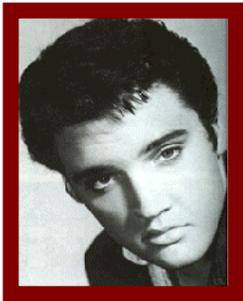


Elvis Presley

Elvis Aaron Presley, 8 January 1935, Tupelo, Mississippi, USA, d. 16 August 1977, Memphis, Tennessee. The most celebrated popular music star of his generation and, for many, the very symbol of rock 'n' roll. Elvis Presley's life and career have become part of rock legend and for many is "The Rock Legend Star".



The elder of twins, his younger brother, Jesse Garon, was stillborn, a tragedy that partly contributed to his mother dominating his childhood and teenage years.

Presley's first significant step towards a musical career took place at the age of eight when he won \$5 in a local song contest. His earliest musical influence came from attending the Pentecostal Church and listening to the psalms and gospel songs. He also had a strong grounding in country and blues and it was the combination of these different styles that was to provide his unique musical identity. By the age of 13, Presley had moved with his family to Memphis, and during his later school years began cultivating an outsider image, with long hair, spidery sideburns and ostentatious clothes. After leaving school he took a job as a truck driver, a role in keeping with his unconventional appearance. In spite of his rebel posturing, Presley remained very polite to his elders and was devoted to his mother. It was on 10 January 1956, a mere two days after his 21st birthday, that Presley entered RCA's studios in Nashville to record his first tracks for a major label. Since hitting number 2 in the UK lists with 'Heartbreak Hotel', Presley had been

guaranteed European success and his profile was increased through a regular series of releases as RCA took advantage of their back catalogue.

In the beginning of the **Beatles'** rise to fame and the beat boom explosion, Presley seemed a bit out of place. Nevertheless, in spite of the dated nature of many of his recordings, he could still invest power and emotion into classic songs. During the early 70s Presley continued his live performances, but soon fell victim to the same artistic problems that had troubled his career.

The backdrop to Presley's final years was a sordid slump into drug dependency, reinforced by the pervasive unreality of a pampered lifestyle in his fantasy home, Grace Land. He collapsed onstage on a couple of occasions and finally on 16 August 1977 his tired body expired. The official cause of death was a heart attack, undoubtedly brought on by barbiturate usage over a long period. In the weeks following his demise, his record sales predictably rocketed and 'Way Down' proved a fittingly final UK number 1.

To this day, Elvis Presley remains number one, King of Rock 'n' Roll. His smooth, intense music with a truly identifiable beat, and his body movements led to a whole new generation and type of music. The music industry and the world were in for a musical revolution as none had ever existed before.

Elvis Presley has left his indelible mark on the music and social world. He truly transformed not only a genre, but also the way in which American Society idealizes rock stars and people of fame.