

= From Elvis in Memphis =

From Elvis in Memphis is the fifteenth studio album by American rock and roll singer Elvis Presley , released on RCA Records . It was recorded at American Sound Studio in Memphis in January and February 1969 under the direction of producer Chips Moman and backed by its house band , informally known as " The Memphis Boys " . Following the success of Presley 's 1968 Christmas television special and its soundtrack , the album marked Presley 's return to non @-@ soundtrack albums after the completion of his film contract with Paramount Pictures .

Presley 's entourage convinced him to leave the RCA studios and record this album at American Sound , a new Memphis studio at the peak of a hit @-@ producing streak . The reason for going to Moman 's studio was for the soul sound of the house band , ' the Memphis Boys ' . The predominance of country songs among those recorded in these sessions gives them the feel of the " country soul " style . This impression is emphasized by the frequent use of the dobro in the arrangements . In any case , the Memphis Boys have a solidly southern soul sound .

From Elvis in Memphis was released in June 1969 to favorable reviews . The album peaked at number 13 on the Billboard 200 , number two on the country charts and number one in the United Kingdom , and its single " In the Ghetto " reached number three on the Billboard Hot 100 . The album was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America in 1970 . In later years , it garnered further favorable reviews , while it was ranked number 190 on Rolling Stone magazine 's 2003 list of the 500 greatest albums of all time .

= = Background = =

After Presley 's 1960 return from military service , his manager , Colonel Tom Parker , shifted the focus of the singer 's career from live music and albums to films and soundtracks . In March 1961 , he performed what would become his last live concert for the next eight years : a benefit for the construction of the USS Arizona Memorial at Boch Arena in Pearl Harbor , Hawaii . During the first half of the 1960s , three of Presley 's soundtrack albums reached number one on the pop charts and a number of his most popular songs were from his films , including 1961 's " Can 't Help Falling in Love " and 1962 's " Return to Sender " .

After 1964 , Parker decided that Presley should only record soundtrack albums . He viewed the films and soundtracks as complementary , with each helping to promote the other . As it turned out , the commercial success of Presley 's films and soundtracks steadily diminished ( Paradise , Hawaiian Style ; Easy Come , Easy Go ; Speedway ) , while he was increasingly disappointed with the quality of his work . From 1964 to 1968 , Presley had just one top @-@ ten hit : " Crying in the Chapel " ( 1965 ) , a gospel number recorded in 1960 . Only one LP of new material by Presley was issued : the gospel album How Great Thou Art ( 1967 ) , which won him his first Grammy Award in the Best Sacred Performance category .

In 1968 , Colonel Parker arranged a deal with NBC for a Christmas television special starring Presley in front of a live audience . Parker originally planned to have Presley sing Christmas carols only , but producer Steve Binder convinced the singer to perform songs from his original repertoire . The high ratings received by the special and the success of its attendant LP re @-@ established Presley 's popularity . During the making of the special , Presley said to Binder : " I 'll never sing another song that I don 't believe in , I 'm never going to make another movie that I don 't believe in . " As part of his decision to refocus on music rather than film , Presley decided to record a new album .

= = Recording = =

Presley left his usual musicians and studios ( Radio Recorders in Hollywood , California and RCA Studio B in Nashville , Tennessee ) , recording new material in Memphis . After the special he approached Scotty Moore and D. J. Fontana , who had played with Presley during his early hit @-@ making career , and who rejoined him on the television show . Presley asked Moore about using

Music City Recorders in Nashville , but that suggestion never came to fruition .

During a January 1969 meeting at Graceland , Presley told his usual producer , Felton Jarvis , that he did not want to record his next album at RCA Studios . Two of Presley 's friends , DJ George Klein and Marty Lacker , suggested that he use American Sound Studio , an up @-@ and @-@ coming studio with which Lacker was involved . RCA contacted the studio 's producer Chips Moman . Willing to work with Presley , Moman postponed a session with Neil Diamond after being asked to produce the sessions with Felton Jarvis as second producer . It was agreed that Presley 's recordings would take ten days and cost \$ 25 @,@ 000 . He would be backed by the studio 's house band , the 827 Thomas Street Band ( informally known as " The Memphis Boys " ) , which consisted of Reggie Young on guitar , Tommy Cogbill and Mike Leech on bass , Gene Chrisman on drums , Bobby Wood on piano , and Bobby Emmons on organ .

