts, Reno is my favorite. This was my third show there, and it was terrific as always. They have no objections to pictures, so the photographers among us get some terrific shots. As we all know, this is a major plus for us concert-goers!

The show was on May 22nd. A few days before, Sally (Denver) and I (Tacoma, WA) flew down to reunite with our good friend Carol Olson in Reno. We spent a couple of days getting reacquainted, anticipating another fantastic concert experience.

Reno usually starts the fan club in seating in the first row, but this year it started in row 6. That could have been not so great, but I have to admit that the crowd down front was having a great time and that overall it contributed to what Michael loves best -- a VERY LOUD, responsive crowd. It was really over the top! I still think we should have been down front, but at least it wasn't an uninterested, stuffed-shirt type of crowd.

So. Michael. Black suit, black shirt. Hair not too long, not particularly short. He & the band had about two weeks off, so they were all well-rested and up for the show. He opened the show with "Love Is A Wonderful Thing." Honestly, Michael seemed to be having a ball. The group in front of the stage were apparently pretty entertaining, because in all the concerts I've been to over the years, I really can't say I've seen him smile more during any show. He was laughing, Schuyler, Chris..... It was great to see them all having a great time.

Michael was in wonderful voice, though the show was shorter than it was last year when I saw him in Elmira. He added no new songs, but deleted several. I was particularly disappointed with the omission of "If I Could." Michael just blew me away with that song last year, and I was so looking forward to hearing him sing it live again. So that was my really major disappointment for the night. On the other hand, I think this was the best performance of "Nessun Dorma" I have ever heard. He had me in tears; that man's voice is straight from heaven. The power is just indescribable; I can't begin to do it justice. Ditto with "Summertime." Not only was Michael just phenomenal (he can really, REALLY work that song!), but he allowed this to be a showcase for the band members to shine. Each member in turn had a chance to take center stage, so to speak, and just rock out. It was wonderful.

During the second half of the show he wore a black t-shirt and jeans. About half way through he put in a baseball cap. This half of the show was just utter pandemonium. The crowd tried to get up to the stage twice and were sent back to their seats by security - during the first song (WAMLAW). By the end of the song, they just gave up. Michael walked across the stage waving his arm inviting the crowd to come on up; needless to say, we obliged! From the 6th row I didn't think I'd get up all that close, but I am happy to say that I ended up with my elbows on the stage for the last 3 songs. Some of the people must have gone back to their seats, because otherwise I'm not sure how I got up there. (Not complaining, you understand!) I was directly in the center; I couldn't see much when Michael was standing back from the stage thanks to the equipment that sits on the stage; I spent a lot of time peering through the small spaces between the equipment. However, when Michael came up and stood directly above it was incredible.

After the show we went around the stage door and hung around waiting for Michael to come out. He came out really very quickly - I'd guess under a half hour after the end of the show (but then who keeps track of time when Michael is involved??). He didn't sign any autographs or speak to anyone in particular, but was very sweet in thanking us all for being there. Even though I was right in the front of the crowd I really couldn't hear a lot of what he was saying; after the concert my ears were still ringing, and Michael's speaking voice is so soft and gentle. Later on a group of us decided that he had told us to go get inside where it was warm. It was cold??????? I hadn't noticed!! LOL!!! Of course it made sense that he couldn't stand around out there; he certainly doesn't dare risking getting a chill before his next show. It was just great to see him so relaxed around everyone; he got into his car and rolled down the window to wave, smile, and once again thank everyone for coming.

There were a few very specific things that stand out:

First, it seemed as though Michael has slightly altered the endings of a few songs. The one that really caught my ear was "Said I Loved You...But I Lied." Michael drew the ending out a bit, and held the last note for an impossibly long time. It is such a hauntingly beautiful song any way he does it, but I hope he continues doing it this way!

When Michael was singing "Go The Distance," a young lady went to the stage and slid a bouquet across the stage in the general direction of the stool where he was sitting. The smile he gave her was just beautiful. It seemed to me that he held his gaze for a long moment before looking away. I'm sure it made her night!

As Michael was introducing "Nessun Dorma," a woman marched down the center aisle waving her arms above her head and loudly saying, "Excuse me! Excuse me!" Though we couldn't hear what she said, his reply was, "All right. Be a little patient and in a little while your wish will come true. Well, THAT wish anyway." Afterward we decided she probably was requesting a particular song, but we'll never know for certain, will we?!! LOL!!

