

Johnny Mathis Stars At Bally's



LAS VEGAS, NEVADA — Chances are you have heard one of Johnny Mathis' ballads throughout the years, seeing as he is one of the top record sellers in the entire record industry, topped only by Ol' Blue Eyes himself, Frank Sinatra.

Johnny Mathis is crooning his sultry tunes at Bally's Las Vegas Celebrity Room from January 21 to January 27, with comedian Jeannine Burnier opening the bill.

During Burnier's performance she sums up Mathis very nicely. "Johnny, of course, is one of the great romantic singers of all time, that's why you're here." (Pause) "And that's why a lot of your children are here."

Mathis' reputation is well deserved, with ballads such as: "Chances Are," "Wonderful, Wonderful," "Misty," "There's A Place for Us" and "A New Day has Begun."

This romantic may well have been one of America's greatest athletes, had he not turned his talents to music. Mathis was an outstanding high school athlete which led to an athletic scholarship to San Francisco State College. While in college, Mathis set records in track and field events and by the end of his freshman year, he was hailed by sports enthusiasts as a future Olympic star.

He ran the high hurdles in under fourteen seconds and high jumped six feet five and one-half inches, "I was a pretty good high jumper and hurdler," Mathis recalls.

In 1956, he was invited to participate in the Olympic tryouts in Berkeley, CA. The same week, a Columbia Records executive heard Mathis sing at the "440 Club" in San Francisco and sent the now famous telegram to Columbia's New York office: "Have found phenomenal 19-year old boy who could go all the way! Send contracts."

Mathis signed the contract and arrangements were made for his first studio session in New York. It was set for the same week as the Olympic trials. Mathis headed for New York and Columbia Studios, telling his parents he'd return in three days. He was not to return for three years.

In 1972, Mathis finally did attend his first Olympic games. He was invited by the International Olympic Committee to be the featured performer in Munich, the only American to receive such an honor.

Within a year his first single, "Wonderful, Wonderful," was a national hit. A pair of million selling records followed, "It's Not For Me To Say" and "Chances Are." Every album Mathis recorded for Columbia has been a major chart record. He has more than 50 gold and platinum albums and singles for his domestic and inter-

national record sales. Recently, Joel Whitburn, a record historian, charted America's most successful record sellers from 1974 on. Johnny Mathis is second on the list, with Frank Sinatra holding a slim lead. Mathis also holds the all-time unchallenged record of having had one album, "Johnny's Greatest Hits," on Billboard's best selling chart for an astonishing 9½ years! Also, his record sales exceed one-hundred million world-wide.

In addition to his success as a singer, Mathis still retains his early interest in sports. He is an avid golfer, playing practically every day and many of the celebrity tournaments such as the L.A. Open, Bob Hope Desert Classics and The Pebble Beach Classic. He has also had the distinction of hosting his own PGA golf tournament, The Johnny Mathis Seniors Classic, for two years at his home course of Mountain Gate Country Club in Bel Air, CA.

Mathis was selected to be one of the amateurs representing the United States in the First Annual U.S. vs. United Kingdom Pro-Amateur played in Scotland. Johnny was partnered with Tom Wieskof and they won their match together, helping the U.S. team to victory in the tournament.

Keeping fit is important to Mathis, not only to maintain his appearance and health, but also because his singing demands it.

Zionist Thinker And Journalist Dies

LONDON, (JTA) — Josef Fraenkel, a leading Zionist, biographer of Theodor Herzl and an internationally known journalist for much of this century, died here recently at the age of 84.

He was regarded as the foremost authority on Herzl's early life and as a storehouse of Jewish memories. In 1938, as Jewish Telegraphic Agency correspondent in Prague, Fraenkel reported the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia and its immediate effect on the Jewish community there.

He was a member of the Zionist Revisionist movement, but broke with its leader, Zeev Jabotinsky, when the latter seceded from the World Zionist Organization in 1935. Instead, Fraenkel supported the moderate Revisionist Meir Grossman, founder of the Jewish State Party, which remained inside the WZO fold.

Fraenkel was born in Ustrzyki, Poland, in 1903. He grew up in Vienna and fled to Czechoslovakia after the Anschluss in 1938, only to be confronted again by Nazi invaders. After the fall of Prague, he came to England, with the help of JTA's London correspondent, Samuel Goldsmith.

He spent more than 30 years working for the British section of the World Jewish Congress.

Riviera Hotel "Splash" Singer



The Riviera Hotel & Casino's "Splash," produced by Jeff Kutash, features songstress/dancer Karin Denise in the production's spectacular finale, "Lady America." This year's "Show of the Year," presented in the Versailles Theatre at the resort, also features special guest-star illusionist Barclay Shaw, the "fiddlin' family" of "Kentucky Country," Robby Gasser and his Sea Lions, the Mac-Valley Globe of Death and the arco-balancing act of Murillo & Ulises. Showtimes are 8 and 11 p.m., at a price of \$17.50 for the first show and \$14.50 for the second show. Prices include two drinks. Reservations and ticket information can be obtained by calling (702) 734-5301 or tickets can be purchased at any Ticketron outlet.

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