

EL VEZ IS THE GRITTY STREETS OF MEXICO GONE VEGAS GLITTER. ZAPATA IN A JUMP SUIT. ELVIS AS CHE GUEVARA. FOR YEARS THE PUNK ROCKER TURNED "ELVIS IMPERSONATOR" HAS BEEN DISHING OUT REAL REVOLUTION DISGUISED AS CULTURAL KITSCH AND BLURRING THE LINES BETWEEN CAMP AND COMMENTARY, AND ALTER-NATIVE AUDIENCES HAVE BEEN EATING IT UP LIKE PEANUT BUTTER AND BANANA SANDWICHES.

OJO ROJO: Where were you born?

EL VEZ: Tu Pelo, Chihuahua. It is about one hour west of Monterey the capital, of the state, of Chihuahua. I moved to Chula Vista shortly after that.

Were you teased in grade school for being El Vez?

No, I was a like-able boy. Entertaining even back then. I'll admit I didn't wear as flashy of clothes then. I was

"You can't really liberate just with music. You can plant the seeds and ideas but it's still up to them to liberate themselves."

ELVEZ

Going To Graciasland

more like a main-stream Rock-a-Billy of today...only as a little boy.

What kind of music did you listen to as a child?

Everything. I have so many Elvis impersonator friends who say they can remember the very first time they heard their first Elvis song...me I don't because it was always there. But so were the Rolling Stones, The Beatles and Pedro Vicente. I was probably hearing music in the womb. My very first 45 to buy was a Dave Clark five single. We already had all the Elvis records in my folks record collection, along with Iron Butterfly, Carly Simon, Joan Baez, Dave Brubeck, and everything else...

What kind of music did you listen to as a rebellious teenager?

Punk Rock of course. I suppose glitter came before that. I suppose the New York Dolls was my first "rebellious" type of music because David Bowie wasn't

really "rebellious" just different

Do you still consider yourself a rebel?

Perhaps in 1977. I was part of the southern punk rock movement. Part of The Originals... The Germs, The Weirdos, etc. so I suppose I felt like a rebel. Being in a punk band called The Zeros helped.

Who are we supposed to rebel against?

Then it was the status quo and the music regulars and life in general. Whatever makes you oppressed. It's a never-ending cycle you know... There is not just one revolution. There should be constant change.... personal revolutions especially. Rebel against nothing if you like.

In your songs you speak of revolution. What kind of revolution is your "Train of Revolution", a peaceful revolution? Or a violent revolution?

In that song it was a violent revolution. I was singing about the Mexican revolu-

A good time. I don't expect everyone to understand what I'm yapping about. Sometimes I think I'm only there to entertain me and I'm very all right with that. I crack myself up! But they might get a little bit of it and that might lead them to want to understand more be it a riff stolen from Ziggy Stardust. I've met kids who went on to find out more about the other music we weave into our shows. Or to learn more about Ceasar Chavez or whomever I might be singing about that day. I think entertainment is the first order of the day. I let the education slip in the back door when they are not looking.

You've been compared to Che Guevara and Phil Ochs. Do people ever think you are a communist?

It was plastered all over the British press that I was a communist. When I was working with the label Poptones in the UK, it so happened that the Queen's

tion. Of land and liberty. The men fighting along side the women. Poncho Villa and the Zapatistas, the originals that today's Chiapas Zapatistas are modeled after.

Do you speak only to Chicanos? Can other Latinos relate to your movement?

