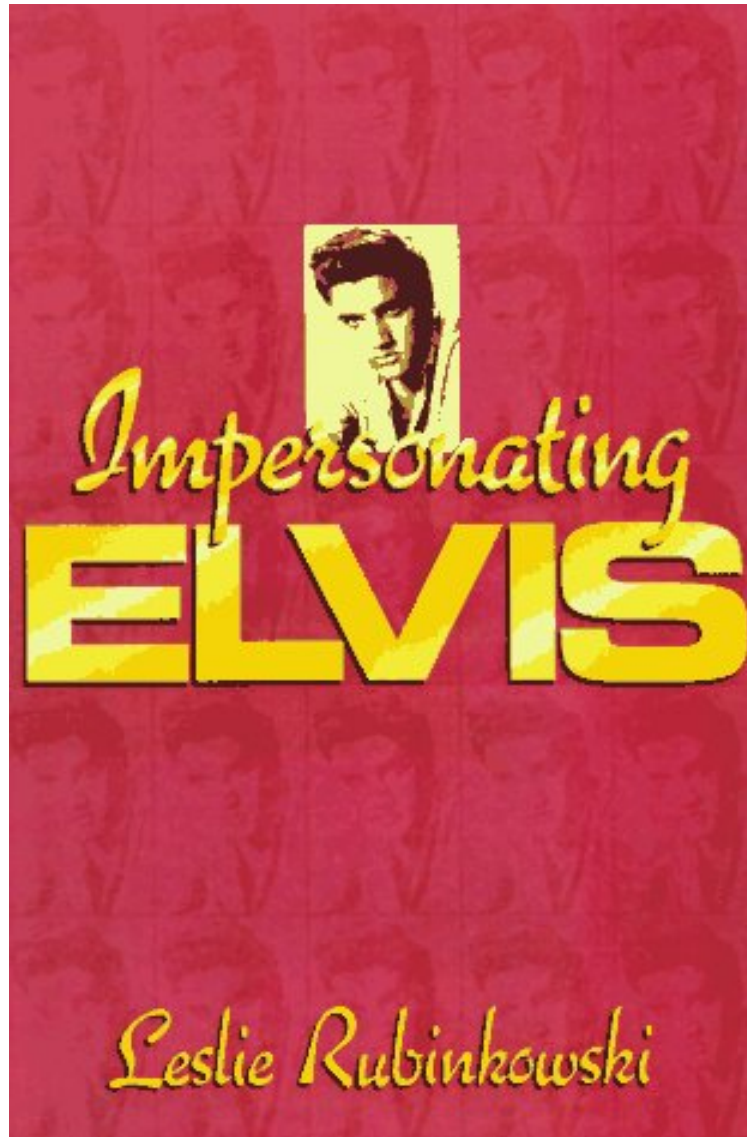


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Impersonating Elvis

Leslie Rubinkowski

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Leslie Rubinkowski : Impersonating Elvis before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Impersonating Elvis:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Finally...a FAIR portrayal of Elvis ImpersonatorsBy A CustomerI'm an Elvis Tribute Artist from Maryland ("Dave Elvis") and I enjoyed this book. Along with William Henderson's "I, Elvis: Confessions of a Counterfit King," it's one of the more fair portrayal of EP impersonators. No, we're not all a bunch of overweight, drugged, and unemployed guys who sit around all day in jumpsuits watching "Viva Las Vegas"

and eating peanut butter and banana sandwiches. We have jobs like everybody else, but paying tribute to Elvis is what we enjoy with our spare time and it seems to make a lot of folks happy. To whoever was responsible for the Kirkus review which is, to say the least, condescending towards Tribute Artists, I have only one thing to say: You aint nuttin' but a hound dog! 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A must-have for Elvis info lovers
By A Customer
The King is still alive and kicking his heels on stage through Elvis impersonators. Rubinkowski tells their tale in a respectful manner. It would be easy to pass these folks off as kooks. Instead she allows us to follow real-life stories of Dennis Stella and Mike Memphis, among others, as well as providing a lot of information about the celebrity impersonation culture. The book is interesting, funny and touching, and I recommend it to anyone who still holds the King close to their heart.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Amazingly good!
By Eddy Martens
A book on how and why people want to impersonate the king of rock 'n roll. The even chapters deal with one specific person trying to make it as an impersonator. The uneven chapters deal with everything else around Elvis impersonating scene. Leslie's wonderful style makes it a pleasure to read.

