

# Just Dino

BIRTHDAY SPECIAL

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MARTIN  
ASSOCIATION

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**ANNIE MARTIN-CROCETTI**

**MARK ADAMS + MICHELLE DELLA FAVE + RICHARD SHELTON**

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# A CELEBRATION

**TOM DREESEN + JOE SCALISSI**  
**REMEMBERING NELSON RIDDLE**

ISSN 2977-1935



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It has never surprised me at all that Dean is one very adored man.

Now Dean always seemed to question it, but then again, that was one of the beautiful attributes of him. His humility spoke volumes. I used to help him answer his European fan mail over Nate N' Al's kosher hot dogs and a cold Italian beer! All over the globe there was so much love and compassion for him. Not just for his music, singing, acting and comedy, it seemed to be because of his casual, kind relatability that truly resonated in everyone's soul. Dean held out his hand to everyone, to shake, to hold and to lovingly pat. His big, beautiful hands were so, so soft. He was always so humbled and truly astonished by the way people from all over the world liked him, no, loved him – dearly.

He would say, 'Wow, I don't understand why people like me!'

I would say, 'I think it's your smile,' to which he would say 'Oh, you do?'

Conversations like this would just bring on giggles. But he did in all sincerity have the most beautiful smile. An infectious, contagious smile.

Dean never forgot his roots. He was one who took care of his family and everyone around him. He sincerely wanted the best for all his family when it came to material things. And while he would offer to purchase things for us, I would always tell him, 'I just want more time with you!'

He always gave of his time to our little family, as did Nanny Jeanne.

Dean was happy and smiling all the time, he was approachable and non-threatening. He was just a regular guy. He was a gentle giant with a soul that was soft.

It is such a true honor that people all over the world have a spiritual veneration and sweet devotion to my father-in-law. It makes me so proud and happy for him.

He worked and earned a loving iconic space in everyone's heart. He didn't know he was doing that. He was simply doing what he loved to do and being who he sincerely was. And in turn, he made people feel *hygge* (hue-gah), a term from my heritage. That's right, he made them feel warm and cozy, happy and relaxed. Dean was true to his art and people could deeply feel that. Doing what you really, really love to do, will not feel like a job.

I feel people all over the globe resonated with his energy and could tell he was doing what he loved to do.

Oh, what a beautiful compliment for "one's art" to be timeless. Especially over generation and cultures.

Again, Dean would not understand this yet, yes, absolutely. He, his art and persona will forever be timeless. It's so true when you stop to think about it, isn't it? His way, his natural way and effortlessness was admirable. He was approachable to people. All men wanted to be like him and all women wanted to be with him. People respected him as he respected them. His hard work, dedication and his natural elegance is an integral example of being timeless.

I don't really know if I have a favorite song – of course all of the Christmas songs he recorded makes me happy. "On An Evening in Roma" is a happy beat Italian song. And I love that Dean's mother, Angela, helped him with the proper pronunciation of each Italian word. "Mambo Italiano" comes to mind because Rio-Dean sang it in Italian and did the mambo dance at a dance festival when she was little, maybe eight or nine. She was tiny but mighty! She has his stage presence. And even though he had passed away before she was born, I know that he was with her on stage.

Dean truly loved his life as an Entertainer and Hollywood Star. He never took it for granted, never. He was so truly grateful for all who loved him!

And in his heart, he loved you all back!

He was a real, regular, genuine, loving father and grandfather! We miss him terribly!  
We love you, Dean /Grandpa!

Annie Pepper Montana & Rio-Dean

## ABOUT THE DEAN MARTIN ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1960 and now in our seventh decade, we are proud to be the first and only official independent, flagship organization dedicated to Dean Martin in the world. We are non-profit.

Our Chairperson until his sad death in December 1995, Dean personally sanctioned our creation over 60 years ago, enabling us to be ambassadors of his career and honor his talents as one of the world's greatest entertainers.

Dean was the driving force behind the formation of what eventually became The Dean Martin Association and he maintained direct, close contact with us and co-founder Bernard H Thorpe over the decades, giving us a unique insight into this otherwise elusive figure.

We have worked with EMI/Capitol, Warner-Reprise and other labels from as early as 1964 as consultants or co-producers on a number of officially-licensed compilation albums and re-releases of Dean's studio recordings (one even gaining him a Gold award in 1976).

The Dean Martin Association continuously strives to respect, promote and support the legacy of Dean Martin at all times with the backing of admirers and members all around the world.

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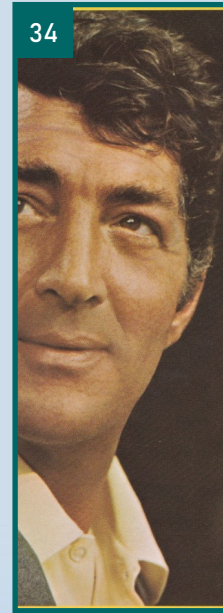
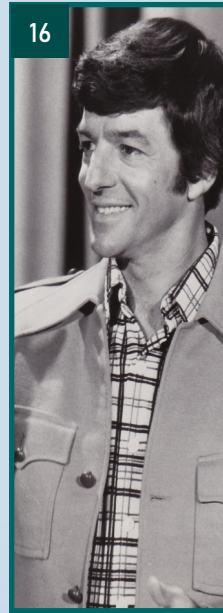
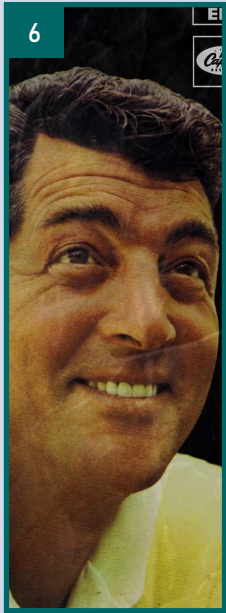
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## cover story

- 20 A CELEBRATION**  
bringing together fans and peers, professionals and admirers, to celebrate what Dean means to us

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"Just Dino is the exclusive and fully-authorized newsletter published only by us in the UK, and distributed worldwide since November 1960. The Dean Martin Association is totally lionized to the man himself, his life and career. Wherever you live, whoever you are, I dedicate your Association to Dean Martin and to you —as you support us by being a valued member."

**Bernard H Thorpe**  
Co-founder, President (1960-2015) and  
Chief Executive (1960-2015)

are  
you  
ready?



THE DEFINITIVE

# RAT PACK



*"If he wasn't Mark Adams he  
would be Dean Martin"*  
- BBC

MARK ADAMS

DEAN MARTIN

*"Stephen Triffitt IS Frank Sinatra"*  
- Arts Desk

STEPHEN TRIFFITT

FRANK SINATRA

*"George Daniel Long is an uncannily  
convincing Sammy Davis Jr"*  
- Daily Mail

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We invited you to share with us your thoughts and feelings about Dean on what would have been his 107th birthday...

## > ED D. FACEBOOK

Dino was 'one of a kind', and a supremely talented man. Without any formal training, he managed to charm & entertain millions while making it look easy. I was blessed to sing at the annual festival that's held each year in his home town of Steubenville, OH. Warm and wonderful people. His song catalog has tunes that no one else sings. Dino will always be my favorite entertainer ever, and I will never stop playing his music.

## > SIMONETTA O. WEBSITE

Every time I listen to him, I smile! He makes me happy because of his beautiful voice and his sense of humor.

## > MICHAEL D. K. FACEBOOK

I'm happy to say I was [at Dean's concert in] London 1983 and had the honor and pleasure to shake hands with the man I've admired since I was a 15 year old boy. I'm now in my twilight years (83) and still listen to him every day/evening and sing (if you can call it that, unquote) at my local Karaoke nights.

## > MICHAEL A. W. WEBSITE

To me, Dean Martin is all about his command of singing voice. Everything else is a derivative of that fact. At a point early in his life, his voice was all he had given to him in life, and he was perceptive enough to realize it, and concentrated his energies there. He was a good steward of what God gave him in life. He passed this along to his family, particularly Deana. My favorite Dean Martin movie is, by far, *The Wrecking Crew* (Columbia, 1968). I also am convinced that this is fast becoming a historical motion picture in the American psyche, mostly because of the cast, but equally because of it's point in history. It was recently adopted in Quentin Tarantino's *Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood* (Sony, 2019), which directly imported scenes into the storyline.

## > RUTH C. WEBSITE

I have loved listening to his smooth voice singing any and all songs. I first found him when I was in the 3rd grade. Loved his movies, variety shows and celebrity roasts.

## > RUSSELL R. FACEBOOK

That moment for me was when I worked on his TV show. To this day, in his honor, I still wear a silver

men's wrist bracelet that I never take off. It's my way of honoring the best showman that ever was. to find songs.

## > LINDA K. FACEBOOK

When I was 14 (I am 72 now), I watched Dean's TV show and I have watched him ever since whether it be TV, movies records. I love him still.

## > MARICAR DE G. FACEBOOK

I was driving home minding my own business when our local station played "Return to Me" and I thought, 'That's a beautiful song and a beautiful voice, rendered beautifully...' I was hooked ever since more and more each day...the more I listened and see him...the more I am loving him, there's no turning back.

## > GRAHAM D. WEBSITE

It probably all started for me when I was in my early teens (I'm 68 now). My sister had two LPs, REMEMBER ME (I'M THE ONE WHO LOVES YOU) and DEAN MARTIN HITS AGAIN, plus a couple of EPs. She was getting married and having a sort out, so I asked if I could have the Dean Martin items, because at the time he was appearing on TV here in Britain, so I liked him a lot, even then. So that's the very basic way my interest in Dean happened. Once I'd got those records, every Saturday I'd go to Cardiff, or other towns and cities, and search out other records by Dean. Then you were spoiled for choice. I'd go to record fairs and film fairs. He was everywhere! So my record/movie collection began...LPs, EPs, 45s and 78s. In between, I was looking for TV and film items, movie stills and posters, campaign brochures. Then it all took off, buying DVDs of shows, interviews etc, anything to do with Dean, swapping items with other fans all over the world. All and everything Dean interested me. He had everything and could do anything. His voice was like velvet and it was clear he could put his own stamp on any song. He looked so good, and was a winning combination for any film role, and he made a big impression in many of his roles. It would be difficult to narrow down a choice of two or three favorite films, he was so good in so many of them. A true professional, and so very talented... And to top everything for me, I met Dean in London in 1987 at the London Palladium. I'd been waiting all week for the promised meeting, and true to his word Dean's manager Mort Viner made it happen for me: he led me across the

Palladium stage, before the show started, curtains closed, to meet the great man. And there he was in front of me! I had so much to say, but was absolutely in awe, I just couldn't get my words out. Dean held out his huge hand and I grabbed it quickly. We spoke for a few minutes, my words probably just a confused muddle. But I tried to say to him what he meant to me, my family, all the people in the theatre and millions around the world. I found him to be a perfect gentleman, so modest kind and warm. Moments I'll never forget, and to mention one of Dean's big hits, "Memories Are Made Of This".

## > VERONIKA L. WEBSITE

Dean means to me a great gentleman with smooth velvet voice. He did not act, he was natural, humble and grateful what life brought to him. You can listen to his music every single day. His songs can rise your mood if it is blue. Simple handsome guy.

## > MARY L. WEBSITE

Dean Martin had a style that compares to no one! His mellow, sexy voice, good looks and easy going personality with his adorable sense of humor made him an icon. His following still exists and is proof there will never be another Dino! Love his voice, looks and good natured personality. Forever in so many hearts!

## > DIANE U. EMAIL

When I was growing up in the 1970s I was into all the music of the time, Roxy Music, The Sweet and lots of others, while my mom would play Dean Martin, Tony Bennett and so on. I didn't really take much notice of them until my tastes changed and all of a sudden I could "hear" what she could. Dean became a favorite of mine and still is: he reminds me of my mom when I used to come home from high school and she'd be at the stove cooking us dinner while one of her Dean Martin LPs was playing on the record player. I listen to him all the time and I also play him for my grandchildren now. They like him too so I'm hoping they will play his songs for their grandchildren. He's timeless and crosses all age groups. I know he's not for everyone's ears but if we can keep his sound going for generations to come he'll never leave us.

## MEANWHILE...

Our man on the ground GRAHAM D. saw a bootleg cassette recording of a Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin concert on sale on eBay for a whopping \$19,999.99! It goes without saying that all our members should be cautious about any high-priced "memorabilia" before buying... JD

## > MAGGIE WEBSITE

Like many children of Italian migrated parents, patriotism along with food and family were very important. Dad thought Dino was a God. When I once asked why, he simply replied, 'I've never heard Sinatra sing in Italian.'

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The singing term 'crooning' is defined as *to hum or sing in a soft, low voice, especially in a sentimental manner* and although there have been thousands of these crooners since it was first introduced in the 1920s, no one has embodied or perfected this way of singing better than Dean Martin, says Thomas.