Bolton On-Line Updates

Published on-line by the Michael Bolton Platinum Club

June 2004 – Issue 81 Page 9

(Continued)

During "Rock Me Baby" security must have been asleep. Michael was playing his guitar, and a woman came up the stairs on the side of the stage. She came up to Michael and put her hand on his left upper arm. Michael didn't act startled; he simply turned slightly - he appeared to think it was one of the band members or crew. The woman came a bit further around, put her hands on each side of his face, and kissed him on the cheek. She then let go & ran off toward the back / side of the stage. I didn't see what happened to her because I was far more interested in Michael's reaction. He didn't do much; I sort of think he's conditioned himself to not respond in situations like these. He sort of made a "well, I'll be!" kind of face, but that was it. Would have been interesting to have been a fly on the wall to hear the discussion with security after THAT episode! LOL!!!

After the show, we went back to the Silver Legacy for dinner / dessert with June Fitzgerald (Las Vegas), Wynona Bigknife (CA), and Mary Piantoni (CA). We never see enough of each other, and this time passed all too quickly. Even though I have other shows to attend this year, I'm already looking forward to the next show in Reno!



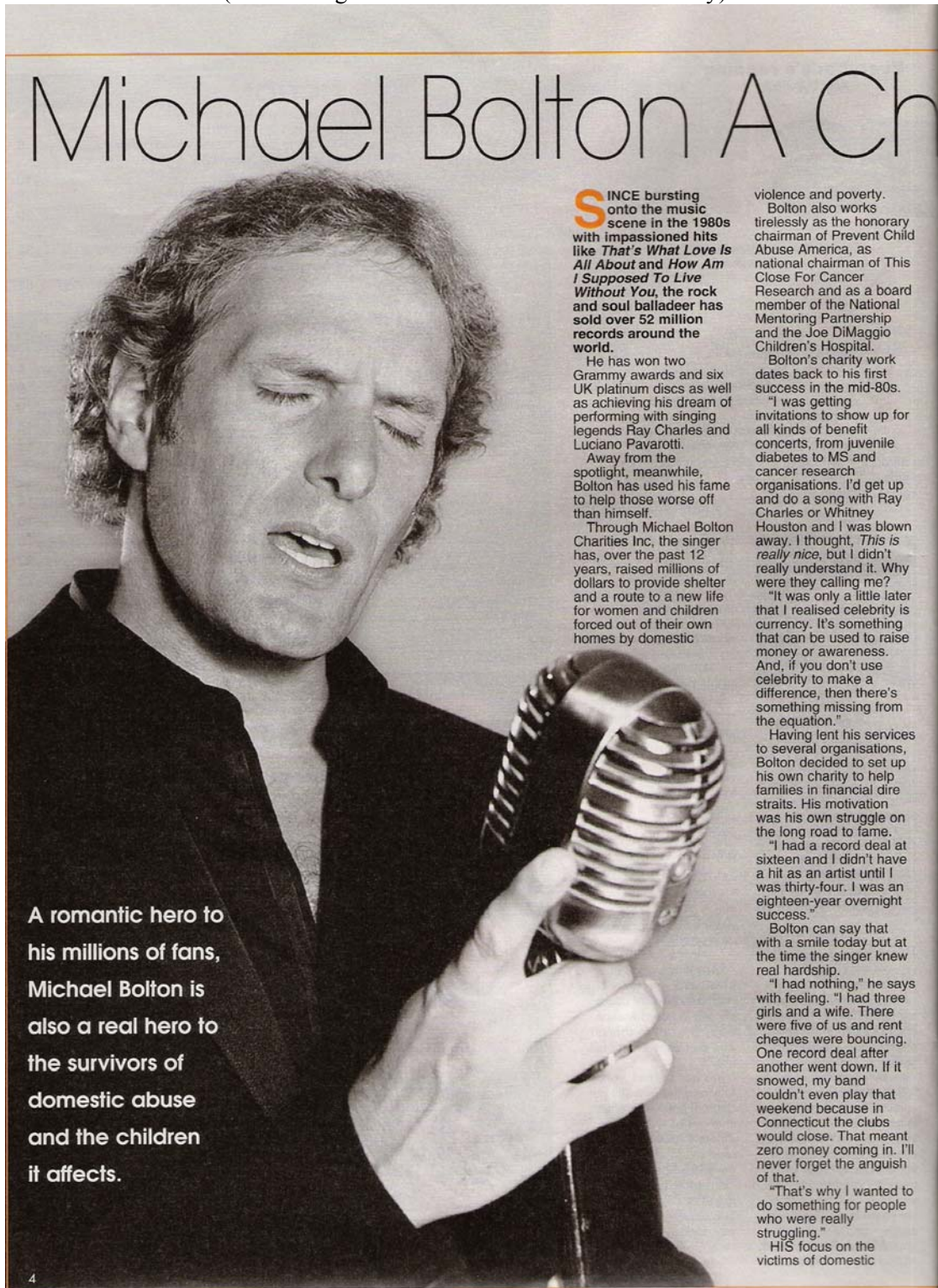
Photos: Sally Freeman

Bolton On-Line Updates

Published on-line by the Michael Bolton Platinum Club

June 2004 – Issue 81 Page 10

Article from the MY WEEKLY (UK) June 5 Issue
(view at larger than 100% to be able to read easily)



Michael Bolton A Ch

SINCE bursting onto the music scene in the 1980s with impassioned hits like *That's What Love Is All About* and *How Am I Supposed To Live Without You*, the rock and soul balladeer has sold over 52 million records around the world.

He has won two Grammy awards and six UK platinum discs as well as achieving his dream of performing with singing legends Ray Charles and Luciano Pavarotti.

Away from the spotlight, meanwhile, Bolton has used his fame to help those worse off than himself.

Through Michael Bolton Charities Inc, the singer has, over the past 12 years, raised millions of dollars to provide shelter and a route to a new life for women and children forced out of their own homes by domestic

violence and poverty.

Bolton also works tirelessly as the honorary chairman of Prevent Child Abuse America, as national chairman of This Close For Cancer Research and as a board member of the National Mentoring Partnership and the Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital.