In August 1997 the world will mark the 20th anniversary of the death of Elvis Presley. To coincide with this event, journalist Leslie Rubinkowski offers this irreverent but respectful, hilarious but touching tribute to those who emulate the King in the highest form: Elvis impersonators.

From Library Journal
Twenty years after the death of Elvis Presley it would appear that he is more alive than ever, kept fresh in the minds of the public not only by his fans but by an astounding number of impersonators around the world. There is a serious business that raises the king to a status of mythic proportion and proves him to be a pop cultural icon still able to draw a healthy crowd. These two works examine the phenomenon of Elvis impersonation. Rubinkowski, a reporter and journalism teacher, packs voluminous research into her book. Clocking more than 25,000 miles in her quest, she interviewed some major players, immersed herself in their world, and attended Elvis conventions from Memphis to Las Vegas. She examines the subculture of the impersonator, with its varying rules, philosophies, lifestyles, and stylistic approaches. Yet she carefully underscores each individual personality. On the other hand, Henderson (English, Univ. of North Carolina) recounts this scene from firsthand experience, donning wig and jumpsuit at age 52 to impersonate Elvis for his book. His forays into costuming, song material, body movements, props, bodyguards, background research, and even shoes are hilarious, informative, and touching in turn. He, too, meets the headliners in this most unusual pastime (for some, a professional career) and invests a not inconsiderable amount of sweat and tears into putting on a credible show. His tale and astute observations make this a page-turner. Both works provide entertaining and informative insights into a nostalgic quirk of American culture and are suitable for general circulating collections.
?Carol J. Binkowski, Bloomfield, N.J. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Kirkus s
A study of Elvis Presley impersonators--their habits, habitats, and hangers-on--that provides lots of detail about jumpsuits and sideburns but willfully avoids analyzing why this peculiar species thrives. Journalist Rubinkowski spent several years attending fake-Elvis conventions and contests and talking with dozens of the estimated 1,500 working Elvises, as well as the ancillary figures who put on the shows or pay to see them. The central character here is Dennis Stella, a 37-year-old insurance salesman and beginning Elvis from Calumet City, Ill., whose largely hapless progress she tracks all the way to the Elvis Presley Impersonators International Association's Las Vegas gathering and Memphis's (relatively) prestigious Images of Elvis contest, held during the August Elvis Week festivities. After several setbacks involving a wig, the big turning point in Dennis's muddled quest is his decision to dye and grow his own hair into an approximation of Elvis's: "The amount of Elvis happening inside a person's head," remarks Rubinkowski, "corresponds exactly to the blackness and volume of hair on top of it." But why would somebody want to perform as Elvis? Dennis started after his mother died, because she had encouraged him to follow his dreams . . . or something like that. It's unclear because Rubinkowski steadfastly refuses to amplify the comments she elicits from her not-so-articulate subjects. The wry Robert Lopez ("El Vez, the Mexican Elvis") is, thankfully, ironic about his career, but most of the Elvises seem earnest and foolish, rambling deludedly: "I'm a very good singer. I just happen to do Elvis, you know? . . . I could be the next big entertainer." Many fans obsessively attend impersonator events, but Rubinkowski, aside from poker-faced descriptions of their tacky outfits, offers no more insights about the audience than about the performers. This kind of ceaselessly deadpan delicacy, which merely underlines the ridiculousness of the phenomenon without penetrating it, is not nearly response enough. -- Copyright 1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.