It is said one of the first of these crooners was Al Bowlly who found extreme popularity in the late 1920s up until his death in on the 17 April 1941, when he was killed in a German air-raid on London.

Bowlly was one of the first singers to ever get a named credit on a record, the standard practice would be to have the band leader as the prominent name (for example, Ray Noble and his Orchestra, while the vocalist normally just got 'with vocal refrain'). Such was the popularity of Bowlly, the public wanted to know who this wonderful singer was.

He was so well loved for his sentimental singing and although in a high register when compared with other crooners of the time like Russ Columbo and the ever-amazing Bing Crosby, he was still considered a crooner. Of course, Frank Sinatra was another legendary crooner but Frank was notably not a big fan of the term.

This singing style was an instant hit and everyone fell head-over-heels for it.

Dean was always told, even from a young age, that he had a great voice so when he found fame as the comedy duo of Martin

and Lewis, people enjoyed the comedy antics of both of Dean and Jerry, but really, they stayed for the simply magnificent voice of Dean Martin. I know I am not alone when, especially in the later movies and TV shows, I just wanted to see and hear Dean sing an entire song without Jerry getting involved and causing chaos. DMA co-founder Bernard H Thorpe also felt this way, recalling his annoyance in the 1950s at going to the movies to watch the newest Martin and Lewis picture, and the camera always panning away from Dean while in the middle of a song!

More importantly, Dean himself was frustrated with this and was one of the reasons he split from Jerry to go on his own way and just stick to what he did best, singing.

Well, I must say, what a clever move because Dean became a bigger hit and is still popular to this day: the DMA and its ever-growing numbers of members alone are proof of this!

Dean has such a warm and easy voice that it can be adapted so easily for any style, be the son a love ballad, a Texan ranchero, or a big band classic, Dean could do it all. Dean sang in a low register although while talking, he had a higher-pitched voice. When you listen to "Everybody Loves Somebody" Dean never



sings a higher note than when he is talking normally. This meant that Dean really found comfort in the lower register, and it suited the songs he wanted to sing.

That baritone style of singing that Dean had meant that there was a wonderful warmth to his voice. He had a full, deep voice that paired harmoniously with a strong, even vibrato. Vibrato is that slight up-down flutter in a voice when holding a note due to the larynx. Not every singer has the same, some has very soft vibratos, some have very wide vibrato and others not at all! But Dean had the perfect vibrato for crooning as it just breaks up a note by softly oscillating no more than a semi-tone above or below the main note. Vibrato tends to be what adds 'warmth' to a voice.

Listen out for it when you next play some Dino and you will hear what I am rambling on about.

Elvis was notably a big fan of Dean and Elvis has a very strong vibrato so one can only wonder if he picked up that technique from Dean.

Back to Dean's early days of singing and Dean singing style was of Harry Mills from the Mill's Brothers. He really admired Harry Mills and said he based his singing style of him and also Bing Crosby, just maybe a touch less *ba-ba-ba-boos*!

It must have been a pleasure and almost other worldly feeling for Dean to then, one day, be singing with them both on his own TV show. Dean sings "The Oldest Established..." with Bing and Crosby in a video clip and although Dean is with two huge names in the business, his voice just rings out and it's impossible not to look at him and how much fun he is having with his counterparts.

I always found Dean's voice sounded even better when he was singing live, especially during his TV show. It did not seem to matter who was singing along with Dean, Dean's voice always shone through and rose above anyone else, and Dean sang with some of the best in the industry.

There is a wonderful clip of Dean singing "I Can't Give You Anything But Love" with Peggy Lee and Jack Jones, and Peggy is just fixated on Dean and although he quips that Jack Jones sings the song 'too well', Dean just captures the audience; you just cannot help watching him. When Dean sings on the couch, he usually sings a love song or a very soft ballad and this is where Dean's voice really shows off its beauty.

It can be a fairly difficult affair to sing softly and gently, but Dean, as he always does, makes it look and sound so easy. No more so than in his 13 November 1969 show where he sings "S'posin'" and it is just wonderful. Comparing it to the lively version from 1953 and then the slightly more laid back 1966 version from THE DEAN MARTIN TV SHOW album, I'm very glad he decided to sing this song so intimately, especially as Dean was not a huge fan of the couch songs.

In my opinion, he sings some of his best songs on the couch including "For The Good Times" and when you watch it, Dean is so melancholic and completely encapsulates the prettiness and the sadness of the song. That to me, is a true singer when they can convey that emotion and sentiment through singing alone.

Now it's always, always, difficult to pick a favorite Dean Martin song; he had songs for every mood, for every weather, and for every season. There could be a Dino song for every day of the week!

But we all have our favorites that we may indulge in more often than others. One of those songs for me is "Break it to Me Gently" which Dean oddly enough never recorded in studio, but he did sing it live at Lake Tahoe at the Cal-Neva (27 July 1962) and boy oh boy, does he sing it beautifully.

I love that Dean says he does not know the words which means maybe he wasn't overly *au fait* with the song but the fact that he sings it the magical way he does really speaks to the true talent that this man possessed. Not only did he have that perfect voice, but he also knew how to use it and where to really make the lyrics come across to the audience. There is not a peep from the crowd because I am sure they are just all fully enraptured by the performance.

Man, to have been there and watch Dean sing that live must have stayed with those people for the rest of their lives. I think most of us would have been happy to have met Dean Martin let alone watch him perform. As you may know, the DMA's Elliot Thorpe was lucky enough to meet Dean after his performance in London and I will be forever envious of that!



Towards the end of Dean's recording career, he still had a surprisingly good voice. I use the word surprising because Dean was a lifetime smoker and, although I'm sure it affected his throat something awful, when you listen to THE NASHVILLE SESSIONS you can hear his voice is noticeably different as you would come to expect from anyone who is sixty-six years old. I do think if he did not smoke his voice would have been in better shape than it was at that time, but he still sang some fantastic songs on that album like "Drinkin' Champagne" which, in my opinion, sounds even better in Dean's elderly voice.

It should be noted that Dean was far from finished in terms of performing on stage then and, to be honest, when you watch Dean performing four years on from the 1983 album, in his 1987 performance at the London Palladium, he sounds even better! His voice is in absolutely great shape: just listen to his belting of the final *when* in "Where or When"...phenomenal performance and Dean really shows why he was and always will be number one! In the same show he does a stunning rendition of one of my favorite songs that he used to perform on his TV show "Here Comes My Baby" and, again, he sings it softly to bring all that bitter sweetness of the song. I put the video in the background while I typed this, and I ended up just watching the whole thing because I just got too distracted with watching Dean!

It has been nigh on 40 years since Dean Martin recorded his last studio song "L.A. is My Home" in 1985, which to me seems unreal. I was born in 1988 so Dean stopped recording before I was even born, and I think that that is an incredible testament to just how popular Dean Martin is and will always be.

No matter how many years pass Dean's voice still shines through every year and every decade. So if ever there was proof needed that Dean had one of the best voices ever, then I think the fact that his music transcends generation is about as concrete as it gets.

A little anecdote to finish, I was at work and myself, a colleague and a younger colleague were talking about Italian restaurants and the younger colleague just blurted out *when the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie* and I laughed and thoroughly enjoyed that this early-twenties person not only knew the song, but knew it was also sung by the greatest performer to ever live: Dean Martin. **JD**

Above: Dean with Peggy Lee and Jack Jones in *The Dean Martin Show*, 23 September 1965 (NBC/Greg Garrison)

Opposite: detail from the LP *THE BEST OF DEAN MARTIN* (EMI/Capitol, 1969)





Dean Martin as a Hollywood Musical star... Bernard looks at this overlooked description in Dean's repertoire.

# THE NUMBERS GAME

**a**t first thoughts, the name of Dean Martin may not be necessarily linked to the wonderful world of the Hollywood musical, but he has certainly appeared in many in his career. They were not all box-office hits but they surely attracted the cinema-goers in their thousands - and still do through the medium of television, DVDs and streaming.

Indeed, the first sixteen films that Dean made (all with Jerry Lewis) had a musical leaning as well as comedy, of course.

But the *idea* of a Hollywood musical gives one the image of films like *The Sound of Music* (20th Century Fox, 1965), *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers* (MGM, 1954), *Oklahoma!* (RKO, 1955), *Guys And Dolls* (MGM, 1955), *West Side Story* (United Artists, 1961) and so on, films where the singing and the music are out and out incorporated into the story-telling itself, where they become part of the natural way of characters interacting and communicating with each other. By this reckoning, Dean has only ever made one true musical, and that is *Bells Are Ringing*,

which was originally a Broadway musical production in 1956 starring Judy Holliday (who went on to co-star with Dean for the 1960 MGM production).

Many of Dean's most memorable songs that encompassed his Capitol career came from the Martin and Lewis movies, a partnership that produced such tremendous talent, something that gave Dean that experience he craved in his early years. Who could forget "How Do You Speak To An Angel?", "Innamorata", "Just For Fun", "Money Burns A Hole In My Pocket" and "Simpatico"? True classics that he first sang on screen (it is not without good reason that I selected a number of such tracks to go on the compilation I produced with Capitol Records in 1979, *THE CLASSIC DINO*, which became a steady long-term seller across Europe).

These were songs that supported the films he made, rather than moved the narrative along and, therefore, don't clearly fall



into the Hollywood musical camp.

Dean was very determined as to how he wanted his voice to be promoted, and was quite forthright when it came to song choices, even in his formative movie years. He didn't always win his arguments and sometimes he even got it wrong:

'I didn't like the song. I didn't understand the lyrics. They made no sense. I told 'em to give it to the kid,' he said to me.

But the producers were clear that this was a song they wanted *him* to sing, not Jerry. With music and lyrics by Harry Warren and Jack Brooks, Dean reluctantly agreed and committed it to celluloid in early 1953, then went into the Capitol studios on 13 August 1953 to record it for commercial release for 14 September that same year. It was nominated for an Oscar for Best Original Song but lost out to Doris Days' "Secret Love" from *Calamity Jane* (Warner Bros., 1953). On 7 November it peaked at no. 2 on the Billboard charts. It became his signature hit for thereafter, matched only by "Everybody Loves Somebody" in 1964.

The song?

What else, but "That's Amore".

As well as the normal inclusion of a song or two within a movie, Dean ensured on many occasions that he also could be heard singing the main theme over the credits, even when the film itself contained no musical numbers, such as *All In A Night's Work* (Paramount, 1961) and *Five Card Stud* (Paramount, 1968).

With his voice promoted in these ways, it naturally made for a substantial series of hit singles during his recording life.

In practically every dramatic picture he made, Dean even managed to sing something, albeit a few lines or a brief chorus. Take *The Young Lions* (20th Century Fox, 1958), for example. This was a stark and brutal war epic but in his role as an entertainer conscripted to the US Army, Dean sang a couple of refrains of the Rodgers and Hart stalwart "Blue Moon". At the time, the media stated that *Martin [outshone] Brando and Clift* and Dean would go on to formally record the song on 13 March 1964 for his beautifully-produced Reprise album *DREAM WITH DEAN*.

Another variation Dean gave us was in the distinctly tongue-in-cheek Matt Helm movies of the late 60s. These definitely weren't musicals but were laced with musical moments, in particular a dream sequence where Dean is wandering along a line of beautiful girls. His influence also stemmed to poking fun at himself and his pal Frank Sinatra in a segment where he plays a track of Frank's.

But Dean's original ambition was to sing.

He was warbling a song or two in his teens and had great desires to escape the mundane life he felt he had to become a singer and entertainer. He would play Bing Crosby 78s and would emulate the crooner's style.

He eventually started touring and sang in a myriad of different locations across America in those early years and worked with Jerry for all those marvelous comedies for Paramount and Hal Wallis. He then went on to make numerous and very varied types of pictures for an equally varied batch of film companies, producers and directors, vowing never to tie himself down to one studio and one producer (as he had done so during the Martin and Lewis years).

He worked for all the major studios and appeared in more than fifty films, not including cameos. From his big-screen debut in *My Friend Irma* (Paramount, 1949) to his swansong in *Cannonball Run II* (Warner Bros., 1984) Dean Martin demonstrated he could make it with all types of film parts given him. Indeed, with the amount of roles he had taken on, it would be quite reasonable to state the majority of were of the more relaxed and musical ilk, yet he eagerly launched himself into films such as *Toys In The Attic* (United Artists, 1963) and *Airport* (Universal, 1970).

But cast your mind back to that song he performed with Judy Holliday in *Bells Are Ringing*. "Just In Time" is our Dino at his

supreme singing best. When it became a hit, it was truly a job well done.

So many wonderful songs he sang in his golden era of films, "Me 'n' You 'n' The Moon", "My Rifle, My Pony And Me" (another example of him being given the opportunity to sing a number in a straight dramatic picture), "Any Man Who Loves His Mother", "Ain't That A Kick In The Head", "When You



Pretend" ...the list could take pages!