Although RCA Records oversaw their company policy to record only in their own studios , the label sent their personnel out to American Sound . Recording began on January 13 , 1969 , when Presley arrived at the studio nursing a cold . In addition to his personal entourage , he was accompanied by Hill & Range publisher Freddy Bienstock , Colonel Parker 's assistant Tom Diskin , producer Felton Jarvis , executive Harry Jenkins and engineer Al Pachucki , representing RCA Records . With Pachucki on the board , American Sound engineer Ed Kollis joined the musicians on harmonica . The session , which produced recordings of " Long Black Limousine " , " Wearin ' That Loved On Look " and several non @-@ album songs , continued until 5 : 00 am . After the first day 's recording , Moman and his colleagues expressed discomfort with the size of Presley 's entourage , and the singer was accompanied by fewer people for the remaining sessions .

The next day Presley recorded " I 'm Moving On " and " Gentle on My Mind " , leaving the studio while working on the latter to rest his throat . The following night , he did not appear , as his cold worsened , and on January 15 and 16 the house band recorded backing tracks for subsequent sessions . Presley returned on January 20 , recording " In the Ghetto " in 23 takes and finishing the vocal track for " Gentle on My Mind " . On January 22 , he recorded Eddy Arnold 's " I 'll Hold You in My Heart ( Till I Can Hold You in My Arms ) " and the non @-@ album single " Suspicious Minds " . Presley then took a break from recording for a vacation trip to Aspen , Colorado to celebrate his daughter Lisa Marie 's first birthday .

During Presley 's absence , Moman was approached by Bienstock , who was concerned about possible future disputes concerning the songs ' publication . Moman and Presley decided not to record Hill & Range compositions , instead using songs by American Sound writers . Bienstock , particularly interested in the non @-@ album " Suspicious Minds " and " Mama Liked the Roses " , warned that Moman would have to surrender the publishing rights to release the songs . In response , Moman told Bienstock to take all the recordings and leave the studio . RCA vice @-@ president Harry Jenkins interceded , siding with Moman and ordering Bienstock to stay away from the studio and let Presley work with the staff . Meanwhile , Diskin informed Presley about the publishing issues . Presley supported Moman , assuring Diskin that he and the producer would handle the session work . Diskin contacted Parker , who told him to return to California . Moman retained the publishing rights , and the sessions were scheduled to resume several weeks later .

Presley returned on February 17 , recording " True Love Travels on a Gravel Road " and " Power of My Love " , and Eddy Arnold 's " After Loving You " and " Do You Know Who I Am ? " the following day . On February 19 , he devoted most of the session to the non @-@ album single " Kentucky Rain " , one of the few Hill & Range songs used on the American Sound recordings . Presley followed with a recording of " Only the Strong Survive " , a hit for Jerry Butler the previous year , which took twenty @-@ nine takes . On February 20 , he recorded Johnny Tillotson 's " It Keeps Right on a Hurtin ' " in three takes and " Any Day Now " in six . Presley 's final session was on February 22 , when he recorded vocal overdubs for " True Love Travels on a Gravel Road " and " Power of My Love " and vocals for several non @-@ album cuts . The following month , Mike Leech and Green Spreen began work on the string and horn overdubs to finish the album ; several brass overdubs were recorded by The Memphis Horns .

