

Entertainment

Led Zeppelin, reggae style Dread Zeppelin's covers aren't exactly faithful

(CPS)- "I was actually created by aliens, and I was patterned and modeled after the most popular person to ever walk the earth, who of course is Elvis Presley. And I look like him, and sound like him, and everything, and a lot of people mistake me for him, but I'm actually not."

Are these the words of a *National Inquirer* interviewee? The real subject of those Elvis sightings at the Burger King in Kalamazoo?

Nope. Meet Tortelvis, the Elvis impersonator who sings for Dread

Zeppelin, arguably the strangest new group of the season.

The group's repertoire consists almost entirely of reggae covers of Led Zeppelin songs, which are now collected on *Un-led-Ed*, its newly released album from IRS Records.

The record already has climbed to 23rd on the album charts in the Aug. 31 edition of *CMJ New Music Report*, a trade magazine that tracks the college music scene.

The music is as eccentric as Tortelvis, who just a few months ago was claiming to be the actual legitimate son of the king himself.

Then again he might have come from outer space.

"I'm really vague about the aliens themselves," Tortelvis admits. "All I know is that as a child, for the first couple years of my life, I believe I orbited the earth in Skylab or something and I fell down into Daddy Telvis's backyard in California. He's the one who raised me from a small child, and the way he figured out that I was modeled after Elvis Presley was, of course, by my beautiful singing voice."

As for where he got the idea for the reggae/Zeppelin thing, "It was actually Elvis Presley's idea. He came to me in 1977. He just told me simply, 'Do Led Zeppelin songs reggae style, the way they were supposed to be done.'"

But then there were rumblings from nonbelieving lawyers from Graceland. "Well, boy we've had quite a bit of problems with (the son-of-Elvis story)," the singer recalls. "We've had Bad PR people and rumors getting around, but actually not true, that whole thing. Oh yeah, I guess rumors have gotten around that I'm the illegitimate or legitimate son of Elvis, but it's not really true."

"They changed the story on their own," says David Millman, an IRS publicist, of the band's recent disavowal of the Elvis story. "They would



CPS photo

A different "Stairway": Fronted by an Elvis impersonator, Dread Zeppelin reinterprets Led Zep classics through reggae music.

get bored doing the same show all the time."

Just to be safe from legal claims that the band was trespassing on any Graceland copyrights, the record company issued a video press kit along with a letter from company President Miles Copeland letting everyone know that the band was kidding. IRS's mock-tabloid bio of the band carefully avoids all Presley references.

"Writers press me for details all the time," says Millman. "What are their real names? Where are they really from? But I always say the less that's real about this band, the better."

So, in the interest of fact-free journalism, here's that man with the beautiful singing voice, on how the band started.

While making his appointed rounds as a milkman, "I ran into the back of a Ford Pinto. In case you're wondering, it didn't blow up or anything, but out popped about five reggae musicians, and I pretty much hired them on the spot, and we've been doing it pretty much since then. That was about two years ago."

Thus, destiny was served. "Yeah, it was just pure luck. Yeah, that was one of the things that was just fulfilling the whole. The whole thing made sense to me, you know? Everything kind of fell together."

The lucky guys in the Pinto were rhythm guitarist Jah Paul Jo, bass player But Mon, percussionist Ed Zeppelin, lead guitarist Carl Jah - who

Tortelvis calls "one of the top 500,000 guitar players ever to live in the Richmond Virginia area" - and drummer Fresh Cheese, "the former light heavyweight champion of the world."

Although he wasn't in the ill-fated Pinto, no Dread Zeppelin show is complete without the sixth Dread, Charlie Hodge, whose sole function is to bring Tortelvis water and towels on stage.

"He pretty much makes the show happen," says Tortelvis. "If I sweat, he wipes me down. If I'm thirsty, he gives me water. If I'm hungry, he'll give me a jelly doughnut, or a peanut butter and banana sandwich."