If time and tide had gone another way, Dean could easily have begun his career with a long contract making the big budget Hollywood musicals which were so popular at the time. If it wasn't for the fact that the producers didn't want '...yet another Italian crooner in [their] midst...' he may very well have been sharing screen time with the likes of Jane Powell or Gordon MacRae. But fate did take him a different way and destiny was to prove that Dean Martin, born Dino Paul Crocetti on 7 June 1917 in Steubenville, Ohio, was to become one of the most likeable and hard-working fellas in the business. Through sheer grit and determination, he got where *he* wanted to be, not where anyone else wanted him to.

Dean Martin spent over fifty years convincing us he was a drunk and that his life was nothing but wine, women and song. The wider, less discerning public may well have been taken in by that act (and many still probably do) but just look at his track record: hundreds of recorded songs, multiple Gold albums, countless TV appearances, an award-winning TV show in his name for NBC, way in excess of a million people having seen him live in Vegas, radio shows, raising millions of dollars through his charity work...all in complete contrast to the relaxed image he continually and obligingly projected.

He worked incredibly hard to get to where he wanted to be, although he insisted that '...it was nothing really...' but the proof of sheer hard work has shone through all of his performances.

He was a true craftsman of his art, a superb entertainer and a wonderful person. He will be considered an icon for all time simply because of the image he portrayed, something that perhaps sometimes may think we hope could be like in ourselves, in our own worlds.

The Dean Martin Association celebrates its 65th anniversary next year (2025) and we are enjoying every minute of being his first, only official independent flagship world organization.

We are honored to be his ambassadors and proud to be part of his life and career - and we are deeply grateful too that you are on this journey with us. **JD**

*Adapted from an article originally appearing in Just Dino #301 (May/June 1991).*

**Above:** Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis in their big-screen debut *My Friend Irma* (Paramount, 1949)

**Opposite:** Judy Holliday, Dean Martin and cast in *Bells Are Ringing* (MGM, 1960)

Nelson Riddle, world-renowned arranger, composer and bandleader, was born on June 1, 1921, and, sadly, passed away thirty-nine years ago, on October 6, 1985, but his music is as popular and beloved today as ever. Karen looks back at his hugely influential legacy.

**N**elson Riddle was a gifted youngster, with a passion to pursue music, playing his trombone, and exploring his talent for arranging during his formative years.

His extraordinary artistry developed over five decades, from the 1940s through the 1980s, revealing Nelson's instrumental musical genius, as he and his orchestrations became in great demand, having an impact on American culture, as well as internationally.

Nelson arranged and recorded well over one hundred albums, masterfully conducting *The Nelson Riddle Orchestra*, often referred to as *The World's Most Recorded Orchestra*, accompanying the top iconic vocalists of the 20th century, including Frank Sinatra, Nat "King" Cole, Ella Fitzgerald, Rosemary Clooney, Peggy Lee, Doris Day, Judy Garland, Barbra Streisand, Linda Ronstadt and of course Dean Martin - as well as many more.

An array of splendid albums and single hits were released during Nelson's illustrious career: *SWING EASY*, *UNFORGETTABLE*, *IN THE WEЕ SMALL HOURS*, *SONGS FOR SWINGIN' LOVERS*, *C'MON, GET HAPPY!*, *ONLY THE LONELY*, *CROSS COUNTRY SUITE*, *ELLA SWINGS GENTLY WITH NELSON*, just to name a few.

Many recall Nelson's beautiful arrangements of "Mona Lisa" and "Too Young" with Nat King Cole, and his outstanding work with Ella Fitzgerald on *THE GERSHWIN SONGBOOK*. But it is his collaboration with Frank Sinatra that was exceptionally noteworthy, as he was credited for reviving Sinatra's career with the Capitol recording of "I've Got the World on a String".

And soon after, Nelson and Frank combined forces on one of the most exciting and sensational tunes of the era, "I've Got You Under My Skin" - and it was pure magic.

'In the 1950s, Nelson Riddle and I wanted to record groups of songs that set a mood. We recorded wonderful, soulful, tender albums; as well as hot swinging ones,' Frank Sinatra said.

# UNFORGETTABLE NELSON



Charles "Chuck" Granata, producer, music historian, and author of the award-winning book *Sessions with Sinatra: Frank Sinatra and the Art of Recording*, shares his professional insights in this quote:

*The recordings Frank Sinatra made with Nelson Riddle are unequalled for their extraordinary musicality. With Nelson, Sinatra pushed himself to unprecedented vocal heights and created a jazz-pop vocal style that became a model of its kind. Nelson's extensive skills, techniques, and limitless imagination allowed him to write breathtaking backings for Sinatra, with pure jazz, swing, classical and even light-rock motifs. Nelson was, inarguably, the finest musical partner Frank Sinatra ever met in a recording studio.*

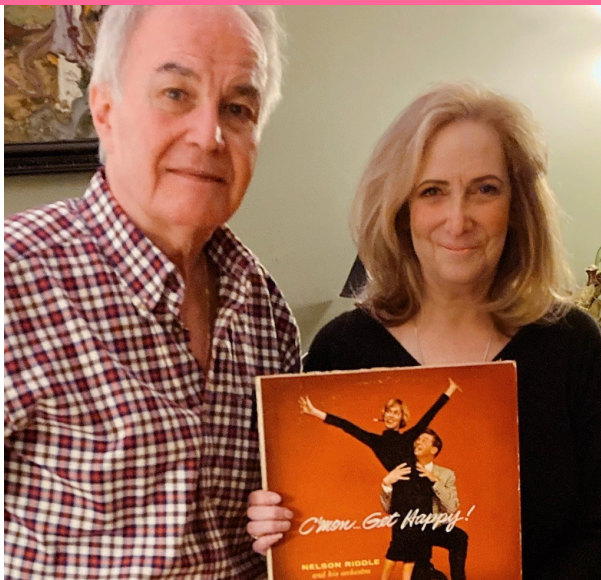
Awards followed for Nelson, winning three Grammys, two for his albums *WHAT'S NEW* and *LUSH LIFE* featuring Linda Ronstadt, and one for *CROSS COUNTRY SUITE*, presented as part of the very 1st Grammy Award Ceremony in 1959.

Film scoring and TV Themes became another creative outlet for Nelson, leading him to win an Oscar for best original song score for the 1974 film *The Great Gatsby*. More of his movie scores include *Ocean's 11*, *Pal Joey*, *High Society*, *Can-Can*, *Robin and The Seven Hoods*, and *On A Clear Day You Can See Forever*, as well as distinctive TV show themes, *The Untouchables*, *Route 66*, *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, *Naked City*, *The Bob Newhart Show* and *Batman*.

A quote by broadcaster and scholar of the Great American Songbook, Jonathan Schwartz, sums up so much about Nelson Riddle: *The scope of his talent dwarfs all other arrangers. His obvious pleasure in delegating authority to the oboe, flute, bass trombone, muted trumpet, organ, bassoon, and vibraphone while still remaining in full control of his administration; his*

*overseeing without overstating the strings; his own private melodies that whisper respectfully under the Gershwin or Kern or Rodgers on the table; his out and out passion that informs every bar of every arrangement. All these things are actively combined in the immense body of work that stands as one of the great achievements in American arts.*

Nelson Riddle's well-deserved place in music history lives on, with a heritage that has been carefully preserved by the Riddle family. Nelson's daughter, Rosemary Riddle Acerra, has gracefully protected the integrity of the estate, ensuring that



the memory and music of Nelson is remembered authentically.

Also keeping the family musical legacy alive in story and song is Christopher Riddle, Nelson's son, a consummate professional and the acclaimed conductor/ music director of The Nelson Riddle Orchestra for the past 39 years, who continues to lead the band since his father's passing in 1985.

In 2021, Nelson Riddle would have turned 100, and to celebrate his lifetime of accomplishments, Christopher Riddle was poised to direct many of Nelson's exemplary arrangements in a commemorative musical production, *Happy Birthday Nelson Riddle: 100 Years of Song*, saluting Nelson's birthday and centennial moments. But due to the pandemic that arose in 2020-2021, much was stalled.

In 2022 Christopher Riddle was invited by the NY Pops to guest conduct at the Riddle centennial celebration, *Get Happy: The Nelson Riddle Sound*, held at Carnegie Hall. Christopher led the Pops in several of Nelson's charts while sharing stories to honor his father.

Nelson Riddle's music spans generations and will be remembered, respected, and enjoyed for years to come, as he remains a prominent influencer in the music and recording industry in this century and beyond.

Thank You, Nelson Riddle! **JD**

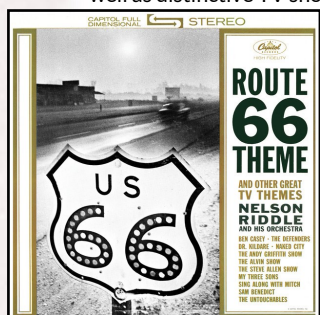
**Above:** Christopher Riddle and Karen Morris with Nelson's classic 1957 Capitol LP *C'MON GET HAPPY*

**Left:** *ROUTE 66* AND OTHER TV THEMES LP (Capitol, 1962)

**Opposite, main:** Nelson Riddle from the photoshoot used for the LP *RELAX WITH NELSON RIDDLE* (WRC, 1964)

**Opposite, inset:** in studio with Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin

For more information about Nelson Riddle, please visit [nelsonriddlemusic.com](http://nelsonriddlemusic.com)



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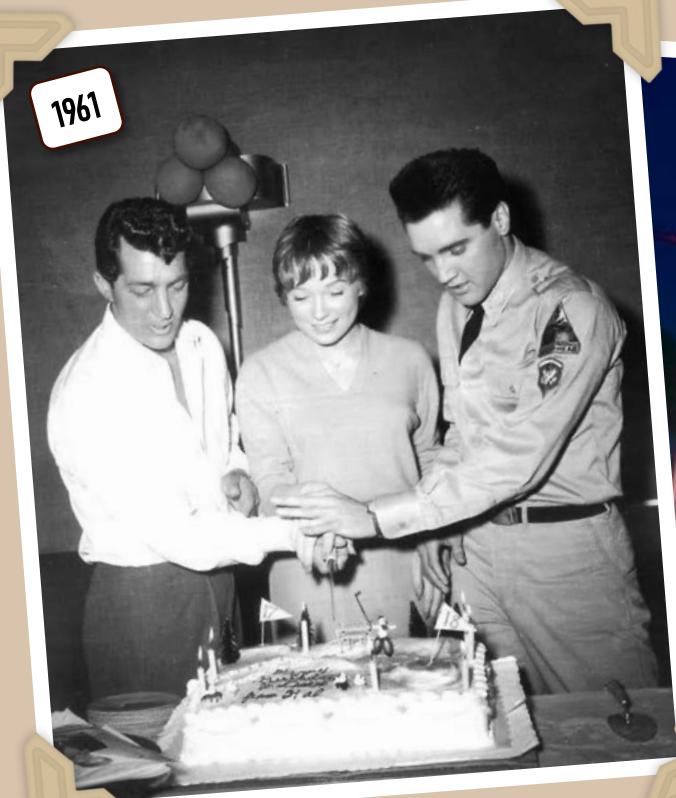
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*at 18 months*



*with Sherley and the Princesses Margaretha of Sweden Margrethe of Denmark and Astrid of Norway on the Paramount lot*



# Big Dean Martin Phones Little Dean

A young victim of near-fatal burns, 11-year-old Dean Martin of Cohoes, got a personal phone call in St. Peter's Hospital yesterday from his popular singing namesake in Hollywood.

Excited into shyness, the youngster spoke in a low voice and brief syllables as Martin promised to keep in touch and encouraged him to "keep fighting."

The film star said he hoped to meet young Dean some day, and would try to "come over and say 'Hello'" on his next trip East. The Cohoes youth has a standing invitation to visit Hollywood after he's better.

## SPEAKS FIRMLY

The boy, talking from his hospital bed, spoke firmly when he thanked Martin for the autographed pictures which adorn the wall of his seventh-floor room. The singer offered to send any other pictures or records he might want, extracted a promise that young Dean would answer his next letter, and told him "we're all praying for you."

Martin has been interested in his young namesake since notified by a California friend of the Cohoes family a few days after the boy's accident on June 1. He sent autographed photos and a personal letter which the lad's mother, Mrs. Earl W. Martin, credits with giving her son a tremendous lift and helping to pull him through. He later arranged to donate the proceeds from the sale of 1,000 records for hospital expenses.

Mrs. Martin said her son, who suffered first, second and third degree burns over 85 percent of his body, is coming



1955

## DEAN CALLING DEAN

In St. Peter's Hospital yesterday at 4 P. M. a Cohoes lad named Dean Martin received a phone call from Hollywood's Dean Martin. Student nurse Mary Coppola listens in on the conversation and enjoys a chuckle.

