

Entertainment

The King lives on Roger Trueman is doing it Elvis' way



By TOM MALONEY
Times staff writer
Shimmering in a gold suit, he's hugging the microphone and courting a blonde at the nearest table.
"Just scream if you recognize this one," he says as he launches Treat Me Like A Fool. And the women scream, but

they're artificial screams, and King Elvis picks up on them.
"Pretend you're back in '56," he says. The scream comes back louder from those who had not even been born in '56.
Elvis smiles and the blonde hands him a handkerchief.
The sideburns jut to the

cheekbone, the black hair is combed back in a ducktail and the voice, if you close your eyes and test your imagination rolls into the microphone with Elvis-like tones.

Roger Trueman is a graduate of Lorne Park Secondary School — class of '74 — and he's quick to mention that he started his Elvis Presley routine two years before the king of rock and roll died. He admits though, that he's a lot more popular now than he was when Elvis was alive.
When his engagement at Malton's Skyway Restaurant and Tavern finished last Saturday, Trueman and his backup band, Liars, went to Saskatchewan for three weeks. They're booked in Florida for January and February.

"A lot of people are still Elvis fans," says Trueman, changing into

jeans in the dressing room at the back of Skyway's kitchen. "I just replace the image. It's not me they're applauding, it's the image."

While Trueman played with local rock and roll bands in the early '70s, he admired Elvis both for his musical talent and his "mystique with women." Like Rich Little would imitate Jimmy Stewart, so does Trueman try to reflect the hip gyrations, the mock caresses and the mannerisms of Elvis.

"If I can get somebody crying, I've got it made," he says.

This night, he brings no tears but catches the eyes of the women crowding the side of the dance floor. As gratitude for a dab with a handkerchief, he plants a kiss, perhaps one second longer than expected, on a young girl. The spotlight illuminates the entire scene,

and Elvis has got it made.

The fake King moves from the fast paced Hound Dog and All Shook Up to the more profound American Trilogy and Don't Cry Daddy to the ballad Teddy Bear, and he does not lose the audience. Even the truck drivers in the corner — "they hate everybody, including themselves," says a band member — stop the heckling.

It's four years since Trueman began his Elvis routine.

"Every day I have doubts about what I'm doing," says Trueman. "I'd like to have my own TV show one day. If that doesn't work out, I'll branch into some other kind of work."

"I've got a lot of dreams in my head."
He's living one right now.

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