



THE COSTUMES

The Rock'n'Roll Rebel

Elvis Presley defined the image of the Rock'n'Roll rebel in the '50s and '60s, first with pink and black suits, then with leather jackets, black pants, a pompadour hairstyle and a casual manner. This iconic image, which embodies all the excitement, turbulence and the ideal of freedom of the era, is still on the cutting edge 50 years later.

Flirting with the look of the Elvis years

The Viva ELVIS costumes are inspired by Presley's life, his entourage, his concerts and his films. The fabulous imagination of '50s and '60s America, which was expressed through the cinema, advertising and magazines of the time, was a source of inspiration for costume designer Stefano Canulli. But his work is neither a reproduction of stereotypes and details of the period, nor is it a retro aesthetic.

"I flirted with the look of the Elvis years through an approach that is both classic and graphic," says Stefano. "I brought to it a contemporary touch that reflects the vitality of the era. I've borrowed from 1950s design and sublimated it to create a world of eclectic Technicolor lines to come up with a dynamic fantasy that highlights the body."

Costume Closeups

- Offset printing was used to create the anatomical patterns on the comic book superhero-inspired costumes in the Got a Lot of Living To Do number.
- The Western scene, features printed solid colors on a sponge mesh fabric that is rarely used for clothing, but extremely useful for its properties of rigidity and flexibility. The cuts are emphasized with contrasting colors, while the cowgirls' costumes feature fake fur tutus in a cowhide pattern.
- Synthetic paper material was used to create the romantic 'letter dresses' of the late '50s.
- The striped prison uniforms in the Jailhouse Rock scene were given a futuristic look with silver piping.

Production Details

- For the first time at Cirque du Soleil, some of the costume accessories use flocking – coating a surface with fibers to give it the appearance of velvet.
- For the final scene of the show, almost all the artists are wearing a variation of the famous Elvis jumpsuit. There are approximately 50 of them, using a total of 250 yards of fabric in a fiery kaleidoscope of colors. Each is decorated with embroidered images that evoke the world of Elvis – objects, food, animals, personal effects and so on.
- Urethane foam wigs recreate the Elvis hairstyle in a Japanese *manga* comic strip interpretation.
- The showgirls' costumes are decorated with colorful feathers printed on transparent acetate to create the illusion of a plume of crystal feathers.
- The costumes are ornamented with some 100,000 crystals.
- The show calls for more than 450 pairs of shoes and 150 custom wigs.
- There is a total of nearly 400 Viva ELVIS costumes, employing some 1,500 components such as shoes, wigs and dresses.