



## Elvis Has Returned To The Building

July 1998 by Robert Scovill

Robert Scovill puts the M 149 Tube through its paces.

Late last year I hooked up with a Phoenix artist named Tim MacDonald who had recently formed a band named Looking For Aldous Huxley. I was introduced to him via some musicians that I had worked with on previous projects who spoke very highly of him and were now members of the band. I attended an informal rehearsal at the behest of the band and once I heard about 5 minutes of the material I knew that Tim and I were going to probably have a long standing relationship. I started attending rehearsals under the guise of pre-production for an independent release on my label, Eldon's Boy Records.

At about the time we started tracking I had approached Karl Winkler at Neumann about acquiring a pair of M 149 Tube mics. I had just used one very successfully on a previous record for a band from Connecticut called Pleasurecrush and thought it was time to step up and purchase a pair. (Yes, I do endorse Neumann but still have to pay for their products and willfully do so--that's how much I believe in their mics.)

My initial plan was to run the mic through its paces in that I only really got a chance to use it on vocals on the Pleasurecrush project. The LFAH project would have things like piano, acoustic guitar, strings etc. etc. as well as vocals. This would present a diverse selection of goodies to try it out on.

The tracking was almost complete for the album when one day out of the blue, I got a call from each one of the band members. For all intents and purposes each of the conversations centered around "have you heard Elvis yet?" To which I replied...."uh... not since Vegas in '67..." Once Tim showed up at the studio that night I got a taste of what they were talking about. Tim pulled out his acoustic and as I watched him tune it to open C#ish I knew this was going to be interesting. He claimed he had written it after chatting to the owner of an antiques shop one day while up north of Phoenix. While there he had bought this really old tube 1/4" tape machine. On the machine was the recording of a man who was using the machine for dictating a letter to his mother. This became the impetus for the song and as it turns out we used snippets of that tape in the form of segues throughout the album.

The moment Tim was finished demoing the song to me, I knew it had to be included on the record. The first time I heard it, it just screamed out to me to have a cello part written for it. I contacted a local cellist named Heidi Foran and gave her a tape of the song and asked her to come up with some ideas for an accompaniment. She did so and showed up at the studio raring to go. With some very minor changes in the arrangement we came in very fired up to record this song. Seeing as to how I was all revved up to record the song as well as all revved up to use the M 149 I thought "hmmm... why don't we just put this mic up and get this thing down on tape before the vibe vanishes. Let's not spend hours evaluating different mics for this and for that let's just go as if this was the only pair of mics I owned." So as it turns out we recorded the entire piece, vocal, acoustic and cello with the M 149. The name of the tune is "Velvet Elvis" and it's a really charming little diddy. I hope you all enjoy it and I hope you get the opportunity to try the M 149. It is held in very high regard in my collection. See ya!

Robert Scovill is a 5 time winner of mix magazines TEC Award for sound reinforcement engineer. He currently owns and operates MusiCanvas Recording and Eldon's Boy Records in Scottsdale, Arizona.