Times-Union Staff Photo by Kohlenberg

along very well after several operations.

Aiding in arrangements for the call were Richard Murphy, manager of Proctors Theater, Troy, which will do-

nate 25 percent of today's proceeds from the opening of the Dean Martin-Jerry Lewis film "Pardners." The Martins reside on Hempel Pl., Cohoes.

DEAR FRIENDS:

I AM PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO WRITE MY FIRST JOURNAL LETTER. I'D ALSO LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN MY CAREER. YOU FOR YOUR LOYALTY AND FRIENDSHIP. YOUR OWN CLUB PRESIDENT OVER IN LONDON AND MYSELF ARE REALLY GETTING TOGETHER TO MAKE THE BRITISH CLUB FOR ME REALLY GREAT. IT'S A WONDERFUL FEELING WHEN PEOPLE LIKE YOU THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY TAKE THE TROUBLE TO BE INTERESTED IN ME. TOGETHER, THE TWO OF US HOPE TO REALLY GO TO TOWN AND DO MANY MORE GREAT THINGS FOR YOU ALL. I'VE JUST FINISHED A ROLE IN "SERGEANTS 3" AND ENJOYED WORKING ON THIS FILM VERY MUCH. I HOPE THAT YOU WILL ALL SEE IT AND ENJOY IT AS WE DID FILMING IT. ALSO IN THE CAST ARE FRANK SINATRA, SAMMY DAVIS, JR., PETER LAWFORD, JOEY BISHOP, HENRY SILVA, RITA LEE AND THE CROSBY BROTHERS. SOUNDS LIKE I'M A CRITIC! BUT I REALLY MUST SAY THAT THEY ALL ARE A GREAT CROWD OF PEOPLE TO WORK WITH-REALLY THE TOPS. ANYHOW, IT'S A WESTERN AND WE ALL THINK IT WILL BE ENJOYABLE FILM FARE FOR EVERYONE.

I HAVE ANOTHER MOVIE CURRENTLY IN RELEASE, WHICH MOST OF YOU HAVE MOST PROBABLY SEEN ALREADY AND KNOW ABOUT. IT'S "ADA"---WHICH I DID FOR MGM. I HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE OF WORKING WITH THE VERY CHARMING AND LOVELY SUSAN HAYWARD---ALSO A VERY FINE ACTRESS. I MIGHT ADD. MGM ADAPTED THIS FILM FROM THE POPULAR NOVEL TITLED "ADA DALLAS".

I HAD A BIT OF TIME OFF AFTER THE WINDUP OF "SERGEANTS 3" FOR A LITTLE REST AND A LITTLE TRAVELING.

NEXT, I'LL BE DOING A FILM FOR PARAMOUNT TITLED "WHO'S GOT THE ACTION?" ---AND I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING WITH LANA TURNER.

I HAVE SEVERAL OTHER THINGS LINED UP ON THE BOARD, BUT NOTHING DEFINITE THAT I CAN MENTION AT THIS TIME.

MY WIFE AND CHILDREN ARE ALL IN GOOD HEALTH, FOR WHICH I AM MOST GRATEFUL. THE CHILDREN ARE GROWING MORE AND MORE WITH EACH PASSING DAY.

I HOPE THAT ALL OF YOU HAD PLEASANT SUMMER VACATIONS. SHOULD ANY OF YOU WISH TO SEND ME LETTERS, I WOULD BE PLEASED IF YOU WOULD FORWARD THEM TO BERNARD THORPE IN LONDON, WHO WILL THEN FORWARD THEM TO ME.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN ME AND I HOPE THAT ALL OF MY FUTURE EFFORTS CONTINUE TO PLEASE YOU.

ALL THE BEST,

*Dean*  
DEAN MARTIN.

1962

at Cero's Nightclub with Jerry and Patti,  
H D Hauer (Cero's owner) and Jeanne

1950



1949



with Jeanne



# THE MEASURE OF A MAN

The sands of time...the sands of Craig Beach, the Sands of Las Vegas, the sands of the shore hugged by a lazy ocean...these are the sands which Dean Martin is measured. Ed surmises the impossibility to measure in years the breadth of a man who is timeless.

**A**ny attempt to define the man by sticking numbers on a line of successive events will fall short of capturing the spirit of his existence. He is an aura, an ideal, a benchmark of cool, a tapestry of handsome good looks with the style of impeccable dress. He is the dark wavy-haired crooner whose eyes aimed heavenward while his syrupy baritone voice filled the club like a low laying fog. The voice. His is the evening's breeze that gently bends a tropical palm, the dance of the candles flame whose sways so calm.

On 7 June 1917, Steubenville Ohio gave birth to a boy, a legend who would eventually be known as "The King of Cool", Dino Crocetti.

Rome has its Caesar, France its Descartes, Ohio its Dino. Nature versus nurture, a modern debate which has yet to effectively account for the development of the human condition, also eludes the genesis of the development from Dino Crocetti to Dean Martin. Born into the pre-existing cognomen of Little Chicago, the boy Dino was thrust upon the small city on the Ohio River. A city which in time would become well versed in steel mills, barber shops, boot legging, gambling joints, pool halls, boxing rings, and night clubs of vocal and other, uhm.... nightly charms.

The elements of human nature at times parallel the elements of the earthly nature. Pressure, heat, and time can produce diamonds, just as family, neighborhoods and culture can produce icons.

Russ Columbo, Bing Crosby, a crazy dancing uncle, and Stu'ville are some of the elements contributing to the developing of icon Dean Martin during the early years. It was

during these times when Dino began in the casual exercise in the business of prohibition bootlegging, avoiding death in the steel mills, boxing, and slyly dropping silver dollars into his shoes while croupier at the Rex.

The streets of Steubenville provided the groundwork, an opening act, sort to speak, to what would become the basis of the confidence and street smarts of a burgeoning Dean Martin. A young man in a grown man's world, learning at a young age what is authentic, and what is illusion. The nature of living, versus the business of living.

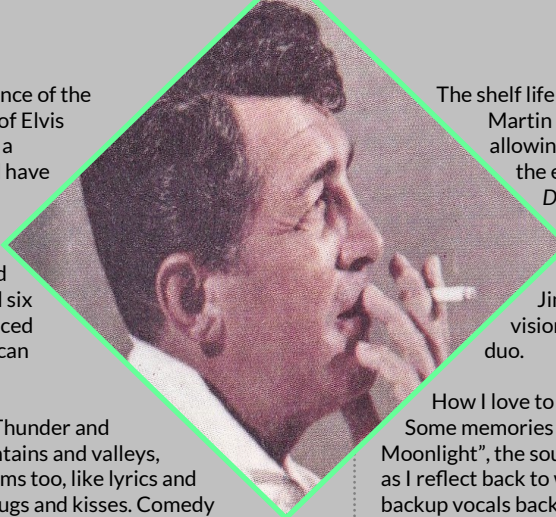
So many decades ago now, a young Dino took the stage at Craig Beach. With the encouragement of his pals and George Williams Orchestra at his side, Dino crooned the now famous standard "Oh Marie". Craig Beach: Ground Zero for the Big Bang of Cool, the genesis of what would become the handsome half of Martin and Lewis, the suave leading man of movies, the laid-back staple member of the Rat Pack, recorder of millions of selling records, and the one-man wrecking crew of a hit television show. Craig Beach became the launching pad for the Steubenville son of Italian immigrants.

Destination stardom, a young Dino catapulted into the dark night sky of glimmering stars and moonbeams. Unbeknownst to everyone but the boy Dino himself, he would become a star, a star who would sing about those exact moonbeams. He would become the Hollywood icon with three stars on the Boulevard, footprints at the Grauman's Chinese, eleven Gold Albums, and more even he couldn't envision.

He would share the recording space with Bing Crosby, the stage with Sinatra, and be the guest of Presidents and Royalty.



He would be the vocal influence of the budding rock and roll talent of Elvis Presley. He would embark on a mission of success few could have imagined, and some would argue, not have seen since. A career on the stage, silver screen, recordings, and television that encompassed six decades. A life that experienced the ups and downs that few can relate.



Nature has its great teams. Thunder and lightning, sun and rain, mountains and valleys, rivers and oceans. Other teams too, like lyrics and rhythm, smiles and laughs, hugs and kisses. Comedy teams, Abbot and Costello, Laurel and Hardy, Crosby and Hope. Martin and Lewis however, may have been the grand finale, the best for last. A crazy rubber faced, squeaky voiced lanky lunatic of a kid from New Jersey and the handsome suave Italian crooner from a sleepy Ohio valley steel town. Dino was the martini, Lewis the olive. Dino the bass, Jerry the treble. The contrast was both visual and vocal. One scrawny with a crew cut, the other manly and handsome. The absurdity of the monkey was grounded with the coolness of the grinder. The music played, Dino sang, Jerry danced, and the crowds swooned. They packed the clubs from New York to Chicago to Los Angeles.

Talent has a unique attractive scent, smells of money and success. And as if on cue, Hollywood comes a calling. Record deals made, albums cut, and Dino dipped his toes into the talent pool of Capitol Records. Paramount and Hal Wallis want the boys on the silver screen, anticipating the night club act would transfer well onto the silver screen. The Dean Martin evolution from the club stage to the screen was seamless. Singing in movies brought his vocals to the masses, even earning an

The shelf life of comedy teams is notoriously short. Martin and Lewis expires at the ten-year mark, allowing Dino to evolve to his next act. Dean Martin the entertainer. Reprise Records Rat Pack, *The Dean Martin Show*. Next stop: Dino, Hollywood legend. Dean Martin the recording artist takes center stage as he hits his stride during the 1960's. Enter Jimmy Bowen. Jimmy Bowen, a scientist of sound with the vision for vocals. Dino and Jimmy are quite the duo.

How I love to hear the organ....

Some memories never seem to fade. "In The Chapel In The Moonlight", the soundtrack to my mind's eye as I reflect back to when Dino roamed the airways. The angelic backup vocals backed by the aggressive rhythmic drum line, surround a strong Dino vocal. The song ebb and flows back and forth, the drama of the voice directs the ear on an emotional tale of chapel, entwining roses, choirs singing, and moonlight turning to dawn. Forever be mine... if Dino doesn't have you after that, you don't have a pulse, baby.

This era of Dino magically mends organ, horns, drums, and backup vocals together as never before. His warm vocals melt the lyrics over it all, creating the unique sound that solidified Dean Martin's place in recording history.

His sleepy delivery of a lyric falls off his fading breath, the drawn-out wafted born note heightens one's sense of anticipation. From the ether it falls on the ear and fills the heart like wine warming the soul. Nobody delivers so effortless as Dino. Those who do things expertly well always have the unfortunate misnomer of lacking effort. If a bird in flight looks effortless, it's because the bird in flight has perfected flight. Dino the singer is no different. He nurtured his natural voice and style from his child home living room to the street corners of Steubenville, to Craig Beach, to Hollywood, to Las Vegas, all the way across the pond into Europe, and back again to Las Vegas.

Dean Martin's legacy is just as well today as it was back when he ruled with a song. Christmas has become the Season of Dino. Dino streaming media is reaching the newest of generations daily. The world it seems is continuously harkening back to the days where men donning black tuxedos swayed the silver microphones as they sang and dance as if the night will never end. A television show where a man can comfortably lounge before a camera and croon a tune so sincere you may shed a tear.

Dino offered a glimpse into his world with his weekly television show. His genuine gift of the sincerest of human qualities such as friendship, love, and tenderness was on display for the world to see.

Silent Night..

The night sky is filled with the starlight of stars who have long since died out. These lights continue to brighten our lives as if they were still alive and well. Dean Martin died on Christmas morning 1995, and like the starlight of dying stars, his starlight continues to lighten our lives daily. His legacy continues in movies, television, commercials, and podcasts. Facebook and TikTok continue to attract new fans to his music and movies. The continuous renewal of interest is a credit to Dinos timelessness. The voice, the charm, the looks, the style, the comedic timing, the effortless demeanor of a man who is the antithesis of the modern-day slacker. We yearn for the days of live bands, brass horns, heavenly strings, and bold brave percussions. To sit under a star lit sky where moonbeams fall upon the eyes of lovers while the music caresses them like tender kisses on a stolen night of bliss. Songs to remind us that somewhere there's a someone for everyone, everybody loves somebody sometime, and everybody falls in love somehow.....

Happy birthday and thank you, Dino, for the memories and the good times, and for the future good times by those who have yet to meet you. D



Academy Award nomination for "That's Amore" from the movie *The Caddy*. Between movies Dean was doing what he loves most, singing songs and making records. Dean's Capitol years yielded some of his greatest works.

