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Elvis Herselvis

An Interview between the American Performer and Wicked Women Magazine

First part of a two-part series on American performer Elvis Herselvis. This issue, we reprint an interview from *Wicked Women* magazine by Kimberly O'Sullivan

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Elvis Herselvis identifies as a female Elvis impersonator and a drag king. In 1993 she toured Australia to sell-out gigs, yet unfortunately, has failed to return. In her home country, however, Elvis Herselvis, otherwise known as Leigh Crow, continues to make waves and draw an audience. Recently, she was banned from a high-profile Elvis Convention by conservative sponsors.

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Reprinted here, with kind permission from the publisher, is an extract of an original interview penned by Kimberly O'Sullivan, and published in the five year anniversary edition of *Wicked Women* magazine. As such, we are given a 'wicked' perspective on the artist.

Wicked Women Magazine: How would you define your sexual style?

Elvis Herselvis: I'm definitely out as a lesbian, but my sexuality is really involved with relationships. I don't know if I will reach the stage where I can just have sex for sex's sake.

Sexually I am both active and passive. Almost whatever my partner needs I am willing to do, as long as they are willing to reciprocate.

Wicked Women Magazine: Where do you see your sexual limits as being?

Elvis Herselvis: I am definitely into having people be nice to me! I am uncomfortable with a lot of power play and even light S.&M., for me that doesn't work sexually.

Wicked Women Magazine: So you are a 'Love Me Tender' kind of gal?

Elvis Herselvis: (much laughter) Yes, it's the truth, that's what I am! I am afraid I am just a big softie.

Wicked Women Magazine: How do you identify?

Elvis Herselvis: As a cross-dresser, as a drag king and of course as a lesbian.

Wicked Women Magazine: Have you inherited Elvis' sexual style?

Elvis Herselvis: Since I have been here in Australia I have had a lot of straight women flirt with me. I love to flirt, I'll flirt with straight women, with queens, with just about anyone but horrible straight men. I'll flirt with nice straight men, as long as they are the sort of straight men who can be kept in line.

Straight men are very intimidated by a woman impersonating Elvis. It is one of the last bastions of masculinity, the right to 'do' Elvis. It is funny, Elvis is perceived as much more macho here than in the States. I personally think he was very queeny, in the 1950s he wore make-up and pink, on stage when that was unheard of behaviour for a straight man.

Because I am a cross-dresser people assume that I am butch and if people want to think that, then that is fine with me. But it's not true. It is not sexually where it is a problem, I can be butch or femme in bed, it is socially where 'butch' does not sit comfortably with me. I like a lot of attention and I found that as a butch I was expected to give the attention, rather than receive it.

Wicked Women Magazine: Have you had any sexual brushes with fame since being Elvis Herselvis?

Elvis Herselvis: Usually people will really throw themselves at me on stage and really play it up and that craziness is part of the act and I encourage it, it's great. But on stage is where I like it to begin and end. A couple of times women have carried it on off stage and it has made me really uncomfortable. It's not me they're reacting to but a character I am playing. I don't like it, it's too weird!

Wicked Women Magazine: Has performance as Elvis Herselvis changed your sexual self?

Elvis Herselvis: Yes it has. Being able to put on a male persona and play Elvis has definitely helped me to find out who I am. I have had to answer questions such as "because I am a cross-dresser does that make me butch?" As I said, I have explored that and come to terms with the fact that for me I do not really need to identify as butch or femme. On stage I can get out the swaggering maleness which is in me. Ironically, because of this I now feel very comfortable going out socially in femme drag. I feel more comfortable doing this since I have done the Elvis drag. Now I can even play at drag in a hyper-feminine style.

Wicked Women Magazine: Do you have any sexual heroines?

Elvis Herselvis: I am a heavy pop culture person, so I have to say media personalities. Julie Newman as Catwoman and Dianna Rigg in *The Avengers* are definitely sexual heroines. They were powerful female characters, women who were very sexy and feminine but who remained totally uninterested in the men in their shows.

When I was a kid I heavily identified with Jodie Foster and I had a great crush on her. If she came out of the closet she would be one of my sexual heroines.

Maybe that will get her to come-out. Jodie - Elvis is calling you ...

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