

FILM REVIEW

## Reinventing Elvis: The '68 Comeback review — revisiting the King's thrilling return

This earnest documentary features previously banished footage of the singer

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Film



Director Steve Binder with Elvis Presley during his 1968 Comeback Special

★★★★☆

The tantalising history of the Elvis TV “comeback” special of 1968 is told and then retold from every conceivable angle in this earnest and all-encompassing documentary. Academics weigh in, session musicians replay the hits and a portrait is built of “The King” grappling with a world at that point enamoured of the Beatles, *Bonnie and Clyde* and hipster cynicism. His gee-shucks homeliness, in fact, is so anachronistic that it made what occurred in late June of that year all the more astounding.

Thankfully, the director John Scheinfeld consistently cuts to Elvis in action and fillets the high points — *If I Can Dream* and *Jailhouse Rock* are incendiary — from the finished show. The outtakes are revealing too, none more so than previously banished footage of the backing dancer Susan Henning canoodling openly with Elvis in scenes that are disarmingly intimate. Henning, interviewed by Scheinfeld, wryly reflects: “I think it was apparent to everybody that we very much enjoyed what we were doing.”

**12A, 110min**

**In cinemas on July 30 (on Paramount+ from August 15)**