

THE RANT AND RAVE GAZETTE

A Music Newsletter

Issue 17

Welcome to the seventeenth issue of the Rant. NOTE: the most recent issue comes up first with past issues following. Cheers!

THE HOKEY POKEY

“YOU DO THE HOKEY POKEY AND YOU TURN YOURSELF AROUND



"I'm turnin', I'm turnin'!"

WELCOME TO VEGAS

We met Joey Singer on a Jazz cruise a couple of months ago. We were passengers - part of the audience. Not a particularly familiar role for either Joey or myself. It turned out that Joey was, and continues to be, one of the best known musical directors in Las Vegas. He was MD for Johnny Mathis and Debby Reynolds in the old days and continues to direct for some of the best known stars in the music world.

Best of all, he is a great guy. Like many of the talented musicians I've met over the years, he is humble, engaged and monumentally funny. We ended up playing together and it was a real joy. I hadn't been to Vegas in many, many years. But I have a fond spot for this bizarre and perverse spot in the desert, and I think it hails from my very first visit - a serendipity affair that I will never forget.

During the late 70's and early eighties, I spent a fair bit of time in Los Angeles. I loved that city back then - the music, the energy, the 'can do' attitude, the beach culture, Laurel Canyon, the Lighthouse, the Baked Potato, Donte's - the place was hopping. One year, I did a road trip to the city of angels with my pal Ramon Donati in his mighty fine Volvo station wagon - a vehicle that becomes of importance later on in the tale.

Well, we had a fine old time. In LA, I most often based myself in North Hollywood - the area around Ventura Blvd. and Laurel Canyon. It was in the middle of the action. There was plenty of music happening in the local clubs and I happened to be, on this particular trip, signing a book deal with Howard Roberts. Exciting stuff.

When it was time to leave, we picked up an order of our latest gastromic discoveries - bacon, lettuce, tomato and avocado sandwiches at the local food wagon, (only in LA would they add avocado!) and headed out across the desert. We had decided, you see, to experience the dry southwest on our way back home. The route had the added advantage of being able to see Las Vegas for the very first time.

Well, everything was going fine ... until it wasn't. A few miles south of Las Vegas, the water pump started to act up. We limped into town and pulled up in front of the old Riviera Hotel. We didn't have enough money to replace the pump and we weren't sure what to do.

“Well, what the hell,” Ramon said. “Let's head inside and have a drink while we figure out our next steps.”

This was old Las Vegas, and this was the old Riviera, and by God it was everything we expected. Unlike today, Vegas was a classy affair - gamblers in tuxes, women in gowns, top 'o the line entertainment; it was really somethin'. We sat at the bar, ordered our drinks, and Ray grabbed two Keno cards, passing one to me.

Keno is a little like Bingo. That being said, I'm pretty sure it has the longest odds of any game in Vegas. Regardless, I proceeded to fill in a line of numbers, then promptly returned to my scotch as the numbers were called over the P.A. Suddenly, Ray grabbed my card and disappeared.

A few minutes later, he came back with a big grin on his face and said, “Hold out your hands.” I did as I was told, and he starting peeling off hundred dollar bills - \$1150.00 worth - enough to fix the car, get a room and catch a show, all in one fell swoop. Talk about first time luck! It was the last thing I ever won on a bet.

LITTLE GEMS

ADVICE THAT WAS WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD



“The perception of dissonance decreases in the high registers”

THATS ALL FOR NOW FOLKS! SEE YOU NEXT TIME