Above, inset pensive Dean, circa 1966

Left: Dean and Jerry with Marilyn Monroe

Opposite: casual Dean, circa 1973





Legendary comedian **Tom Dreesen** has graced the show business stage for over fifty years. He has performed alongside the most celebrated figures in the entertainment industry, including Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Johnny Carson, David Letterman, Smokey Robinson, Liza Minnelli and so many more too numerous to list!

**S**upremely talented with exceptional comedic skills, Tom spent 14 years on tour as the opening act for The Chairman of the Board, vocalist extraordinaire, Frank Sinatra. He also opened for another extraordinary member of the Rat Pack, Sammy Davis, Jr., best known as Mr. Entertainment! As if that isn't impressive enough, he delighted audiences with five-hundred national TV appearances throughout his rising career, adding to his first-rate comedy arsenal.

Tom's early career path was set in motion when he teamed up with Tim Reid as America's first and only biracial comedy duo. After six successful groundbreaking years of touring, they co-authored the book, *Tim and Tom: An American Comedy in Black and White*. So much of what Tim and Tom kidded respectfully about decades ago is still relevant today and was ahead of its time.

Continuing forward, Tom Dreesen's career soared when he landed an opportunity to perform his stand-up routine on the highly popular and influential TV show, *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson. He credits Johnny for his future success after he 'killed it' on that spectacular show segment! With 28 million people watching, Tom was on his way to achieving his comedy dream. Over sixty appearances on *The Tonight Show* proved Tom had comedy longevity. It would take a book to cover all Tom Dreesen has accomplished and indeed, his celebrity memoir, *Still Standing: My Journey From Streets and Saloons To The Stage, and Sinatra* does deliver.

My friend and colleague, Darren Grubb, co-author of *Still Standing*, offers his insights and admiration for Tom:

'My friend and co-author Johnny Russo and I are devoted Rat Pack fans and when we heard Tom was interested in writing his own story we jumped at the opportunity to be involved. I thought I had heard or read every Frank, Dean or Sammy story out there, and I was blown away hearing his (Tom's) stories and

experiences with them. Tom had a remarkable career before he worked with Frank, and certainly after. His journey from a tough upbringing to the heights of success is inspiring, uplifting, and proof that good men find a way. I'm sure you've heard of the old saying "Never meet your heroes." Well, Tom shatters that paradigm. He is the most humble, thoughtful, and decent man I've ever worked with. It was the honor of a lifetime to be a part of this project, and I'm blessed to know him.'

Sometimes in life we are fortunate to have 'pinch me' moments. Chatting recently with Tom was one of those times for me. He was charming, gracious, naturally funny, down to earth, and chock full of entertaining stories. I'm a loyal fan, but also as a producer who presents Sinatra-inspired events, I was genuinely enchanted hearing Tom share his outlook on comedy, life, performing and a myriad of touching memories about Frank, Dean and Sammy. As we began our conversation, Tom spoke honestly about the changing times of comedy.

'It's changed dramatically since I started out. It's the language. And I'm not I'm not a prude. I'm a street guy. I don't have a degree from academia. I got a doctorate from the streets. I spent four years in the military. I was a bartender. I know every dirty joke that's out there. And I've heard them, and I enjoy hearing them like anybody else. But when I started out, you couldn't make a living doing material like that. Wherever you went in America when I started out, people would say, what do you do for a living? You'd say, I'm a stand-up comedian. So the next question was, have you ever been on Johnny Carson? If I haven't been on Johnny Carson in the eyes of America you just weren't a comedian. So, how can I get on that show? You had to write material that Grandma and Grandpa, Mom and Dad, and the kids could laugh at. You realize you couldn't say, go to hell, couldn't say, damn on that show. Then cable television came along and you could say whatever you wanted to say. And it turns out that created a nation full of comedians who heavily



use the F word every other sentence. That's how it's changed. As far as the cancel culture, years ago, Lenny Bruce had the same thing. They'll always try to stop comedians, and this is my opinion. Comedians are the last bastion of freedom of speech. We have the First Amendment in this country and thousands of men and women died so that we can have that First Amendment to say what we want to say. You don't have to listen to us. You can turn us off, you can walk out the door, you can ask for your money back, but you can't stop Americans from saying what they want to say. And they are always after the comedians because we use that freedom of speech. And so the politically correct police and the cancel culture are always after us, but they're not going to win, not in this country.'

Many fans remember Tom from his numerous performances on *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson, and on *The David Letterman Show*, where he also guest-hosted. He reaffirms the importance of those shows in his career.

'I'll explain to you about The Johnny Carson show, how important Johnny's approval of you was. If Johnny liked you, then he called you over to sit down next to him after you had a couple of appearances, One appearance on The Tonight Show and to America, you had arrived. But to our industry, you hadn't arrived until Johnny sat down and talked to you. Twenty-eight million people watched that show. One appearance and your life changed. Freddie Prinze did one appearance and the next day he got a sitcom. I did one appearance on that show and CBS signed me to a development deal the following day. David (Letterman) and I started out together, so I had David's approval the first time he met me. I came off stage at the Comedy Store, and he had just driven out to LA in an old red pickup truck from Indianapolis. And I came off stage and he complimented me on my stand-up material. He and I became friends, instant friends and we've been friends ever since. He let me host his show, and he appreciated me and my stand-up and my comedy. It was very, very important that he came along when it was always Johnny Carson. A lot of the younger comedians wanted David's approval because he was reaching a much younger audience.'

Tom toured with Frank Sinatra for fourteen years as his opening act and became close with him personally and professionally. A relationship based on true mutual respect.

'I really cared what Frank Sinatra thought of me. That Frank Sinatra thought enough of me, of my act, my performance, that I could come and grace the same stage with him. When I was growing up on the South Side of Chicago, if you played a word association game with me, if you said love, I'd say, mom, if you said baseball, I'd say Cubs. If you said show business. I said Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr and Dean Martin. And that they thought enough of me that I could be on the same stage with them. Those are moments that are hard to describe. Walking out on stage in front of twenty-thousand people in arenas all over the country, forty-five, fifty cities a year where they came to see Frank, not you. And to win that audience over and Frank's approval of that. How much he appreciated, that meant more to me than anything.'

Tom speaks warmly about a special moment with Frank:

'I would spend like six times a year, go to his compound down in Rancho Mirage, California, Palm Springs area, and I'd stay at the compound and we'd hang out and go riding around with him. He stayed up till dawn every night. He never went to bed till the sun came up. We would ride around the desert. When we were alone in the car, many of those nights, he wasn't the great Frank Sinatra. And I wasn't comedian Tom Dreesen. He was a kid from Hoboken, new Jersey, and I was a kid from Harvey, Illinois. And that's who we were. Those are very, very, very special moments. One night, on the way back to the compound, the sun was coming up and I was driving him back, and he told me something very personal. Something very private. And he said to me afterward, "I shouldn't have told you that." I said, well, it won't go any further than this car. He said, "I know, I know, but I shouldn't have. I shouldn't have told you that." And I thought about it for a second. I said, well, it's not like we're strangers, you know, we're friends. And then I don't know what made me do it. I said, *strangers in the night...exchanging glances...* you know, singing to him. But Frank looked at me and said, "for God's sake, if you're going to sing that song, get in key." And he starts singing it back to me! And we were singing it back and forth when we pulled into the compound. And when I got into



my bungalow that night, I thought if I went back to my old neighborhood and told all the guys in the bar, I was just riding around with Frank Sinatra singing "Strangers In The Night" they'd say, get the hell out of here. But that's a moment I'll never forget.'

Tom recounts Frank Sinatra's impact, words of wisdom and generosity... 'Frank knocked me over with his wisdom and his philosophy. We were coming out of the Waldorf Astoria one night, on our way to do a show, and we went out the back way because Frank couldn't go out the front, as he'd get mobbed. Security was taking us to the limousine and a woman jumped out of the doorway. The doorman told me later that she had been there for five hours waiting for him. She hollered out, "Mr. Sinatra, please, Mr. Sinatra, please." Security was holding her back as we were getting in the limo. And she's screaming, "please, Mr. Sinatra, please." Frank got back out of the limo and told security to leave her alone. He said to her, "What is it?" She said, "my husband is home very, very, very ill. If you could sign an autograph to him, it would mean the world to him." He said, sure, signing an autograph. And she said, "beautiful cufflinks." And they were very, very, very expensive cufflinks, well over \$1,000, I know where he got them. He thanked her. And when he finished the autograph he took the cufflinks off and he handed them to her and said, "give these to your husband. I want him to have them." She said, "oh, no, no, no, I don't want them. I just was admiring them." He said, "no, I want your husband to have them."

After Frank gave away his cufflinks, Tom asked him why he'd done that. Frank's response and philosophy on giving have forever stayed with Tom. 'He said, "Tommy, if you possess something that you can't give away, then you don't possess it. It possesses you." And I never forgot that. And he said to me, "Aristotle Onassis had millions of dollars. He had mansions, he had yachts, private jets. He said, "and the second he died, all that transferred, nothing we have is ours. And he said, that shirt on your back, Tommy, if you die tomorrow, someone else will own it. That changed my life. That totally changed a lot of my thinking on life.'

Tom shares how the audience reacted when Frank sang →

**Above:** Tom backstage with Frank Sinatra (Tom Dreesen private collection)

**Opposite:** with Dean Martin in Dean's dressing room for a show they were doing in Sacramento, California for Governor Deukmejian (Tom Dreesen private collection, 1982)

→ "My Way" or "The House I Live In", particularly when they knew Frank was approaching his golden years.

'I'd always sit in the wings and look at the audience, how they reacted to that song. Frank would stand on stage, all the lights would go down, just a spot on him, and he would start to sing. *And now the end is near...* People would burst into tears. *And though I faced that final curtain...* "We love you, Frank, long live Frank Sinatra." It was so moving night after night. And "The House I Live in". When he would get to the end of the song, of all the things he loved about America, he'd say, but especially the people, and all the lights in the arena would come on. And I would get chills every night watching him do that song.'

On Sammy Davis, Jr. and the most dramatic performance moment Tom ever witnessed:

'There's nothing Sammy Davis couldn't do on the stage. Sammy could sing as good as anybody out there.. He could dance better than anybody out there. He could do comedy as good as any comedian. He could do impressions better than anyone out there. He could play the piano. He could play the drums. He could play the trumpet. He played the xylophone. Sammy was born to be in show business. Years ago Tim Reid and I were in Chicago at the International Amphitheatre called the Black Exposition. There were black businessmen, entrepreneurs, men and women who got together for one whole week of exchanging ideas. All the black acts were there, and I was there because I was with the black and white comedy team of Tim and Tom. The comedians were in the wings and every time a singer needed the stage set up, they would say, get up on stage and do five minutes while we set the stage for the next singer. The show was loaded with Motown acts, Smokey Robinson and the O'Jays, The Temptations, doing three songs and moving on. Sammy Davis flew in from overseas to be on that show. Months prior to that show, he had been at the White House and President Nixon gave him an award. And Sammy hugged President Nixon. Sammy hugged stop signs. You know,

he hugged everybody. So when he hugged President Nixon, pictures were taken and it was on every black magazine out there, *Ebony*, *Jet*, all the magazines. And Sammy became *persona non grata* in the black community because they were very anti-Nixon. This was the first time he was appearing in front of a black audience right after that picture was taken. The emcee announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Sammy Davis Jr." And the audience began to boo and scream and jeer. Get off the stage, boo, calling him names and screaming so loud. Sammy was trying to get his conductor, George Rhodes, into the countdown, and the music was drowned out. And George had headphones on and still couldn't hear. So Sammy stood there while he was being booed and jeered. We had knots in our stomach backstage, as the great Sammy Davis Jr was being booed. The emcee came back out and said to the audience, "what is our struggle all about? If it isn't about individual freedom, that the man has the right to become a Protestant, a Catholic, a Jew, a Democrat or a Republican? Isn't that what we're fighting for? A right to do that. This man came 3500 miles to sing for you. Doesn't he at least deserve to be heard?" Mumble, grumble. Everybody sat down. Sammy went over and he changed the sheet music, and he sang one song, "I Got To Be Me", from the Broadway play. And never before did that song have the meaning as it did that day and walked that stage. *Whether I'm right, whether I'm wrong, whether I find the place in this world or never belong. I've got to be me. I'll go it alone. If that's how it must be. I can't be right for somebody else if I'm not right for me.* Now, halfway through the song, we're realizing he's getting that crowd back. At the end of that song, he got a standing ovation. He got a standing ovation. Like, we still don't believe your politics, but that was something special. It was Sammy personified. He said to the audience, "okay, you showed me what you got. Now let me show you what I got." In my fifty-five years in show business, that is the single greatest performance that I have ever seen. I've seen people take a tough crowd and get them back in an hour or so. I've never seen anybody take a hostile audience and in one song, get a standing ovation. That is the greatest performance I've ever seen.'