Bolton's charity work dates back to his first success in the mid-80s.

"I was getting invitations to show up for all kinds of benefit concerts, from juvenile diabetes to MS and cancer research organisations. I'd get up and do a song with Ray Charles or Whitney Houston and I was blown away. I thought, *This is really nice*, but I didn't really understand it. Why were they calling me?"

"It was only a little later that I realised celebrity is currency. It's something that can be used to raise money or awareness. And, if you don't use celebrity to make a difference, then there's something missing from the equation."

Having lent his services to several organisations, Bolton decided to set up his own charity to help families in financial dire straits. His motivation was his own struggle on the long road to fame.

"I had a record deal at sixteen and I didn't have a hit as an artist until I was thirty-four. I was an eighteen-year overnight success."

Bolton can say that with a smile today but at the time the singer knew real hardship.

"I had nothing," he says with feeling. "I had three girls and a wife. There were five of us and rent cheques were bouncing. One record deal after another went down. If it snowed, my band couldn't even play that weekend because in Connecticut the clubs would close. That meant zero money coming in. I'll never forget the anguish of that."

"That's why I wanted to do something for people who were really struggling."

His focus on the victims of domestic

A romantic hero to his millions of fans, Michael Bolton is also a real hero to the survivors of domestic abuse and the children it affects.

Bolton On-Line Updates

Published on-line by the Michael Bolton Platinum Club

June 2004 – Issue 81 Page 11

Charitable Man

violence came about gradually.

"I was invited one Christmas to do a thing called Toys For Tots. You stand in a mall and people line up to bring a toy in exchange for an autograph and a picture. They bring hundreds, sometimes thousands of toys which are then delivered to orphanages or places where kids are sheltered.

"With all these people bringing toys and then other people working to distribute them, it's like the least you can do as a singer is show up and sign autographs.

"But you can't really do that without being told stories about difficult circumstances and why these kids are in this situation.

"I live in a fairly affluent part of Connecticut but even here there are shelters. And I found out it's not just poverty that drives mothers and their kids into safe houses. There's also violence. I was kinda overwhelmed by the reality of it.