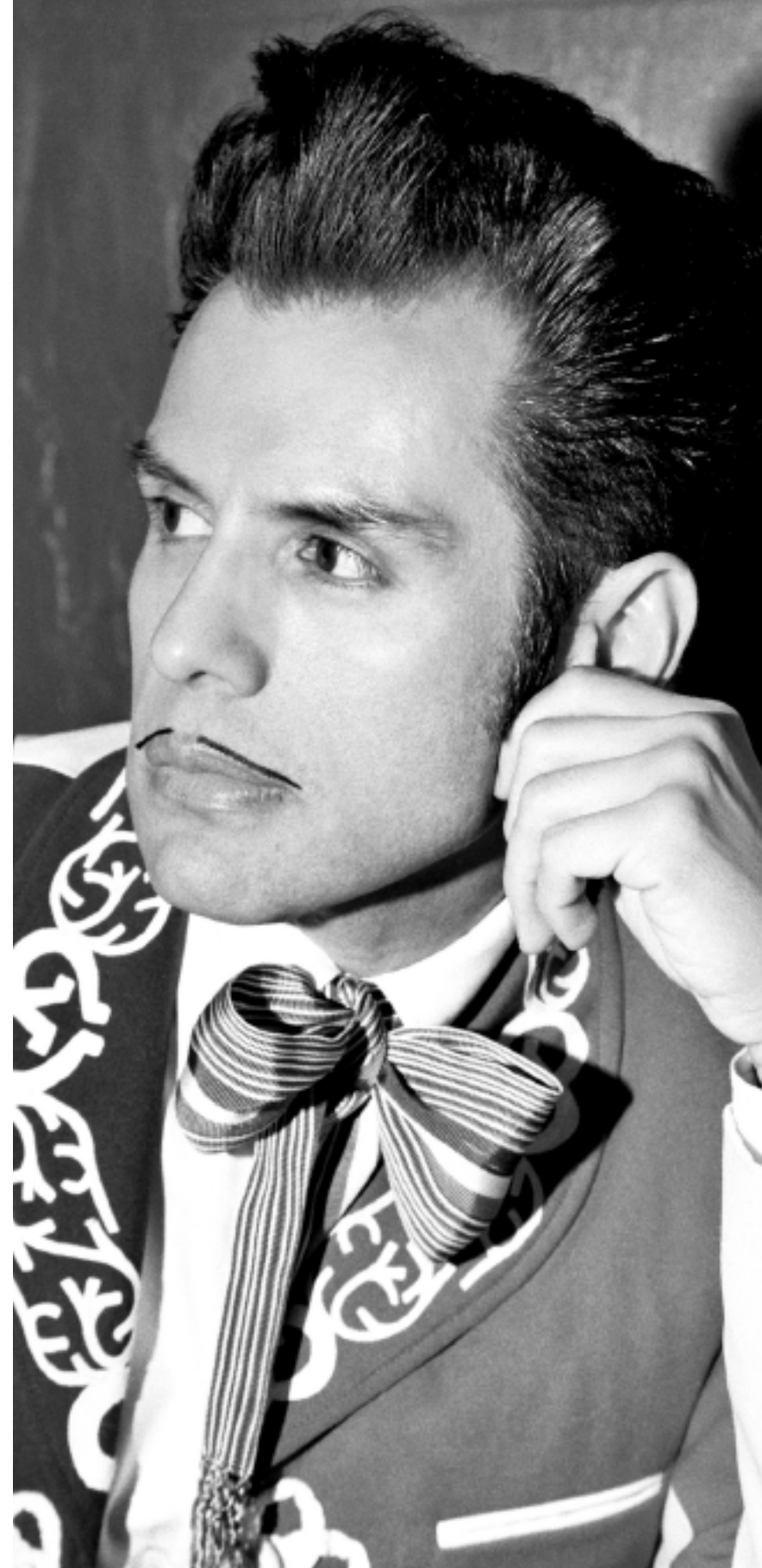
Of course I don't just speak to Chicanos. That would be very limiting don't you think. Jeeez! Other Latinos dig it too. My songs might be site specific but I think they have a global appeal. We were in Berlin once and we had performed "Immigration time", my take on Elvis' "Suspicious minds." These Turkish kids came up to us and said we love that song. You are singing about us. We come from Turkey here to Germany and we try to be part of society... so here is a song with So-Cal intent and tale and it ends up meaning something to a kid thousands of miles away. Think globally but act Elvisley.

What about gringos, what can they get from your performances?

financiers invest her monies into stocks etc. well they invested into music man Alan McGee's (Creation Records, Oasis, etc.) new label. When it was discovered the press turned it to read QUEEN INVESTS HER MONEY INTO MEXICAN, COMMUNIST, ELVIS IMPERSONATOR. Real good pictures of me in red PVC jumpsuits. I have socialist ideas but I'm not a communist. But not like being a communist is a bad thing.

Do you make a lot of money off your tours and records?

I do all right. It is my work. It is how I get paid and pay my bills. It affords me a nice life. I'm very grateful to the fans because they are the ones who buy the records and come to the shows. I'm not Elton John with multiple houses or even at the White Stripes level of making money but I do alright for me and I can do the shows and music I want to do without too much restraint. Restraint meaning the cost of my expression... I can't wear clothes



made from actual gold or something or toss dollars into the audience from confetti canons.

Do you fly in a plane called Lisa Maria?

No, but my home museum mansion would be called Graciasland

Would you ever join the US Army like Elvis did, and fight to protect freedom and democracy?

I almost joined the marines when I was a kid. I thought it would be like a 24 hour a day gym class. I could eat all I want. Get paid. Exercise. I don't mind getting yelled at. It rolls off my back like a duck. This of course was when I was 17 Luckily punk rock had other plans for me. But I would not join the army now.

Do you think that Elvis would be able to bring a 14 year old (Priscilla) to live with him today?

Well he wasn't flaunting it. He was being secretive. I suppose he wouldn't. And really shouldn't.

Would you consider doing tours for free? I mean going from town to town liberating the people?

Well I have done shows and benefits for free. The trick is I can't always do them. I have a working staff and they have to be paid. So a free show can end up costing because you still have to pay for stuff. You can't really liberate just with music. You can plant the seeds and ideas but it's still up to them to liberate themselves. Doing a whole tour for free well that would end up costing thousands of dollars... It could be a good tax deduction.

"There is not just one revolution. There should be constant change... personal revolutions especially."

What's the biggest misconception people have about El Vez?

I love for people to have misconception about El Vez. Getting lost in the translation is part of the whole idea. It's a whole mix of established ideas getting a mustache put on them and turned upside down. To have people think that El Vez is just a Mexican Elvis is the common conception, I suppose. It's so much more... don't you think? ☺