

Dave Tapley gets everyone "all shook up" imitating Elvis

By Kathleen Johnson

Since Elvis Presley's unexpected death on August 16, 1977, thousands of his fans have tried to live with his memory in their hearts, their minds and through the sounds of his music.

But the excitement they remember of his flashy style and unique talent during live concert performances loses its stimulation on the television screen, so they turned instead to Elvis impersonators to vicariously fill the void.

Irving's Dave Tapley doesn't mind stepping in and helping Elvis' adoring and loyal fans with their dilemma. He is now one of the 4,000 Elvis Presley impersonators in the country, and his decision to become one was a result of the demand from the public.

"It's been more by definition than by choice," explained Tapley. "Three years ago our band was singing 'Big Chill' music, a lot of Beatles, Elvis and Motown sounds, and we kept getting more and more requests for Elvis."

Tapley ~~wasn't~~ wearing a wig or jeweled jumpsuit back then. It was his voice's eerie resemblance to Elvis' that was turning the audience on. Restaurateur Gene Street heard about Tapley and asked him to headline the entertainment at the grand opening of his new Tex-Mex Antigua restaurant/resort in Acapulco.

"When we were down there rehearsing, he (Street) bought me this wig and sideburns from Murray Stein in Hollywood, and another investor got involved and excited about it and bought me an outfit," explained the 34-year-old singer. "We pulled that thing off in Mexico and it was incredible. It was like a big huge Hollywood debut. Police surrounded the whole square."

When Tapley returned to the states he did a television talk show with Ed Busch. From that exposure, he went on to do a cystic fibrosis benefit Christmas party in Dallas and another one in Fort Worth. Since then, he's had calls from hundreds of people wanting him to impersonate Elvis.

"It's wild," laughed Tapley. "The Morning Guys (Y95's Bill Evans and Trey Matthews) found out about it and they had me calling them every



Elvis impersonator Dave Tapley bears a striking resemblance to The King when he puts on a wig, sideburns and costume, but with or without his get-up, his voice remains eerily realistic to the singing idol.

morning, talking on the radio like Elvis. Then KLUV Radio called me to do some events."

Tapley's Elvis Show is backed by his band, Radio Dallas, and he calls in three musicians from the University of North Texas for the rhythm. Formerly called The Dave Tapley Band when it originated six years ago, Radio Dallas consists of Irving musicians Bobby Luna on drums and Rusty Haley, Manny Callejas, Scott Cason and Bryan Smith on guitars. Andy Upchurch on the keyboard is the only band member not from Irving.

always wanted to do. I'm at a point now where I can almost make a living at it. If a couple of things come off that I'm planning, it's going to be a real nice living."

According to Tapley, he is filling a void that has been left open by others who have gotten caught up in the impersonator trap, who have forgotten their own identities and purpose.

The people who really think they're Elvis, he said, who dye their hair black, dress like him all the time and act and talk like him. "When I take that stuff off (the wig, sideburns and costume), I'm Dave again. When I see those guys, I just want to say, 'C'mon, buddy, get real.'"



Staff photo/Ken Hale

The real Dave Tapley, without the Elvis wig, sideburns and sequined outfit.

He has been offered numerous contracts by agents, but right now he prefers to handle his own career. All of his charity appearances are done at no charge, but he has just recently returned from Memphis on business, and an appearance on Lake Ray Hubbard's Texas Queen. His upcoming gigs include the Addison Grand Prix and the La Buena Bola Golf Tournament at the Las Colinas Country Club. On June 29th he will be auctioned off at a Bachelor Bid benefiting cystic fibrosis.

"I get calls every day for something different," he said. "I am committed to being the best Elvis impersonator there ever was, and my short term goal is to be successful in Vegas. That, I think I can do. But, what I really hope results from all of this is national recognition for my own talents - not as Elvis - but as Dave Tapley."

And, ladies, without the wig, sideburns and costume, the real Dave Tapley is still something to get all shook up about.

Tapley is a 1973 graduate of MacArthur High School and went to Southwest Texas State to major in drama. He switched universities and his major when he decided to attend North Texas State University, where he concentrated on music and business. After graduation, he went into the construction business, singing and playing the guitar as a hobby. Now, the two are reversed.

"I still do some construction, but mainly I'm doing this," he said, referring to his impersonation. "This thing has really taken off. It's so much fun and it's something I've



RADIO DALLAS

In late 1987, the David Tapley band drew tremendous response from the set of Elvis music within their 50, 60, and 70's classic hit format. Shortly following, auditions were held and selections were made that included top musicians throughout the metroplex.

Early in 1988, the band became, "RADIO DALLAS" catering to local nightclubs, and appeared nationally, as well as, throughout the Southwest.

RADIO DALLAS maintains it's classic music style and also offers an exciting "Elvis" Show.

DAVID "ELVIS" TAPLEY "THE KING"

There are few who emulate Elvis Presley, few who truly perfect his legend. Meet David Tapley, considered by many to be the personification of "The King."



PHOTO BY RAFF FRANCO

DAVE "Elvis" TAPLEY