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**Las Vegas & The Movies**

**By Iulia Pascanu**

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Sunny Las Vegas hosted hundreds of movies or movie-scenes. Some of them got the Oscar. Others got lost on the way. But Vegas surely remains a classic attraction for film-makers since the glory of the Rat Pack days.

To be completely fair, the early 60's weren't really the first screen action days in Las Vegas. Frank Sinatra's first movie, Las Vegas Nights was set back in 1941. However, the Rat Pack Days are always a good point to start.

**The Rat Packs**

Five gentlemen in Las Vegas: Sammy Davis Jr, Peter Lawford, Dean Martin, Joey Bishop and Frank Sinatra. Good friends. Loved to party. And of course, they had their own favourite place to hang out, that was Sands Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas (which was demolished in 1996, nowadays the site of the Venitian).

The Rat Pack Days begun in late 50's, somewhat as a reaction to the Cold War early days; the guys came up with the idea of having their own "summit of cool" in Las Vegas; it lasted seven years. As the Sands performing scene wasn't enough for them, the mighty five moved further to movies and recordings.

The seven years brought out seven films: Some Came Running, Ocean's 11, Sergeants 3, 4 For Texas, Robin and the 7 Hoods, Marriage on the Rocks, and Cannonball Run II. Ocean's 11 (1960) is the most famous one, and also benefited from a modern remake (2001), starring George Clooney, Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts. The action in new Ocean's 11 involves robbery scenes at Bellagio. The Rat Pack, released in 1998 for cable TV, includes scenes from The Sands.

**The King**

## Las Vegas The Movies

The good old days gave us the classic Viva Las Vegas (1964), featuring Elvis Presley, who sings his heart out for the beloved "sin city".

Later, in 1970, the King starred a documentary filmed at the International Hotel, nowadays Las Vegas Hilton (Elvis: That's the Way It Is).

The 1979 Elvis, a memorabilia to The King, stars Kurt Russell. The story goes on in 1988 with Elvis and Me, inspired by Priscilla Presley's autobiography. The 1995 BBC documentary The Burger and the King: The Life and Cuisine of Elvis Presley seems to have closed the Elvis & Las Vegas series, up to this moment.

### Casino

This one, released in 1995, is the classic. It approaches "sin city" the way nobody dared before. The story is based on the almost fabulous life of Frank Rosendhale (impersonated by Robert de Niro), the best handicapper of all times, and his beautiful wife Gery (impersonated by Sharon Stone). Las Vegas made them rich and television made them famous.

"Casino" hit the box-offices, but Frank said director Martin Scorsese brought the spotlights on his own chopped vision of Las Vegas; blamed him that he was not really interested to either understand casinos or be faithful to the real story; thus, Frank Rosenthale would have told it differently.

### The Winner

Las Vegas footage has proven a good luck charm for Francis Ford Coppola's famous nephew, Nicholas Cage. He started with Honeymoon in Vegas in 1992, grabbed an Oscar on the road with Leaving Las Vegas and made a come-back with Con Air in 1997; literally, Nick Cage forced his landing on the Hard Rock Hotel guitar...

Just another subjective list 1971 – Diamonds Are Forever, from the James Bond (Sean Connery) series 1974 – The Godfather Part II The Rocky series (parts III and IV) included brief glimpses from Las Vegas 1987 – Heat, 100% Las Vegas made, starring Burt Reynolds 1988 – Rain Man, with Dustin Hoffman, action set mostly inside Caesars Palace 1991 – Bugsy, the story of Bugsy Siegel and the making of the Flamingo. Casts Warren Beatty and Annette Bening 1993 – Indecent Proposal. Some reviews advice to "save the money for slots" 1995 – Heat, this time starring Robert DeNiro and Al Pacino, the only movie the two "monsters" have met 1995 – Showgirls, mostly a movie about... girls, including many scenes at Stardust

Iulia Pascanu writes for

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## **String Quartet vs. Jazz for Your Las Vegas Wedding Music**

**By Renae Judkins**

Las Vegas weddings have been known for their tackiness as long as Las Vegas drive thru weddings have existed, but Las Vegas weddings are quickly becoming more elegant with brides spending more on their Las Vegas nuptials. With this includes their choice of Las Vegas wedding music and Las Vegas wedding musicians.

We spoke with Chandler Judkins, president of Las Vegas Wedding Music, the number one live musician contracting company in Las Vegas and he had a lot to say about a new trend among Las Vegas couples.

"Las Vegas couples aren't choosing string quartets as much as they used to," Judkins said. "Jazz is more of the choice for their Las Vegas wedding music."

The reason for choosing jazz more than strings for Las Vegas weddings is simple according to Judkins. "They want something different. That's usually why they're getting married in Las Vegas in the first place."

Strings are still a popular Las Vegas wedding music choice and oftentimes Las Vegas couple will pair up the two, having strings for the ceremony and jazz for the cocktail hour and reception afterward.

A Las Vegas jazz quartet can be the perfect solution to create elegance, class, dancing and swinging, and all at a reasonable price. Las Vegas Wedding Music's jazz groups start as low as \$500 for a few hours, and no minimum time is required. Las Vegas Wedding Music's musicians often show up to play for a 15 minute wedding ceremony and then go home.

Las Vegas Wedding Music is so flexible with price, timing, groups, song requests list and more because according to Judkins, music is his passion and he wants to share that passion through his company Las Vegas Wedding Music.

"Couples getting married in Las Vegas often don't realize that live musicians can be contracted for as little as a Las Vegas dj can be hired," Judkins said. "Our goal here at Las Vegas Wedding Music is to promote live music. We want our brides to walk down the aisle to the real thing, not a distorted version of 'Canon in D.' "

Judkins is a professional musician himself and oftentimes plays with the Las Vegas jazz groups. Live sound demos of the Las Vegas string quartet and the Las Vegas jazz groups can be found at Las Vegas Wedding Music's site: [LVWeddingMusic \(dot\) com](http://LVWeddingMusic.com).

Las Vegas Wedding Music also offers other Las Vegas wedding music packages for couples getting

## Las Vegas The Movies

married in Las Vegas who want something different for their Las Vegas wedding. Singers, harpists, top 40 bands, mariachi groups, impersonators and more are available.

Las Vegas Wedding Music can work with nearly any budget and their packages start as low as \$250.

Renaee earned her journalism degree from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

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