Moman moved away from the usual Presley pop recordings aimed at an established audience . A developer of the Stax Records sound , he incorporated a Memphis sound integrating soul , country , gospel and rural and electric blues . Many arrangements lean heavily on the rhythm section , with lesser contributions from strings , brass and woodwinds . Arrangers Green Spreen and Mike Leech changed Presley 's image on the tracks with the addition of violas , cellos and French horns . The arrangers intended to blend the tracks for a distinctive sound ; the strings are used in counterpoint , rising when the track fades and vice versa . The violas play the same lines as the French horns , with cello used for darker tones . Syncopation was incorporated by bowing .

The twelve tracks on the album were selected from thirty @-@ one which were recorded in the American Sound sessions . The first song , " Wearin ' That Loved On Look " features an electric @-@ bass lead for the first time in a Presley recording . The second is " Only the Strong Survive " , with Presley backed by bass and drums . He plays piano on the third track , the country song " I Hold You in My Heart ( ' Till I Can Hold You in My Arms ) " . Presley 's voice is roughened by a cold on the fourth song , the country @-@ rhythm @-@ and @-@ blues " Long Black Limousine " featuring a trumpet solo . The fifth song , Johnny Tillotson 's traditional country @-@ western " It Keeps Right on A @-@ Hurtin ' " , was arranged to sound more like Memphis soul . Side one ends with a version of Hank Snow 's country @-@ western " I 'm Moving On " with a strong bass line and driving rhythm .

Side two begins with Florence Kaye and Bernie Baum 's " Power of My Love " . The song has a blues @-@ based sound , with Presley backed by a brass section , drums and electric guitar and organ . The lyrics include double entendres ( " Crush it , kick it / You can never win / I know baby you can 't lick it / I 'll make you give in ) " , with groans by backing female singers emphasizing sexuality . The second track , a cover of John Hartford 's " Gentle on My Mind " follows . The string @-@ laden arrangement was inspired by Glen Campbell 's 1967 Grammy @-@ winning version of the song . The next song , Eddy Arnold 's 1962 hit " After Loving You " , is arranged in a 12 / 8 tempo rhythm @-@ and @-@ blues style . This is followed by Dallas Frazier 's " True Love Travels on a Gravel Road " and Chuck Jackson 's 1962 hit , " Any Day Now " .

The twelfth and final song of the album , selected as a single , is Mac Davis ' " In The Ghetto " . The song was chosen by Billy Strange , who had previously picked material for other Presley sessions . The protest song denounces the consequences of poverty , with compassion for inner @-@ city youth . Because of " In the Ghetto " ' s lyrics , controversial for its time , Presley originally did not plan to record the song because he thought it might alienate fans . After Moman said he might give the song to Rosey Grier , Presley 's friends Joe Esposito and George Klein ( initially opposed to " In the Ghetto " ) , convinced the singer to record it .

The album cover is a still from the " Trouble " - " Guitar Man " production number of NBC 's Elvis special . Presley is featured with a red electric guitar , wearing a black leather suit with a red scarf around his neck , with silhouettes of guitar players at the back of the set . From Elvis in Memphis became one of American Sound Studio 's best @-@ known productions , with Dusty Springfield 's Dusty in Memphis ; both albums reflected similar times and musical trends on the Memphis scene .

= = Release and reception = =

The single " In the Ghetto " was released on April 15 , with 300 @, @ 000 copies shipped by RCA . In its second week after release it entered the charts , where it remained for thirteen weeks ( reaching number three on June 14 ) . The single sold a million copies in the United States . Meanwhile , it reached number two on the British Singles chart . However , its success triggered a confrontation between RCA and American Sound . During the sessions , Presley 's usual producer , Jarvis , grew increasingly worried about losing control of Presley and his recordings . During its first two weeks on the chart , " In the Ghetto " ' s production was credited to Jarvis . Lacker then called Billboard and had them correct the producer credit to Moman . During the fourth week , Parker asked Billboard to remove the production credit from the song 's entry entirely ( arguing that Presley 's records did not traditionally list a producer credit ) .

