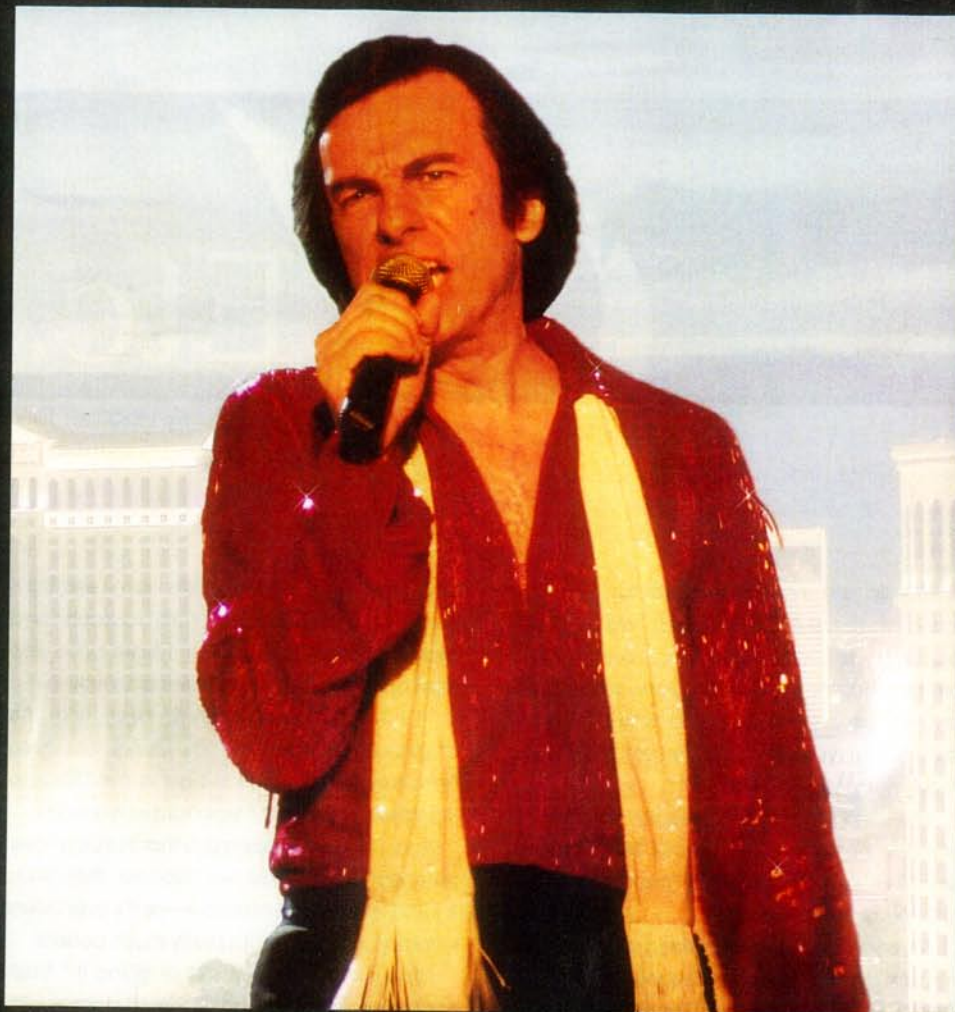


# White's Diamond

## Jay White Shines In His Neil Diamond Tribute Show

By Jen Lawson



**W**hen Jay White began performing as Neil Diamond, he thought he'd last a few months at the most.

How wrong he was.

Now in his 25th year of belting out "Sweet Caroline" and "I Am, I Said," White's career shows no signs of slowing down. In fact, he was recently in Hollywood filming a scene for *Frost/Nixon*, an upcoming Ron Howard movie based on the Broadway play.

"Ron Howard was looking for a Neil Diamond look-alike and sound-alike and he took a look at a tape and liked what he saw," White told *What's On* after his show. "In the movie I'm singing at David Frost's birthday party. The funny thing is, I don't even sing a Neil Diamond song. I sing a Frank Sinatra song, 'Love And Marriage,' but the words were changed to 'Frost and Nixon, Frost and Nixon.'"

White's career began to take shape in the early '80s. He sang with local bands in the Detroit area, and people continually told him that he looked and sounded like Diamond. He developed a Diamond tribute act and got his first gig at a jazz club, performing on weekends while selling life insurance during the day. That arrangement didn't last long.

"I had been performing for six months and I told my wife, 'I don't want to sell life insurance anymore.' I was getting paid more by performing so I quit my day job. I thought if it doesn't work out, I could go back to selling insurance, but I haven't looked back since."

Las Vegas came calling five years later. He landed a spot in "Legends In Concert," a gig he held for nearly a decade, then launched his own show, "America's Diamond Live," at the Riviera's Le Bistro Theatre on Feb. 1, 2002.

White's show is fast-paced and fun. Audience members dance in their seats, and by the end of the show, nearly everyone was standing up, singing along and clapping. He has the audience help him sing a few tunes, including "Song Sung Blue" and "Forever In Blue Jeans," and they enthusiastically oblige.

Footage of Diamond is shown on a screen a few times throughout the show, which demonstrates how strongly White resembles Diamond in appearance and voice. He has his mannerisms and facial expressions so perfected that it's uncanny.

Not only have countless fans been amazed by White's act, Diamond himself and Diamond's mother have given White their endorsements.

"If there's anybody who could disapprove of what I'm doing, it's his mother," White said. "But she put her hands up to her face and said, 'I can't believe it—you look just like my son.'"

Legendary congo drummer King Errisson, who began performing with Diamond 34 years ago, has been in White's show for the past six months. White said that when Errisson saw him for the first time, he said, "Neil would crap his pants if he saw you."

One of the highlights of White's career was meeting Diamond, who signed a photo with the message, "Keep singing so I can relax." White is also included on a DVD that Diamond released a few years ago, and Diamond has stated publicly that White is his favorite tribute artist.

As Diamond's star power continues to sparkle bright, White is hoping to find a stage on Broadway or the Strip for a musical he wrote about the first 25 years of Diamond's career. He's calling it "Solitary Man" after Diamond's first single.

More than 40 years after his first album was released, White said Diamond's music is still so popular because everyone can relate to it.

"He wrote what was in his heart," White said. "Each song tells a little bit of a story about love, love gone bad, or good times, and when people hear the songs they can recall moments in their own lives."

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**SHOW TIME:** 7 p.m., Sun.-Thur. (dark Fri.-Sat.)

**SHOWROOM:** Riviera's Le Bistro Theatre

**SHOW PRICE:** \$49.95

**702-794-9433**