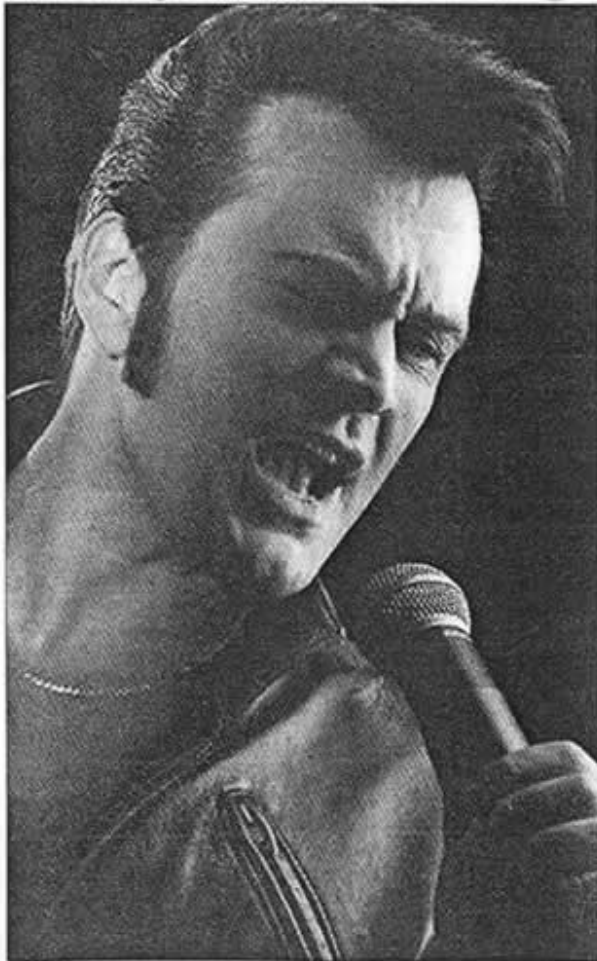


## Arts & Entertainment

# Randy Friskie to stage the gospel concert Elvis never gave



*'He Touched Me' is the theme of an upcoming concert by Elvis Presley tribute artist Randy Friskie. He will pay homage to both the king of rock and roll and the King of Kings on April 25, at Chandos Pattison Auditorium.*

ELVIS impersonators have long been the butt of many jokes. Randy Friskie, however, has carved out his own place in that unique corner of the entertainment world, and has earned a measure of respect.

His career was launched at Expo '86, where his Presley show played to sold-out audiences for almost two months. Since then, he has gone on to great acclaim in some circles.

Friskie does not see himself as a mere imitator of Presley, declaring: "I prefer to think of myself as someone performing a tribute to the greatest performer that has lived."

According to Friskie's website, there was much more to the 'king of rock and roll' than many people perceived. "There was a spiritual dimension to Elvis that influenced his singing, and was reflected in his love for the gospel songs . . . These songs were a source of inner strength that supported Elvis throughout his career. It is a known fact that Elvis always had a great desire to perform a complete gospel concert, but he never got to do it."

'He Touched Me' is Friskie's response to Presley's unfulfilled ambition. The concert will be presented April 25 at Chandos Pattison Auditorium in Surrey.

Presley's status as a rock star and sex symbol, his troubled life, and his tragic decline overshadowed the fact that he was a very accomplished gospel singer. He

released more than 50 gospel songs, and his recordings brought him three Grammy awards. He gave classic renditions of songs such as 'Peace in the Valley,' 'Crying in the Chapel,' 'Somebody Bigger than You and I,' 'He Touched Me,' 'You Gave Me a Mountain,' 'American Trilogy' and 'How Great Thou Art.' Friskie will be performing all of these songs at the concert, and close to two dozen others.



Friskie's website stresses lesser-known aspects of the singer's life. "Elvis Presley was born and raised in the 'Bible Belt' of the USA. He read his Bible and prayed regularly . . . He held Bible studies at his home, [and] read passages from the Bible onstage during his concerts."

Presley, Friskie asserts, "did not like being called 'the King.' When fans used to shout out from the audience 'Elvis, you're the King,' he would reply: 'No honey, there is only one King — and that is Jesus Christ.'"

The website also gives some insight into Friskie's own spiritual perspective: "It is Randy's sincere hope that [the concert] will not be received as just pure entertainment — but rather that it will be recognized as Randy's own expression of a faith in God, and a spiritual dimension within him, that comes from a personal relationship with Christ." Contact 604-582-7285.

— David F. Dawes

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