

# LAS VEGAS

# SHOWCASE

## Bill Willard's VEGASTARS

Every year about this time I cover the Winter Consumer Electronics Show for the trade paper Variety. Having been what is known as an audiophile for some years, one who actively seeks the best of high fidelity sound, the show is usually an ear-opener somewhere among the many exhibitors. My searches aren't for the latest toys normally exhibited in what is known as "The Zoo," the Convention Center Rotunda and exhibition halls, or the Las Vegas Hilton convention area, but in the rooms of the Riviera. This is where the high end audio products are shown and demonstrated. But there is now the combination of better sounds in video, which call for some inspection trips to those booths or rooms. Now that the compact disc system is firmly established in audio and may spell the doom of analogue vinyl records in quantity for record

store sales as time goes by, I no longer seek out these CD manufacturers or pay much attention to what is going on in that audio division. My first listen was three years ago at the Consumer Electronics Show here (there is the summer show in Chicago which I have not attended), where I listened and was amazed to a degree at what the tiny discs with laser beam pickup could sound like. My interviews were with many bitter anti-digital record forms, upper end perfectionists, Sheffield, Reference Recordings, Dave Wilson, to name three stalwarts, who denounced the new medium. Last year Sheffield and RR jumped on the new turntable for a spin which would put their product on the market. Then I bought a Mission compact disc player, critically acclaimed to be one of the top four brands, from R. P. MILLER AUDIO. That name should be familiar to all KNPR listeners. He set up the compact disc player and loans discs to the station from his well-stocked store in Commercial Center. So far, the Mission has provided good sound, even moments of excellent sound from the four inch discs, but there are times when I return to my collection of vinyls in the old analogue, 33&1/3 or 45 rpm formats for solace despite the snaps, crackles and pops which are eliminated from the compact discs. So, I wonder as I wander through the CEShow through Sunday, listening, interviewing, hoping for the best.

tion at the Riviera contains one dance number choreographed by KUTASH which will be seen in the movie "Knights of the City," to be distributed by New World Pictures...Another Flash! TONY BENNETT sings at the Riviera two days this week - not the Vegas Riviera, but the Riviera Convention Center in Palm Springs. After his guesstar role there with the Palm Springs Symphony, BENNETT bounces to Syracuse for the tribute to songwriter JIMMY VAN HEUSEN at Cruse-Hinds Concert Hall...Those irrepressible WALKERS are back in ROCKY SENNES "Roaring '20s Revue" at Holiday Inn Casino Center Strip...Sax maniac JAY ORLANDO is carrying jazz sounds in the Desert Inn's Raffles lounge with pianist JOE DARRO and drummer JOE LOCATELLO. In the main showroom NEIL SEDAKA & FRED TRAVALENA are heading for a three-weeker opening on the 16th...The Art for Nuclear Disarmament "Disarming Images" is a must-see in UNLV's Natural History Museum through Feb. 2.

★★★★★

Reverting once again to the CEShow doings, LIBERACE's Tivoli Gardens will be teeming with electronicians with PROTON celebrating its 5th anni in the Crystal Ballroom where the company partied last year. Also Denmark's BANG & OLUFSON is hosting a Crystal Ballroom cocktailer for 100 guests...SANDY ZIMMERMAN ropes in special guests every Saturday aft in the Continental Hotel lounge. Her live "Las Vegas Today" talkshow airs over KREL with prizes and other come-ons. Her astute engineer is GENE HARVEY, who plied classical discs over radio KLAS some years ago...Chocolate lovers will be streaming to the Sahara Space Center March 7-9. "Fantasies in Chocolate" will benefit DISCOVERY: The Children's Museum.

★★★★★

BURT REYNOLDS may be filmed here in some scenes from his new film, "Heat," shooting next month. Whether BURT's lady friend LONI ANDERSON will spend time here with him is a question mark. They were billing and cooing over Xmas at his Jupiter, Florida, manse...Flash! "Splash" has been named "1986 Show of the Year," according to a handout from the show's publicists in Ellay. The JEFF KUTASH produc-

### Pointer Sisters Topline At Caesars Palace With Ventriloquist Ronn Lucas



LAS VEGAS, NEV. — The Pointer Sisters are at center stage in the Circus Maximus Showroom with ventriloquist Ronn Lucas through January 13.

Ruth, Anita and June Pointer have been touring almost non-stop for more than a year, bringing audiences the beat-heavy music and sassy lyrics that have proven them winners in showroom excitement. They earned two Grammy Awards within the past year and continue to stoke audiences with favorites like "Dare Me,"

"Jump (For My Love)," "Neutron Dance" and "I'm So Excited."

They have been evolving in their career since it began, climaxed by the popularity of the single "Dare Me" from their new "Contact" album. They started with the rich, rolling rhythms of gospel songs in their youth, went to the '40s sound that set the country on its ear and first made them famous, graduating to the famous beat-heavy pop-rock of their current hits.

Ronn Lucas, who was recently voted the 1985 Ventriloquist of the Year by the American Society of Ventriloquists, was named the previous year's Gold Cabaret Entertainer of the Year.

After three years as a featured performer in the Broadway smash, "Sugar Babies" starring Mickey Rooney and Ann Miller, Lucas and his lineup of unlikely characters continues to appear as opening act for such performers as Joan Rivers and Linda Ronstadt. He most recently headlined at the Tropicana Hotel in the "Follies Bergere."

Lucas, who has been practicing the art of ventriloquism since he was seven years old, knew he had found his life's work when he would call himself out of the class and school - and was given permission to go. He also used to make his mother's tea kettle sing "Home on the Range."

Buffalo Billy, a sassy Texan, is Lucas' most popular character, but his signature piece is his "sock routine," in which he actually removes a sock from his foot and builds a puppet on his hand.

The Pointer Sisters and Ronn Lucas are appearing in the Circus Maximus Showroom at Caesars Palace through January 13. For reservations call 702/733-7333 or 1/800-454-4544 (outside Nevada, within the U.S.)

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