

The Elvis Story

When we decided to put this show together, I wanted to give the audience a brief outline of Elvis's music and life...but what could we tell you that you didn't already know? I mean, Elvis is perhaps the most well known, celebrated, idolized star in the music industry...then and now! Any information I could share is probably already known by most...but then, it occurred to me that maybe folks don't know THIS Elvis. The Elvis that didn't wear a sparkling diamond studded jump suit. The Elvis that hadn't starred in movies and been in the company of leading ladies and stars from around the world. The Elvis that hadn't felt the pressures of "stardom" and all of the decisions that his rise to fame would bring about. Maybe, just maybe, we could share a bit about the Elvis who was an unsure, skinny kid just trying to make a record in Memphis...the Elvis who drove a truck and worked a regular job...the Elvis who hadn't turned the world on its edge through his music. So here goes...the Elvis that was...before he was ELVIS! BEFORE THE CAPE!

Elvis Aaron Presley was born to Vernon and Gladys Presley in a small two room house in Tupelo, MS on January 8 1935. His twin brother, Jessie Garon, was stillborn, leaving Elvis to grow up as an only child. Elvis and his parents moved to Memphis, TN in 1948...a move that ultimately afforded him the opportunity to make the most of his musical talent. Elvis listened to, and was influenced by, the pop and country music of that time, the gospel music he heard in church and the black R&B music he heard on historic Beale Street in Memphis...a mix that would lead him to create a sound that the world had never heard!

In 1954, Elvis began his singing career with Sun Records in Memphis. Marion Keisker (the secretary at Sun) suggested to the studio owner, Sam Phillips, that he use Elvis on a song called "Without You" that Sam was planning to release. However, Elvis didn't sing the song to Sam's satisfaction...so Sam asked Elvis what he could sing. Elvis ran through some pop tunes that he knew, and Sam was impressed enough to team Elvis with local musicians Scotty Moore (guitar) and Bill Black (bass).

On July 4, Elvis, Scotty and Bill met and played, but nothing really clicked. It wasn't until July 5, near the end of a tedious recording session, that Elvis and the boys started playing around with an old Arthur Crudup blues tune. The recording of "That's All Right" backed by a high energy rendition of "Blue Moon of Kentucky" launched Elvis and the boys into the public spotlight, and created a sound that so many listeners never even knew they were yearning to hear!

Elvis and the boys started performing together regularly, with Scotty acting as the group's manager. They played throughout the South and enjoyed moderate success. They even played the Grand Ole Opry on October 2, 1954...a performance that didn't go very well, and prompted Opry officials to suggest that Elvis go back to driving a truck at Crown Electric!

Elvis, Scotty and Bill eventually went on to release five singles with Sun Records before Elvis's contract was sold to RCA Victor for \$35,000...and though Elvis's popularity continued to grow and skyrocket, (we all know that story) it was that sound—that raw, pure sound—from his early recordings that made that indelible mark on the future of rock and roll.

The Elvis Songs *with label, label number and release date

That's All Right

Sun 209 (07-1954)
RCA 47-6380 (12-1955)

Blue Moon of Kentucky

Sun 209 (07-1954)
RCA 47-6380 (12-1955)

I'm Left You're Right She's Gone

Sun 217 (04-1954)
RCA 47-6383 (12-1955)

Mystery Train

Sun 223 (08-1954)
RCA 47-6357 (12-1955)

Heartbreak Hotel

RCA 47-6420 (01-1956)

Blue Suede Shoes

RCA EPA 747 (03-1956)
RCA 47-6636 (08-1956)

Tutti Frutti

RCA EPA 747 (03-1956)
RCA 47-6636 (08-1956)

Trying to Get to You

RCA EPB 1254 (03-1956)
RCA 47-6639 (08-1956)

Hound Dog

RCA 47-6604 (07-1956)

Don't Be Cruel

RCA 47-6604 (07-1956)

Blue Moon

Recorded at Sun Studios — unissued
RCA LPM 1254 (03-1956)
RCA 47-6640 (08-1956)

Just Because

Recorded at Sun Studios — unissued
RCA EPA 747 (03-1956)
RCA 47-6640 (08-1956)

Lawdy Miss Clawdy

RCA 47-6642 (08-1956)

Love Me Tender

RCA 47-6643 (09-1956)

SELECTIONS FROM THE OCTOBER 1956 RCA LP

"ELVIS"

Rip It Up

When My Blue Moon Turns to Gold Again

Long Tall Sally

Ready Teddy

Paralyzed

SELECTIONS FROM THE JULY 1957 RCA LP

"LOVING YOU"

Have I Told You Lately That I Love You

Teddy Bear

Party

Mean Woman Blues

Jailhouse Rock

RCA 47-7035 (09-1957)

Wear My Ring Around Your Neck

RCA 47-7240 (04-1958)

Hard Headed Woman

RCA 47-7280 (06-1958)

Big Hunk O' Love

RCA 47-7600 (06-1959)

"Some people tap their feet, some people snap their fingers, and some people sway back and forth. I just sorta do 'em all together, I guess"

—Elvis in 1956, talking about his way of moving on stage

Thank you so much for being here with us to enjoy this music — for without you, live music just wouldn't matter! Elvis has left the building...thank you and good night!

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ELVIS



BEFORE THE CAPE

JOHNNY

&

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