From Elvis in Memphis was released in June 1969 . The album topped the UK Albums Chart , disposing for one week Jethro Tull 's Stand Up . In the United States , it reached number thirteen on Billboard 's Top LP 's , and was ranked number seventeen on the magazine 's Top Country albums of 1969 . By January 28 , 1970 , the album was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America after selling over 500 @,@ 000 copies .

On August 23 , 1969 Presley was featured on the cover of Rolling Stone , with the album receiving the lead review . Peter Guralnick , the magazine 's reviewer , described it as " great ... Flatly and unequivocally the equal of anything ( Presley ) has ever done " and praised the " evident passion which ( Presley ) has invested in this music " , adding : " ( he ) is trying , and trying very hard , to please us. he needs to have our attention ... It is his involvement after all which comes as the surprise . " Billboard also published a positive review , saying that Presley had " never sounded better , and the choice of material is perfect " . High Fidelity wrote , " Elvis has been through a number of stages , and his latest is the best " .

From Elvis in Memphis has continued to receive praise in retrospective reviews . In 2009 Rolling Stone described it as " extraordinary " and attributed the sessions ' success to Presley 's " newfound maturity and soulfulness " and Moman 's " warm , distinctly Southern musical backing " . AllMusic gives it five stars out of five , and highlights it as an " AllMusic album pick " . Critic Bruce Eder said that together with 1956 's Elvis Presley , From Elvis in Memphis was Presley 's " greatest album " . Eder called it " one of the greatest white soul albums ( and one of the greatest soul albums ) ever cut " , with Presley " rejuvenated artistically ( while ) he 's supported by the best playing and backup singing of his entire recording history " .

PopMatters has described From Elvis in Memphis as " some of the best music Elvis Presley ever made " . Sputnik Music 's reviewer considered that the album " rivaled " Presley 's early recordings in " terms of historical importance and innovation " , and was " downright essential , for any Elvis fan and for any music fan " .

= = Legacy = =

Following the American Sound sessions , Presley returned to Hollywood . Between March ? April 1969 , he recorded the soundtrack and starred in his thirty @-@ first and last motion picture as an actor , Change of Habit .

When the album was due for release , Parker arranged Presley 's return to live performing . He made a deal with Kirk Kerkorian , owner of the Las Vegas International Hotel for Presley to play the newly built , 2 @,@ 000 @-@ seat showroom for four weeks ( two shows per night , with Mondays off ) for \$ 400 @,@ 000 . For his appearance , he assembled a band later known as the TCB Band : James Burton ( guitar ) , John Wilkinson ( rhythm guitar ) , Jerry Scheff ( bass @-@ guitar ) , Ronnie Tutt ( drums ) , Larry Muhoberac ( piano ) and Charlie Hodge ( rhythm guitar , background vocals ) . The band was complimented by the backing vocals of The Sweet inspirations and The Imperials . His initial Las Vegas show attracted an audience of 101 @,@ 500 , setting a new Vegas performance record . By 1970 , Presley began to tour the United States for the first time in thirteen years .

= = = Reissues = = =

In 2000 RCA released a remastered compact disc of From Elvis in Memphis , including six bonus tracks ( released as A- or B @-@ sides ) recorded during the album sessions . The reissue received five stars out of five from Rolling Stone . " Don 't Cry Daddy " and " Kentucky Rain " were minor hits in 1970 , but " Suspicious Minds " became one of Presley 's signature songs and was the final chart @-@ topper of his career . In 2003 , the album was number 190 on Rolling Stone 's list of the 500 greatest albums of all time . In 2009 , Sony Music Entertainment issued a Legacy RCA Edition of the album for its 40th anniversary : two discs ( From Elvis In Memphis and the studio disk of From Memphis To Vegas / From Vegas To Memphis ) , four outtakes and ten tracks originally released as monaural singles ( including " Suspicious Minds " and " Kentucky Rain " ) .

= = Personnel = =

= = Track listings = =

= = = Original release = = =

= = = 1998 CD reissue = = =

= = = 2009 CD reissue = = =

= = Chart performance = =

= = = Album = = =

= = = Certifications / sales = = =

= = Release history = =