"When I think of tough times in my childhood, they're nothing compared to what these families are facing."

Of the importance of running his own charity, Bolton says, "I wanted to

If you are concerned about issues to do with domestic violence, contact the Women's Aid Federation National Helpline (freephone) 0808 2000 247, or contact your GP, or The Samaritans on 08457 909090.

make a difference and see what that difference was.

"I still play benefits for other organisations but you don't see where the money goes. I have no doubt that the ones I've done are totally reputable and all need a lot more funding, but there's something good about knowing that four more beds were bought and that a certain number of people you'll never meet had a bed that month."

CLEARLY a deeply sensitive man, Bolton is constantly moved by the stories of the people he has helped.

"You're face to face with survivors," he explains. "We don't call them victims and they don't call themselves victims any more. They have a story to tell and you try to comprehend it in this day and age.

"It takes raw courage for a woman to step forward and know she's gonna be stared at and judged and maybe even misunderstood and mistrusted. It takes tremendous courage to do that so they can stop further violence or protect their children.

"I'll spare you the details," Bolton continues. "But it's impossible to listen to some of the stories without your eyes welling up.

"Then, as a man, you get angry. You want to dole out justice, in a way. It's a cycle of emotion and outrage that keeps you fired up about doing more work."

Bolton is currently working with other organisations to lobby the American government about addressing the root causes of poverty and domestic violence.

"My theory is that while we're proud to fight terrorism outside our borders, we also need to look inside our borders. We need to look at the terrorism that's taking place in our own neighbourhoods, where fear, intimidation and often death visit these families, but they're perpetrated by someone on the inside.

"International terrorism is a war that has to be fought," Bolton stresses. "But you can't say you care about your citizens and not protect them internally as well as externally. You either care about people or you don't."

ALTHOUGH he is best known as a soul singer, Bolton takes a lighter approach with his latest album, *Vintage*, on which he tackles some of the great romantic ballads of the 40s, 50s and 60s.

"These songs are already in your memory," Bolton explains. "You grew up with them. You've heard them in TV commercials, variety shows and old films.

"They've been sung by so many great singers from Billie Holiday to Louie Armstrong, Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole. They're an invitation to visit something that feels as if it was written in a place of romantic innocence that doesn't exist any more or, at least, it's very rare these days."

Despite following in the footsteps of such great singers as the ones he has just mentioned, Bolton had no reservations about tackling such classics as *Summertime* and *When I Fall In Love*, the latter becoming an American hit for Bolton at the end of last year.

"Those artists should inspire you, not intimidate you," he explains. "And for me they do."

Looking back to his



King of the jungle with his lion's mane hair!

By Douglas McPherson

previous Grammy-winning cover of the soul classic *When A Man Loves A Woman*, Bolton adds, "There wasn't any doubt in my mind that history would continue to hold the Percy Sledge version as the original. I hoped it would do well for me, but I didn't think, *How can I sing this in a better way? Or, How can I outdo a classic?*

"It's not a competitive thing," Bolton continues. "Because everybody brings something different. I just hope that somewhere down the line someone might say, 'I really love this version of this song, but have you heard this version?' Then they'll play mine. That's as competitive as I want to be."

As for the future, Bolton is already looking forward to breaking yet more musical ground.

"I want to cut a blues record. I want to cut some of the songs I was listening to when I was a teenager. Up tempo blues."

One side effect of his work with broken families is that it has brought Bolton closer to his own children, now aged 24, 26 and 28. Michael brought his children up himself following his divorce over

ten years ago.

Michael has just returned from a meeting with congressmen in Washington DC.

"They were talking about young girls basically being sold into slavery and how it's rampant right now," he says, his voice filled with concern. "When you see a picture of a young girl in that situation it's impossible to say, 'I don't know that person so I don't care about them.' There's no way you can't think of your own kids."

"To me, it makes me say, 'I love you,' to my kids more often. It's something that was always said in my household, but it's different now."

"As time passes," Bolton reflects, "a lot of things fall away that don't mean a lot to you and the things and people that do mean something to you mean more."

"The puzzle of life becomes more crystallised and, the more hardship you see other people going through, the more sense you get that you should be grateful for the fact that your kids are OK."

● *Vintage* by Michael Bolton is out now on Universal.

