

Elkie Brooks is city bound

01 April 2009 Londonderry Sentinel

By **Eamon Sweeney**

ONE of the UK's most enduring and popular jazz, blues and rock artists will play the Millennium Forum for the first time on May 2.

Born Elaine Bookbinder in Manchester, Elkie Brooks as she became known, set off as a 15-year-old to fulfil her passion to follow in the footsteps of her musical heroes such as Ella Fitzgerald. Elkie released her first single, Something's Got a Hold On Me in 1964. However whilst her acclaim constantly grew, chart success proved elusive and the songstress spent the next few years on tour with bands such as The Beatles and The Animals. Speaking to the Sentinel, Elkie said: "I have been in the business now for 49 years and I'm still learning."

Explaining how she maintains her passion after almost five decades she said: "It's all about the music for me. In the 60's we were locked into the pop music thing, so it was a natural course for me to change direction."

In 1970, Elkie's career took on a whole new direction and collaborations with people like Pete Dinklage brought about rock fusion band, Dada. The group was working well when the introduction of another future star Robert Palmer produced the perfect foil for her, the band became Vinegar Joe, and they produced many legendary performances together. However, despite the recognition the material failed to translate into record sales and the band split in 1974.

Having returned from the USA in 1975 with a deal with A&M records, Elkie's first solo album, Rich Man's Woman launched. Her second LP, Two Days Away, written and produced by legendary songwriters Leiber and Stoller finally proved the catalyst for commercial success. On her 32nd birthday, the classic single Pearl's a Singer was released bringing her first Top 10 hit. Elkie told the Sentinel what the Londonderry audience can expect on May 2 at the Millennium Forum.

"Obviously I would be foolish not to do the hits, or some of them at least. I am currently working on my new album, which is third produced by my eldest son Jay. It may be out before, but will definitely be out before the end of the year."

Still without a title, the album will contain new material as well as cover versions that are guaranteed the instantly recognizable Elkie Brooks treatment.

"I love Irish audiences because they are less inhibited than other places and the reaction is what I like," Elkie said.

Elkie Brooks plays at the Millennium Forum on May 2, as part of a nine date Irish tour.

For booking queries call the Forum Box Office on 02871264455 or contact boxoffice@millenniumforum.co.uk.