Tom recalls a light-hearted story about Frank Sr, and Frank Jr who was directing the orchestra, during a gig in Atlantic City. 'I was getting ready to go on stage, and the stagehand asked if he could have a picture with me. We took the picture (with small camera) and I said, "could I take it out?" And he said, sure. At the end of the show, I was goofing with the audience. I said, "I can't stand entertainers who say you're the greatest audience and try to patronize you, but I have to tell you, you're the greatest audience to perform for. Do you mind if I take a picture of you?" And I took this little tiny camera, pointing it at the audience, and said can you get a little bit closer?" They all start laughing. And, now it was a joke.

'Whenever I finished my show in the casinos I always exited stage right, Frank entered stage right. We would crisscross and the orchestra would be vamping. Frank would say, Tommy, come back and take another bow. I'd go halfway out to him (what they call a half bow), bow to the audience, wave to him and say, good night. I did that for every year, for years and years. After about ten years touring with him on this particular night, Frank went to center stage and said, Tommy, come back and take another bow this night, and instead I walked straight up to him. Now his eyes got big as his tennis balls. Frank Sinatra Jr's got the orchestra vamping as he's the musical director. Then I said, could I ask you a favor? Frank said, "I'm trying to start the show now." You never mess with the show with Frank. I said, "could I get a picture?" He said to the audience, "look at this guy. I'm trying to start the show and he wants to take a picture." But he agreed. So I handed Frank the camera and I said, "get a picture of me and Frank Junior." I put my arms around Frank Junior, and he's grinning from ear to ear, and under his breath he said to me, "he's going to fucking kill you." Well, luckily a woman in the audience took that picture. She took a picture of Frank Sinatra trying to take a picture of us (Tom and Frank Jr). I use that in my one-man show. And everybody thought, oh my God, Frank's going to tell Tommy, get your suitcase. But we had such a great relationship.'

On the talent of Frank Sinatra, Jr:







'In all the years that I toured with Frank Sinatra, only twice he canceled because of his throat. He couldn't sing. And Frank Jr. both times filled in, and this was on the spur of the moment. It wasn't like they had a weekend event. One night, just before the show, Frank said he couldn't go on. And both times Frank Jr. did an incredible job. He was a good singer and a good musician. And whenever people say, well, he wasn't like his father, well, no one was like his father, right? You know, how would you like to go on a baseball (game) with the name Mickey Mantle Junior!

Tom shares about first meeting Dean and a special connection he had with Dean's family.

'First of all, I met Dean in a bar. It was called Dominick's. Where else would you meet Dean Martin? I went up to the bar. I didn't know Dean was there. He was in the corner. And this is the truth. This is what he said. I was ordering some drinks to take back to the group that I was with. And in the corner, I hear this guy say, you're a pretty funny little dago. And I look up and I think, who's calling me a dago? It was Dean Martin. And I said, well, you're pretty funny yourself. And I went over, shook hands, and then moments later, his manager came in. And we spoke for a minute. And then it wasn't long after that that Dean asked me to be on the Dean Martin Show as he'd been watching me on TV because he watched TV a lot. From doing the Dean Martin roast with him, I also did some private gigs, some corporate dates with Dean. I played golf with him. I played golf with him a couple of times at the Riviera, and I became really good friends with his son Craig, his oldest boy, his first child. Craig and I played golf together and hung around together a lot.'

Tom shares a sentimental story about Gail Martin, Dean's daughter: 'When Frank Sinatra passed away, a man named Mike Downey was a writer for the LA times, wrote an interesting story about me and my relationship with Frank Sinatra. It was on the front page. Dean Martin's son, Craig called me the next day. He said, My sister Gail is a big fan of that writer, Mike Downey. And she read that he knows you. And I said, Oh, I know him for years. Craig said that his sister Gail really wanted to meet him. She was a big fan of his writing. So I arranged for a dinner at a place called Fab's, a little Italian restaurant in my neighborhood. And Mike Downey came with me and we went in, and Craig Martin was with his wife Donna and with his sister Gail. Before we even sat down, I said, Gail, this is Mike Downey. And she started telling Mike all the columns she ever read before we even sat down. About nine months later, they got married! So often times they'll say that Tom Dreesen brought us together. Frank's death actually brought them together. And they're still married to this day.

On Dean's comedy style: 'What people don't realize is, is how funny Dean Martin really was. Dick Martin (of Rowan and Martin) once told me he thought Dean Martin was one of the

most underrated comedians in the country because everybody of course knew Dean the singer or Dean the actor. But he could slay you. He broke Frank up all the time. Dean wouldn't say anything all day, and then he'd say one line and you'd fall on the floor. Dean would like to sit around while everybody else was talking and making jokes. And, he wouldn't say anything. And then he'd say one sentence about something and it would be the line of the day. He was truly a gifted comedian. He had a great sense of comedy and he loved to laugh too!'

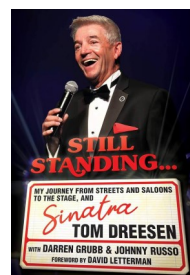
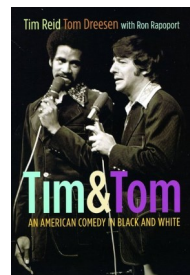
On Dean's love of golf: 'If you're a golfer and you're having a bad round of golf, you might go into the pro shop afterward and maybe buy a putter, or maybe buy a new driver. But Craig said his dad might've had a hundred sets of golf clubs in his storage spaces. Wow. He'd walk in after a round of golf and buy a brand new, a whole new set of golf clubs. Oh my gosh. He loved it that much.'

On Jerry Lewis and Dean: 'I talked to Jerry Lewis one night, well over an hour and a half in my dressing room. I knew Jerry. I did his MDA telethons alot. I was curious about comedy teams because I had been a member of a comedy team and I asked him about him and Dean. He said, "Tom, in the beginning, we didn't have great material. We did things like, *Did you take a bath today? No, why is one missing?* You know, those kind of old jokes and stuff. But we loved one another, and the audience saw that, that we had great love for one another. And they also saw when we didn't have love for one another." But he said it was their chemistry, this Jewish kid and this Catholic guy, which was in those days, a Jew and a Catholic on stage together as a comedy team was extraordinary.'

Tom mentioned his love of the UK and performing there: 'There was a chat show called *The Des O'Connor Show* for years. And I was the first American comedian they used over there. I went back there twice to perform. I love the UK. I love the people there. I love their comedy, like *Monty Python*, and I think *Fawlty Towers* starring John Cleese was one of the greatest sitcoms. I love going back to the UK. They have (a former professional soccer player over there named) Vinnie Jones (who is now an actor and presenter). I play golf with Vinnie all the time and we exchange jokes. I give him jokes to tell when he goes back to London.'

Tom could have easily talked endlessly about his career and the fantastic times he spent with Frank, Dean and Sammy. But we truly appreciate his kindness in sharing these heart-felt memories with us all. Many more inspiring stories are in his sensational books and one-man show, *The Man Who Made Sinatra Laugh*. Tom continues to perform at sold-out venues nationally and is a sought-after motivational speaker. You can catch Tom's next live performance on 8 June in Nashville at the Franklin Theater.

As David Letterman says in the foreword of Tom's book: 'Like me, you will love Tom.' **JD**



Top: Tom with Frank Sinatra Jr (Tom Dreesen private collection)

Above: Tom's books - *Tim & Tom: An American Comedy in Black White* by Tim Reid, Tom Dreesen with Ron Rappaport (University of Chicago Press, 2008); *Still Standing* by Tom Dreesen with Darren Grubb and Johnny Russo (Post Hill Pr, 2020)

Opposite: with Sammy Davis, Jr (Tom Dreesen private collection)

Please visit  
tomdreesen.com



Fans, peers, friends and professionals join us now for a journey of remembrance, as we celebrate what would have been Dino's 107th birthday. This is what memories are made of...

# A CELLER



**D**ean Martin surely had to be one of the most likeable fellas in the business! Whilst showing everyone a devil-may-care and relaxed attitude in all chapters of his showbusiness work, he worked very hard to get this across to the public and succeeded very well: million-selling records, hit movies, award-winning TV series, plus radio and innumerable concert appearances, the majority of which were in his beloved Las Vegas.

Born on 7 June 1917 as Dino Paul Crocetti, he started his working life as a gas station attendant, croupier, mill hand and whiskey salesman, but always longed to be a singer. Singing as "Dino Martini", bandleader Sammy Watkins hired him and it wasn't long before he crossed paths with a young comedian called Jerry Lewis. With a name change to Dean Martin, he and Jerry became a hugely successful comedy team, working the clubs, taking over the airwaves as NBC radio stars, finding a niche presence on TV (again for NBC) and pulling in the crowds with their Paramount movies. They made sixteen films over ten years, finally going their separate ways in 1956.

While critics at the time maligned Dean's ability to make it as a solo artist (reviews of his movie *Ten Thousand Bedrooms* [MGM, 1957] compounding that), he nevertheless proved the naysayers wrong by becoming one of the world's highest paid entertainers. He became well-known and adored by millions of admirers across the globe, and was looked up to by his fellow artists (even Elvis Presley declared himself a fan).

There was no finer person in showbusiness that we know of: we are very privileged and very humbled to have known him and immensely proud to have been ambassadors for his life and career since 1960. On our 64-year (and counting) journey, we've been fortunate enough to meet and in many cases become friends with fans, DMA members and entertainment professionals (who are also fans and some even DMA members!). A few of them join us now to share their thoughts and celebrate all things Dino...

## MARK ADAMS



My connection with Dean Martin began in 2002, twenty-two years ago. Feels like yesterday but it very nearly didn't happen.

I am a British actor who has been performing on stage, screen and TV since 1984. 40 years!

So when half of that time has been, in part, dedicated to Dean, yes, it's been quite a connection.

Why did it nearly never happen?

Well in 2001 I was on a UK number one tour (basically a tour of the U.K. to the big theatres) with a show called *Leader of the Pack*. It had been written by a good friend of mine and celebrated the writing team of Ellie Greenwich and Jeff Barry who wrote tons of songs, out of the Brill building straight into the US charts (songs such as "Then He Kissed Me", "Da Do Ron Ron", "Do Wah Diddy", "I Can Hear Music" and of course "The leader of the Pack").

Katrina Leskanich, of Katrina and the Waves, Eurovision winner and massive hit maker with "Walking on Sunshine" was making her stage-acting debut and was brilliant in the part of Ellie Greenwich.

I played her writing partner, and one time husband, Jeff Barry.

It was a great show and a lot of fun but also quite gruelling and after eight months I felt ready for a change. No sooner had I finished the tour, my agent said I'd been asked to audition for a show called *The Rat Pack - Live from Las Vegas*.

I initially said, 'Not for me. I've just been on the road! Don't fancy another musical.'

'We'll, this isn't really a musical. It's kind of a recreation of what the Rat Pack did in the Sands Hotel 1960 whilst filming *Ocean's 11*'

Well, I had heard of the Rat Pack, though my memories were of it being Sinatra, Bogart, Niven, what was known as the Holmby Hills Rat Pack, then latterly Sammy Davis and Dean Martin.

I was intrigued. I knew the music would be great and there would be a fifteen-piece band onstage, not in the orchestra pit! We would have hand held lead mics. Not head mics.

We would have hand held lead mics. Not head mics. I'd get half a dozen solo songs, some nice comic schtick and some belting songs with Frank and Sammy (no Lawford or Bishop).

I had worked with the director a few times before, maybe this would be fun!

So before the audition I looked a little bit more into this Dean Martin chap.

Of course I knew a little a out him about him, who didn't? He was in a comedy act with Jerry Lewis; he had a few hit songs, "That's Amore", "Memories Are Made Of This", "Everybody loves Somebody"... I also recalled the Matt Helm films, they were played a lot in the UK: James Bond without the budget, but with a dashing hero of a leading man who brought some nuanced light comedy to the role. He got the girls and the gags.

Then I started to look into this guy in earnest. Fortunately my next door neighbors were huge fans and they had a video tape (remember those?) of a concert performed in 1965 at the Kiel Theatre. St Louis. It was a charity event organized by Frank, of course, hosted by Johnny Carson, and it was entitled *Frank Sinatra's Rat Pack*. This was way before YouTube, so trying to see anything was difficult, especially of the three together in live performances.

What I saw was a game changer.

A man in a white tuxedo jacket walked into the stage to introduce Carson. Now Carson knew television inside out. He also was a consummate comedian and the audience welcomed him with a great deal of warmth.

Everyone in the theatre were dressed to impress. As was Carson. A tall elegant man who was at ease with the situation, he explained the reason behind the event and that actually he was a late replacement for Joey Bishop (more cheers). Carson, had the responsibility of introducing Dean. 'The only reason I have a drink in my hand is to set the scene,' he started.

Well, he could get no further! The audience erupted and for once Carson was speechless.

