

LAS VEGAS SHOWCASE



It's Chanukah, Hanukah, Hanuka, Hanukkah greetings from this corner and such amenities taken care of let's resume the serious biz of columning. . . San Fran's new convention center is underground. The \$126,000,000 competition to L.V. called the GEORGE R. MOSCONE Center was opened last week and everyone went below decks to pop the champagne. One of the toppers described the facility, 37 feet below the street and 11 feet below water level as "a big bathtub -- only a seven-foot-thick concrete floor keeps us from floating to the surface".... With New Year's Eve also a-poppin', speaking of champagne, the Riviera opens its new Superstar cum Convention Center presenting the DUKE ELLINGTON Orch fronted by MERCER ELLINGTON as SHIRLEY MacLAINE & DAVID BRENNER whoop it up in the Versailles Theatre. MANHATTAN TRANSFER will captivate Jan. 1 - 2 in the SS Theatre with admissions handled by Ticketron. "Miss Far East" pageant comes to the Imperial Palace in May staged by Dreamcloud Productions headed by BUD CARROLL & SONNY SABETTA. Both men huddled with IP's JERRY SCHAFFER this week to set the program for taping in the Imperial Theatre Royal Halls and the new Antique Car Museum JUFF KUTASH brings his "Hollywood Goes Broadway" multi-media variety musical, integrating lasers, pyrotechnics and special effects along with juggler MICHAEL MARLIN and comedian RICH MICHEL, in the Tropicana's Fountain Theatre through New Year's Eve. In the Sahara Casbar, MIKI ADAMS & THE LAST BAND alternates with "Saddle Tramps" . . . JOSEPH BERNARD presents his Festival of Las Vegas Actors Monday (21) 8 p.m. in Union Plaza main showroom, admission free. Perf consists of comedy sketches followed by L.V. Preem of THORNTON WILDER's one act play "Pullman Car Hiawatha". SAM BOYD will be honored Jan. 28 as Citizen of the Year by National Con-

ference of Christians and Jews spearheaded by ORAN GRAGSON & CHARLES RUTHE. Speaking of SAM and His Town on the Boulder Highway, it now houses a new western dance hall and CHIC HECHT's marvelous Western Emporium. Also on the grounds on land donated by SAM & BILI BOYD, is KNPR which tossed a party Wednesday celebrating BEETHOVEN's birthday. New KNPR producers are CHRIS CURRIN & SHERRIE BRANDENSTEIN.



FRANK SINATRA's imminent return to Caesar's Palace Jan. 7 - 13 will boost the traffic already destined to be heavy on his opening weekend from the 50,000 or more expected to attend the Winter Consumer Electronics Show at Convention Center and the Hilton. SINATRA's succinct comment on the recent flow of drinks at Caesars after boss CLIFFORD PERLMAN's cutoff was "I'll drink to that." And his new Reprise album is receiving critical bon bons here particularly the last cut, side 2, "The Gal That Got Away/It Never Entered My Mind" arranged by Nelson Riddle and conduct-Mind" arranged by NELSON RIDDLE and conducted by pianist VINCE FALCONE, who plays tasty keyboard filigree on the medley. He's not saying where he got it, but MORRIS SHENKER disclosed he received a "firm commitment" for \$55,000,000 to consolidate existing debts at the Dunes. He's still hoping for more loan money to build another 600-room tower. Shenker's interest in the failed Silverbird auction was deep because of the late MAJOR RIDDLE whose estate holds 12% of the Dunes and some loan agreements are outstanding vis-a-vis the two men....Inside tract to resurrect the Silverbird is held by MICHAEL GAUGHAN of the Barbary Coast, with ED & FRED DOUMANI of the landlord group, Tiger Investment possible dark horses at this running.



"Latin Fire Follies" extended through Dec. 26 at the Hacienda. BUDDY HACKETT had one show a night at the Riviera with newcomer ARTURO tonight through Wednesday, then the lights go out until Xmas in the showroom...

ABBE LANE, who closed out her gig with WAYLAND FLOWERS at the Sahara, moves over to the Riv next year with two dates set. Meanwhile BOB ANDERSON moves in the LANE slot through the 23rd....TONY BENNETT is off to Japan to warble concerts for a week in Tokyo, Osaka & Yokohama where he's as big as baseball. . .VASSILI SULICH's spanking new full length "The Nutcracker" opens Friday for the weekend and through the 23rd in UNLV Bayley Theatre. San Fran Theatre Ballet's "Nutcracker" cancelled its final Monday perf in Aladdin Theatre for Performing Arts. Slow biz.



BILL AMRON, who Scrooges balefully in the tuner version of "A Christmas Carol" at Meadows Playhouse is researching for a book on the 25 years of the Stardust's "Lido." He's also set for directing NEIL SIMON's "California Suite" up next at the Playhouse in January. . .MAYNARD SLOATE signed JERRY CLARK to star in the Union Plaza's upcoming tuner "I Love My Wife." Also cast, Patti Appel, Ton Moriarty and Robin Blythe. New "Blitz," replacing disco with mimi, magic, dance theatre and song, will be revealed by SA ANGELICA and JOE DANOVA and their Celebrations Unlimited with preem of "Blitz - New Year's Eve" at Meadows Playhouse, a one-nighter... SAM SHEPARD's "Buried Child" wrapped in UNLV's Bayley Theatre an artistic winner. Play won the Pulitzer in 1979. . .LORIN MAAZEL made his first Nevada appearance Tuesday in UNLV's Ham Hall directing Orchestre National de France in Berlioz and Prokofiev. GREG THOMPSON's "Fabulous Follies" with luscious JULIE MILLER resumes at the Dunes December 27.



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**WAYLAND HAS
BIG OPENING ACTS**

The holiday season is in full swing at Del Webb's Sahara Hotel and spirits in the Congo Showroom are really high over the hilarious comedy of puppeteer Wayland Flowers and his lovable but outrageous Madame. Appearing with Wayland is lovely singing star Abbe Lane for two shows nightly this weekend -- 8 p.m. dinner shows and 12 midnight cocktail shows Friday and Saturday.

Wayland's talents best described by the critics as "pure magic," makes his characters so real that the puppets themselves have earned marquee billing during his engagements.