Like any man of destiny, Tortelvis is sure of his future. "I've got only 13 more years to live," he states. "I'm 29 years old now, and I probably will be dying at the age of 42, just as Elvis did, and Elvis's mother did. So I've pretty much got to do everything I want to do within the next few years."

Dread Zeppelin's whole *National Inquirer*-inspired gestalt may be silly, but if you hear the music, you won't be able to dismiss them as pure novelty. Sure, the whole concept of an Elvis impersonator fronting a band doing covers of Zeppelin tunes is wholly preposterous, but their version of "Whole Lotta Love" cooks like nobody's business. No matter what Tortelvis's real name and life story are, he really does possess a beautiful singing voice.

Feldman faces new drug charges

by Robb Frederick
The Collegian

Teen actor Corey Feldman faces new drug charges after police found heroin while booking him for traffic warrants. Feldman (*Stand By Me*), was released early Friday on \$5,000 bail. The charges stem from an incident March 9 when police stopped Feldman's car and found 25 balloons, each containing cocaine or heroin.

- Charges have been dropped against Bobby Brown, who was arrested after a confrontation with police in an Atlanta restaurant. Brown intervened in a scuffle between his brother and a local police officer.

- Mickey Rourke and Carre Otis have privately settled the lawsuits they brought against Vision International for selling nude photos of the couple to *Playboy*. Rourke and Otis claimed the company's release of the photo stills, taken from the film *Wild Orchid*, was unauthorized and detrimental to their careers.

- Whitney Houston denies rumors that she is gay in the Oct. issues of *Life* and *Fame*. Stories had spread that the singer's relationship with executive assistant Robyn Crawford extended beyond friendship. Houston said she "has no desire for a woman," and noted her latest beau "is very much a man." Glad she noticed.

- New material will highlight the forthcoming Byrds retrospective, including five "lost" tracks originally recorded for the 1968 LP *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*. The four-disc set will also include a 1970 cover of Bob Dylan's "Just Like a Woman" which includes Jackson Browne on piano.

- Rumors that Michael Jackson was recording a duet with Bart Simpson are not true, according to *Simpsons* producer James L. Brooks. Jackson was interested in the track, titled "Do the Bart, Man," but he did not have time to work on the single. The track will now be recorded by Bryan Loren.

- Director Michael Moore has signed a \$10 million deal to

Liner Notes

make an investigative film about presidential son Neil Bush and the defunct Silverado S&L. Moore's debut film, *Roger & Me*, documented his attempts to interview Roger Smith, the elusive head of GM.

- Poison drummer Rikki Rockett recently branched into the fashion industry with the debut of his "Rock and Roll Slut Wear" clothing line. The clothes are described as "tribal and primitive, with a strong dose of cut-and-paste." Sounds to me like Rockett has finally found something he is worse at than drumming.

- Elektra Records celebrates its 40th anniversary with a double album of current label stars covering past Elektra classics. Cuts from the compilation include a rendition of the Doors' "Hello, I Love You," performed by the Cure, and a Faster Pussycat remake of Carly Simon's "You're So Vain."

- Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses*, probably won't inspire any death warrants with his newest book. The new book, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, is a children's fairy tale. *Haroun and the Sea* will be available in the United States next year.

- Just when I thought bootleg Bart Simpson merchandise was reaching nightmarish levels, I read about the multiple New Kids comic books that recently hit the newstands. It doesn't get much worse than that.

- Director Spike Lee hasn't received a warm welcome since beginning work on his next film, *Jungle Fever*, in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn. Additional police were posted after the windows of a florist shop used in the film were smashed and the shop-owner received several threats.

- Don Henley, Eric Clapton, Billy Gibbons and U2's Adam Clayton have contributed to the forthcoming Taj Mahal release, which is being recorded in Philadelphia and Los Angeles.

- Former Creedence Clearwater Revival guitarist Tom Fogerty, 48, died Sept. 6, of a respiratory failure caused by tuberculosis.

Todd and Robb turn 20
You ain't seen nothin' yet