Dean, who would have been ready and waiting in the wings, his dressing room on stage level as he hated elevators, knew what to do.

He casually walked on. He didn't once take in the →



Above, inset: Mark Adams [Libby Christensen]

Opposite, inset: Dean Martin [Ricci Martin/Reprise]

Opposite, main: Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr and Frank Sinatra, c1965

# BRATTON



→ audience. He walked to Carson. Off mic they shared a joke. The audience, quietened, Carson took this moment to leave the stage.

Dean, looking more handsome than any man should look, just looked at the adoring crowd and said. 'Oh, thank you very much.

played the London Palladium towards the end of the debut tour and just prior to us having our West End home.

'You steal the show you know? You could be doing this for years!'

I laughed.

Well, he made a pretty good prediction.



Above: Mark Adams as Dean Martin, Stephen Triffitt as Frank Sinatra and George Daniel Long as Sammy Davis Jr. on stage [DRP Touring]



For more information about Mark and The Definitive Rat Pack, including cast bios, merchandise and tour dates, please visit [thedefinitiveratpack.com](http://thedefinitiveratpack.com)

Above, inset: US entertainer Joe Scalissi as Dean Martin

Am I supposed to be on? Somebody pushed me on. Oh, alright.'

So natural, so easy, so secure.

His stillness, his casualness, his ability to connect with the packed audience... But also know where every camera was in the room, had the audience and everyone watching on close circuit television all over the US in his hands and he hadn't cracked a joke or sung a note.

Of course he had his prop. The glass in his hand.

What was in it?

It was the first question I asked Deana Martin when she came to see our show at the Strand theatre in London's West End nearly forty years later.

'Oh, this don't mean anything at all. This is just a gag! I don't drink anymore. I freeze it now and eat it like a popsicle!'

Audience howled; a few more drink gags and a few off stage remarks from Frank, who I am sure was excited by his pally's reception, but also wanted to share these moments.

He still hadn't sung a note!

Now you know when someone is genuinely funny when the orchestra are also laughing. You can see the string players, normally the most serious, with huge grins on their faces. He had them in the palm of his hand too.

Well, his solo set that evening was extraordinary. His links between songs were incredible. His version of "King of the Road" led to my insistence that it be in our show.

I knew then that I wanted to play the part, and the rest as they say...

I recall an actor friend of mine, who's work I really respected, came to see the show when we

I don't know how many shows I've performed over the last twenty years but they must run into three or four *thousand*

In December 2009, I took my own show, *That's Amore*, on tour across the US.

Ten years ago George Daniel Long, who plays Sammy Davis Jr. and started the company Definitive Rat Pack Touring.

With our own shows *The Definitive Rat Pack* and *Sinatra and Friends* we have played shows in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, France, Sweden, Denmark, Turkey, Ireland, Singapore, Malaysia, Dubai, Brazil, Grand Cayman, Cuba. Our Christmas show tours the UK every December. Spring 2025 sees us back on tour in Germany to pick up where we last were in 2020 when the pandemic halted everything.

Dean was born 107 years ago by the time you read this and passed away nearly three decades ago (in 1995), yet the appetite for his music and style, and that of Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr. too, is still there and we find our audiences can't get enough of us.

When I was interviewed by the DMA some years ago, I was asked if there would ever be a time when I feel I wouldn't want to play Dean anymore.

I genuinely would like to pass the baton on at some stage and I hope I inspire younger guys to want to explore the brilliance of Dean, to pick up where I leave off. But I still ain't ready to leave just yet!

Would we like to perform in Steubenville one day? Yes, without a doubt - maybe it will happen and we'd love to be invited. ♦

## JOE SCALISSI

Since I discovered Dean Martin, I always related to him. Same ethnicity, one older brother, I was a boxer and I guess we both liked great music and making people laugh.

Dean had an aura, a charisma that drew you in.

Never meeting him, you felt like you knew him.

He was a mega star who seemed to keep his head out of the clouds and feet firmly planted on the ground.

I'd say Dean was someone who you can relate to and understand your connection to, even without meeting them. ♦



## CHERYL RADDEN

We're celebrating the birth of one Dino Paul Crocetti on 7 June 1917. Back then, what his proud parents, Angel and Guy, didn't know was that their tiny infant would become an international celebrity icon, his name still fondly remembered 107 years later.

I live in the UK and have been member of the DMA for far too many years to remember, having joined when Bernard Thorpe was running things!

Inexplicably, our television companies only brought a few episodes of *The Dean Martin Show*, but they did treat us to Dean's 1967 Christmas edition with the Martin and Sinatra families, and importantly, I saw it! I was 12.

I became a life-long fan of Dean's there and then. Found his antics fascinating. He looked and sounded good too. With that very naughty twinkle in his eye.

Remember the fantastic duet with Frank and Dean at the end of that show? That was the hook. From then on, I began following his career. It was impressive. A big TV star, film actor, hit singer, regular gigs on stage in Vegas and elsewhere (but not in the UK). His name was everywhere. He was one of the Hollywood elite - in a time when Hollywood stars were something really special. There were those great Westerns he made too. The Matt Helm series, and then *Airport*. The first disaster movie.

Fans like me would wait patiently for the next album. Every vinyl release became a beloved possession. There were a lot of hit albums of his to collect.

It was the era of 60s pop, and yes, we loved that too - but many of us loved Dean just that bit more.

He was the whole package. That irresistible charm, understated ability - someone who, despite his fame and popularity, didn't take himself

too seriously. And of course, that stunning, distinctive singing voice.

It was its rich, attractive warmth that was more appealing to fans than say, the technical phrasing ability of his friend Frank Sinatra.

You could even hear him smile as he sung. What's not to like?

Dean had appeared on stage with Jerry Lewis here at The London Palladium in 1953. Most of the

audience enjoyed the show, but many booed and the pair didn't get good reviews in the press either. Dean seethed over the critics, vowing he'd never appear on stage in the UK again. It was a pity he was upset with us, but he didn't appear on stage anywhere outside the USA anyway.

It wasn't until June 1983 that he changed his mind about us, doing a series of sold out shows at London's Apollo Theatre.

No one booed then!

Audiences loved him. He promised he'd return. And he did, in July 1987. Just a few months after losing his beloved son Dean Paul. Brave.

Learning about him and his career became a fascinating experience for me over the years. All sorts of highs and lows, concerns and laughter. His eventful private life was well documented in the press, and things didn't always go smoothly. The media wasn't always kind to Dean. Some critics dismissed him because of, what was perceived to be, a careless attitude to his craft - The fact that he preferred not to rehearse his TV show on-set, making mistakes during its recording. And he didn't do dozens of takes, hunting for perfection, while recording those songs we all love.

Ironically, fans loved him *because* he'd done those things. Or didn't do those things.

When Dean Martin passed away in 1995, I feared his memory would soon fade too.

Instead, those who admired his work began to celebrate it again - along with reminding us all what a decent bloke he was - terribly popular with those he knew and had worked with. He was remembered fondly. And then the internet happened, allowing his astounding contribution to entertainment to be reflected on sites like YouTube, iTunes and Spotify, etc.

So, instead of disappearing into the mists of time, the internet reignited his work archive. Boom!

All we have to do now is click an icon on a gizmo and his library of songs magically appear. Same goes for his movies. A limitless number of golden video clips, and all sorts of contributions from people



giving their opinions on his career and what has now become a lauded reputation.

And rightfully so.

He's "The King of Cool", they say. A title richly deserved.

In a world devoted to rap, hip hop, rock and pop, it's great that a new generation are now aware of Dean's work and like what they see.

What is *their* hook?

It's something of an achievement. It would make him smile. He'd be surprised.

It's good to know that there are young people now who are discovering what fans like me did all those years ago. And although they don't have the advantage of Dean being with us, his achievements are all quite literally at their fingertips.

Applause to every last one of you, because you're the ones who will hopefully carry his memory forward.

And finally, let's hear it for Steubenville! Thank you to all those who contribute and visit the festival every year to celebrate the icon that was born in your town over 100 years ago. Brilliant! *That's amore!* ♦

## MICHELLE DELLA FAVE



How lucky can one girl get? Ain't that a kick in the head. To say that I was lucky is an understatement.

I was the kid from Bergenfield, NJ who suddenly stepped into the spotlight of a star - that being Dean Martin!

As my birthday gift in observance of this amazing superstar, dear reader, I share my reflections as experienced in the wonderful world of Dean Martin 'behind the scenes' - step into the 'looking glass'!

For me to walk into that universe was exceptional and enchanting! I was mesmerized and soaked it all in! My earliest memory with Dean was as a Golddigger as the opening act in Reno or Lake Tahoe. All of a sudden there was a rush outside the 'green room' where we were waiting to go on. The entourage passed with Dean in his black tuxedo, impeccably dressed, as he was getting ready to perform. The next time I saw him was on the set of NBC as the Golddiggers did our special guest appearance. I realized that the Dean Martin experience extended beyond him and encompasses his environment too. Everything was the best that Los Angeles had to offer at that time, such as: musical director Lee Hale, choreographer Jonathan Lucas, choral director Jack Halloran, and accompanist Jeff Clarkson. All there to make

the Golddiggers and anyone who guest starred on his show shine. Again, how lucky can one gal get?

Dean's easy going nature and temperament were always present. We were like a happy family, all creating and having a good time. No upsets. That's what Dean wanted, good times.

Observing Dean was witnessing a performer who never really seemed to let the performance game be a serious and heavy situation.

All of his guest stars were amazing to watch and when they were with Dean, the tremendous rapport they shared flowed so easily! I think he was most proud of this! Dean was a schmoozer and the female guests loved it. And the male guests always had a good time. He was a charmer, with a warm and welcoming persona.

Dean didn't come off as a competitive person. He just let things roll along. And that's probably the best lesson I've learned from working with Dean. Dean and I chose the month of June to come into this world, an interesting connection!

Each person in Dean's universe, at NBC studios in Burbank, were all there for a very special purpose. We wanted to be there, to be in his spotlight, to work with him. That was shared by everyone - from the crew, the cue card boy, to Les Brown and his band. And of course, the lucky girls that got to be on his show every week - and every week the show was like a fantastic party! We all knew the purpose was to provide entertainment and joy to the live audience and thousands watching on TV. Welcome to my world. That was the theme of medleys we'd sing at the end of the show. Sitting around Dean - seated in the middle singing his favorite songs - we backed him and sang a few notes here and then I had solos! Imagine this - the kid from NJ!

I was so overjoyed to have a solo! What a blessing it was to be part of Dean's show and entourage! He encouraged me as a singer which boosted my confidence considerably as a young entertainer! His 'star quality' was not only heard, but seen with his impeccable, tasteful dressing. He made a striking appearance as noticed and admired by all - fans, crew, guests, and entourage! Surreal - a bevy of beauties surrounded him and I was one of them!

I think I prefer his guardian angels. It wasn't only Dean that was so remarkable, but the presence of director Greg Garrison, who not only made sure Dean was always presented at his best, but a tremendous protective guardian of his star.

Knowing that Dean was special, Greg was very aware of the delicate emotional part of Dean, which makes an artist a great singer and/or actor. The



secret is to maintain a healthy balance.

Greg was Dean's high official archangel who knew all of Dean's virtues and his faults.

Everyone was aware that they were working with someone very special.

And to think that I was in the same space learning from all these masters - was definitely a blessing.

If Dean were sitting next to me right now, he'd likely say, 'kid, just let things roll along, enjoy the process of creating and have a good time. Life is short, and for once, baby, let the good times roll'.

Happy Birthday, Dean.

Your memory is forever etched in heart and mind.

Thank you for the privilege and gift of knowing you and stepping into your aura.

I am forever grateful for such an amazing experience; lessons learned! ♦ →



Top & above: Michelle with Dean, in screen-shots from *The Dean Martin Show* (NBC)

Far left, inset: Michelle Della Fave today

Left: Michelle with Dean, in a screenshot from *The Dean Martin Show* (NBC)



## → RICHARD SHELTON

My relationship with Frank Sinatra started young.

As a small child in the English Midlands, I saw a photograph of Frank Sinatra in a magazine taken around the same age I was then, exclaiming excitedly, 'Mummy, who is this man called, Frank Sinatra? This could be me!' She looked at the photo sceptically, but quickly saw the similarity replying, 'Well, yes, I suppose it could!'

To give this a context, I need to explain my enduring relationship with Frank Sinatra which is utterly that of an actor. I have had the good fortune to travel deep behind the blue eyes of the icon and portray Sinatra's complex, mercurial character in two dramas; firstly, in the hard-hitting, award-winning 'warts 'n all exposé,' *Rat Pack Confidential* on the London stage – a play that went far beyond the mystery and myth of all five of the fabled Rat Pack, which included Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Joey Bishop and Peter Lawford.

