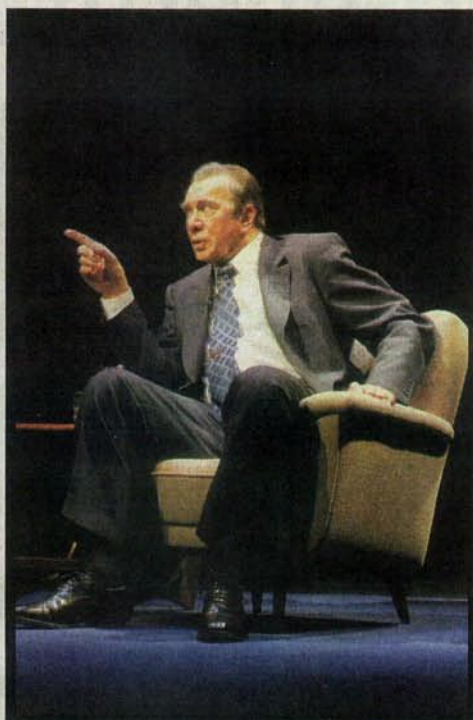
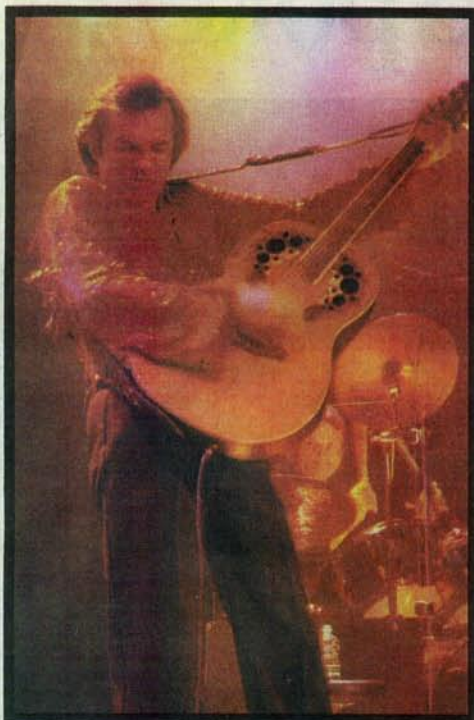


## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT

## Neil Diamond becomes him



JAY WHITE: COURTESY PHOTOS; 'FROST/NIXON': ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTOS

**THE MOVIE:** Michael Sheen, above left, and Frank Langella, top right, act as David Frost and Richard Nixon in the Broadway play "Frost/Nixon." Jay White, in his Neil Diamond act, joins them in a film adaptation directed by Ron Howard.

**THE PERFORMER:** White wants to get a musical he has written about Diamond on Broadway or the Strip. He says the musical is about the first 25 years of Diamond's career. Meanwhile, White will be performing at the Riviera.

## Las Vegas tribute artist wows onstage, so Ron Howard puts him in film, too

By JERRY FINK, Las Vegas Sun

**A**lmost anyone who has seen Jay White perform his Neil Diamond tribute at the Riviera is impressed by his presentation — his vocals, mannerisms and physical appearance are remarkable.

Movie director Ron Howard is no exception.

Howard saw a video of White and was impressed enough to put him in his latest film, "Frost/Nixon," which is based on the Broadway play. The story centers on a series of interviews of President Nixon by David Frost, televised in 1977 — three years after Nixon resigned in disgrace over the Watergate break-in.

Frank Langella, who won a Tony Award for best actor, plays Nixon. Michael Sheen plays Frost.

White plays Diamond, a small but pivotal role.

White is in the film for only a few minutes, assuming his bit doesn't end up on the cutting room floor between now and the film's debut, probably late next year.

"I'm sure there's that danger with any scene shot in Hollywood," said White, who spent a couple of days in Los Angeles in September to shoot his part. "But apparently the scene I'm in segues to the next scene and it's pretty important."

The scene is in a restaurant where a birthday party is being thrown for Frost.

Diamond performed at the real party. Hollywood being Hollywood, the song that White sings isn't the same one — it's a takeoff on the Frank Sinatra song "Love and Marriage."

The lyrics have been changed to "Frost and Nixon, Frost and Nixon ..."

Although White was only in one scene and sang one song, at a wrap party in October at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, Calif., the cast and crew urged him to perform for them.

He sang "Sweet Caroline," which Diamond recently revealed was about Caroline Kennedy, daughter of President Kennedy.

The film-acting bug didn't bite White while he was in Hollywood.

"It was a lark," he says. "I've never been that interested in being a movie actor."

He's more interested in getting a musical he has written about Diamond on Broadway or the Strip.

"I've got the investors lined up," White says. "We're looking for a stage."

He says the musical is about the first 25 years of Diamond's career. While it is a story, it has the feel of a concert.

White, who has been performing Diamond for more than 25 years, hopes the success on Broadway of "Jersey Boys" will help him get his own production off the ground. The musical about the Four Seasons opens in Vegas at the Palazzo in April.

Meanwhile, White will continue performing at the Riviera. He was off for a couple of weeks while the National Finals Rodeo was in town and will resume Wednesday. Las Vegas King Errisson, Diamond's percussionist for 33 years, is performing with White to keep up his chops before embarking on a tour with Diamond next year.

White, a lifelong hockey player and fan, may be more excited about his close relationship with the Las Vegas Wranglers than with his close encounter with Hollywood.

"I've practiced with them a dozen times this year," White said. "A few weeks ago they needed a backup goalie to be on the bench and they got me a jersey with my name on the back. I did some warm-up shots before the game. It was nice."

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## IF YOU GO

**Who:** "A Neil Diamond Tribute" starring Jay White

**When:** Opens Wednesday, 7 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays, dark Fridays and Saturdays

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

**Tickets:** \$68.90; 794-9433