Later, I wrote and portrayed Sinatra in the power-house drama, *Sinatra: RAW*, on stages from London, New York, Australia and in 2022 won 'The Best of Broadway' at the Hollywood Fringe Awards. In it, we find a man facing his middle age at the dawn of the 1970s heralding a new era of rock music, asking himself, 'What now?'

*Rat Pack Confidential* was based on the book by the same name, and the book's author and film critic for The Oregonian, Shawn Levy said of my performance, 'I sat in awe that night. Richard Shelton is an actor who has discovered a way to convey the complexities of Sinatra's character. When I met him after the performance, gone was the boorish, herculean character I'd seen on stage and instead, in front of me stood a softly spoken Englishman man. He has an uncanny connection to the character of Sinatra. He has got, to paraphrase Cole Porter, Sinatra 'under his skin'.

The BBC agreed. 'No one should take lightly standing onstage trying to be Frank Sinatra, but Richard Shelton is quite simply phenomenal. He captures the essence of the man perfectly. His voice has exactly the right tone; he has that twinkle in his eye; he has the anger that sometimes flowed out of every Sinatra pore.' [Mike Young, BBC Music]

You can't have Sinatra without music and my love of big-band and jazz music started when my

father would blast the music of Ella Fitzgerald, Dave Brubeck, Buddy Rich and of course, Frank Sinatra, around the house. Aged 14, I played my dad's cassette of Sinatra's *My Way* more than he did. I simply got it – the cadence of the lyrics, the phrasing, the melodic story telling quality. Even back then, I could feel the loneliness in, "Didn't We Almost Make It, This Time",

or the celebration in "Hallelujah, I Love Her So".

It wasn't until I was in my 40s that *Rat Pack Confidential* came calling. I was already known on the acting and London jazz scene having made a break from a previous career in the hotel business. I knew a lot about starting over again and having the courage of my convictions. It stood me in good stead for what was to come with Sinatra and gave me the insight into a certain Sinatra swagger and confidence which was a very necessary and innate part of his character and key to his magical allure.

So where exactly did Dean Martin fit in? Well, to my mind, without Dino Sinatra would have been less – much less.

Sinatra and Dean Martin were both global stars by the time the Rat Pack came along. Originally called The Clan, its leader was the movie legend, Humphrey Bogart, whom Sinatra idolised. In the early 1950s, as a bunch of friends they would meet to chit-chat, play cards and drink and it was Bogart's wife, screen siren, Lauren Bacall who one night said in her unmistakable sexy growl, 'You're like a Goddam Rat Pack...' and the name was born.

Around this time, Sinatra was splitting-up from the love of his life, Ava Gardner. He'd lost it all – his movie deal, his reputation but worse of all, his voice. Legend has it that one night when he was singing "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning" in the Purple Room Club in Palm Springs, Dean Martin yelled from the audience, 'Oh for God's sake, cheer up, pallie!' Sinatra shouted something back and the act was formed!

It's important to understand that these men were friends for years before 'the act'. There was a respect and a trust that ran far deeper than just showbiz tales of glamour and late nights. They were both children of Italian immigrants and had the hunger to make something of themselves in the fiercely competitive world of showbusiness.

Sinatra was a paradox of needy and fiercely independent. If he liked you, he'd move heaven and earth for you but if he didn't, or he lost his legendary temper, you just got out of the way.

But it was Dean Martin who softened his edges, who was the

perfect foil for his musical genius.

Dean had great natural warmth and charisma. Sinatra wasn't naturally funny, but Martin was. With a simple look, a gesture, some gentle goofing around, the 'drunkie Dean' prat falls, he made it all appear so perfectly effortless. Of course, it wasn't – these were highly skilled men at the top of their game who knew exactly what they were doing and by doing it, enraptured the world and created a legend.

In *Rat Pack Confidential* we were given the unusually long rehearsal period of five weeks. Each of us would watch hours of footage of the Pack members to get it just right – the walk, the lip movements, the hip wiggles, the tug of the tuxedo sleeve. But most importantly of all, the character.

Acting is the art of evocation. It isn't impersonating – that's a very different skill. None of us were impersonators. Acting is about peeling away the layers and understanding the emotion of the moment and then presenting it, understanding how it felt to be in a certain situation and communicate that to the audience. That's where the characterisation comes from.

Alex Giannini, the actor who played Dino, was a magician. For every glittering award nomination or favourable notice, I owed it in large part to Alex. Without him, I simply couldn't have created the Sinatra I found. Within the play, he deftly balanced the unpredictable Sinatra temperament; he softened the pain of the loss Sinatra would sing about and made it tolerable. He would dissolve awkward dramatic moments with a slight of hand, so as I gained a unique perspective in what it might have felt like to have Dean Martin alongside as Sinatra's wingman. Without him, I simply couldn't have done my job.

Alex was a master at understanding the measure of what was needed to improvise Dean's imagined on-stage drunk persona. As we know, so much of it in the early days was just apple juice. The real stuff came later.

*Rat Pack Confidential* was an emotional roller-coaster ride of a show, largely driven by Sinatra who was the 'Chairman of the Board', but it was always a relief when the Dean singing segment would come along because for a few moments, I could simply stand back, take my foot off the gas and just enjoy the sheer humour and beauty in Alex's performance as Dino and bathe in his reflected glamour.

It was intoxicating and made me feel safe. I could only imagine how it must have been to see and hear the real Dean, which must have been magical. Just recreating it gave me a good idea how special it must have felt.

Before the show, the dressing rooms would be a mixture of eau-de-cologne and a cacophony of various 50s music, a far cry from the usual pre-performance backstage smells and sounds in a theatre. A stage manager remarked, 'I've never had such a beautifully scented cast – it's a joy!'

As Sinatra loved Dean, I loved Alex.

We were connected in a deeply meaningful and respectful way, both aware we couldn't do what the other was doing and grateful to orbit in each other's hemisphere just for a short time. We just made each other better.

When *Rat Pack Confidential* ended, I missed Alex terribly. We stayed loyal friends until he died, far too young.

By the time *Sinatra: RAW* came along, Sinatra was older, more disillusioned by life and its ups and downs, which he sang about so brilliantly.

I love portraying this sometimes fearsome, sometimes gentle, often complex and complicated man, but I also miss Dean alongside me on stage. I wonder if the guys ever said as much to one another.

I know Frank and Dean had an on-stage reunion tour, but it was short lived.

Perhaps it might be fun to recreate that one day, bring it back to life and step back into the oh, so shiny shoes of the Rat Pack.

Above, inset: multi award-winning actor and singer, Richard Shelton, labelled as "the world's leading dramatic interpreter of Frank Sinatra"

Below, right: Richard as Frank Sinatra in *Sinatra: RAW* (Laurence Harvey/Highfield Productions)







Along the way, I've had some truly extraordinary Sinatra synchronicities.

By a fluke, I was one of the last people alive in Sinatra's last home in Foothills Road as it was being demolished.

One of his tuxedos walked into my life and is an exact fit, a fact confirmed by Sir Roger Moore (James Bond) on British TV.

I've worked with his musicians, his hands and feet imprints on the Hollywood Walk of Fame are an exact fit to mine and were made on my birthday, 20th July.

I got the chance to share the stage with Deana Martin at Catalina Jazz Bar and Grill in LA and accidentally drank from her prop glass without knowing it and felt overwhelmingly embarrassed. I think it was Frank up to a devilish Rat Pack prank and I hope she'll forgive me! It was a real 'pinch me' moment to share the same space as her.

But meantime, after an extensive UK tour of *Frank Sinatra: The Retirement Concert*, I'm bringing *Sinatra: RAW* to the Edinburgh Festival.

The screenplay version is written, and I'd love to partner with someone to make it onto the small and big screen.

I remain very grateful to Frank Sinatra and especially to Dean Martin, who have both given me the privilege of understanding true friendship and indelible professional collaboration few actors are ever lucky enough to experience. ♦

## BERNARD H THORPE

\*Where to begin?

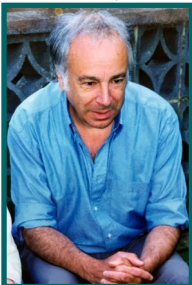
Sometimes when the hundreds and hundreds of letters that come in to the London DMA office addressed to Dino, I recall in 1960 that I had no idea to the extent of how far reaching his admirers were around the world. The majority of course are in the US, and that makes

perfect sense, but we have a huge percentage in the UK and across Europe. Australia features large, as does South Africa, and so many from Asia. I occasionally wonder too how Dean's voice 'translates' for our members for whom English isn't their first language. We know how he works a lyric, how he phrases a word and holds a note. But at the end of the day, I know he transcends such silly barriers as language and culture!

Dean truly is an international superstar, and appeals to all corners of our fragile planet. He brings everyone together, and those who are brought together indeed find a common ground.

When we started out, we were Dino's Fan Club, then The International Dean Martin Club. But Dean told us he wanted us to be called The Dean Martin Association; so what our Chairman proposed, we gladly and without hesitation complied. Y'see, Dean knew what he

I sit amid



was doing. He *always* knew what he was doing.

He just liked to make us think he didn't. That was his stage act.

We were an association of Dean Martin admirers - that's how I saw us and that's what Dean was happy to see in us, too. So we literally became an association, in name and in actuality. We became Dean's association.

All of what we do at the DMA is for our wonderful Dino and for our wonderful members. We have built working relationships and made friendships all over the world because of this one man.

He smiles and nods when I tell him whenever our membership numbers increase (which at the time of writing, following his London concerts, is quite often and by quite a lot!).

'Is that so?' he gently says, as if he is diplomatically incredulous that anyone would be interested in *anything* he does!

But interested we are, and interested his admirers are (I don't like to use the word *fan* because Dean isn't fond of the label, another reason why he changed our name).

We would like to play his records twenty-four seven; we'd watch his TV show back to back if we could; his movies would be on endless repeat...

So what does he mean to me, this enigmatic, hugely talented American entertainer? What does he mean to all of us?

Perhaps that's assumptive of me to *know* what he means to others, but by all the mountains

of correspondence we get, let alone what Dean gets himself directly, I can be certain that he means very much the same thing to all of us:

We admire his effortless charm, his suavity, his ability to make everyone feel welcome and wanted. We enjoy his outlook, the manner in which he sings a song, how he walks across a cabaret stage in Las Vegas or a soundstage in Hollywood. We appreciate his elegance in dress, his way that he can spin a gag and make us laugh. He makes us feel like he's there for us, and only us.

He looks like a million dollars, and we feel like a million dollars when we watch him.

I've been fortunate enough to meet him, to spend time alone with him talking about business and pleasure. I feel privileged to be in his company, but that doesn't mean I am ever a sycophant to him: I respect him greatly and very deeply, and I offer my opinions to him. He likewise understands I'm not here to bask in his glory, to pass it off as my own. No. And I would never *ever* misuse my position as the president of his association. I do a job for him. But what a job! To have to listen to his latest LP or his newest single, to have to attend premiers to his films, to go around the world talking about him and his career! Oh boy! Some jobs are a bind. But this one? I wouldn't change it for the world!

How much longer can the DMA go on for? That's not up to me, that's not even up to Dino. That's up to *you*. And I hope it will go on forever. JJD

Above: Richard Shelton as Frank Sinatra in *Sinatra: RAW* (Highfield Productions)

For more information about Richard, please visit [richardshelton.co.uk](http://richardshelton.co.uk)

Left, inset: DMA co-founder and president, the late Bernard H Thorpe

\*Bernard wrote this piece in June 1983, shortly after Dean returned home from London. It was for inclusion in a trade magazine but was ultimately unused.



**Letter From Dino** was the original title of our monthly publication in 1960, before we settled on *Just Dino* (from 1987 onwards).

Please note that any items mentioned as being enclosed or available for sale within this article are not for sale nor are available, nor enclosed. As products are no longer held by The Dean Martin Association either now or in the future, we must respectfully ask that you do not contact the publisher or The Dean Martin Association or any associated individual or organization asking to purchase any products that this or similar archival editorials make reference to.

## 1962

### C'est Magnifique!

One of the songs on Dean's first Reprise LP - and also the general attitude of quite a proportion of the record buyers with regard to FRENCH STYLE.

This seems to be selling well, but then Dino has always been an "album seller", more so than his singles. If a French-themed LP from Dino sells well, then how well will his Italian one be received?!

DINO: ITALIAN LOVE SONGS has had a terrific response already in the US and we are of the opinion it will beat the sales of all his LPs to date. It will be released in the UK on 3 September 1962.

## 1964

### Everybody Loves Somebody

Dean's current single is racing up the US charts, above The Rolling Stones (and we all know what Dean thinks of them...!). In fact, it's above almost everyone else! Let's get it to no. 1!

## 1965

### The Sons of Katie Elder

This will be the next film from Dean to arrive. The stars are John Wayne, Dean Martin, Martha Hyer (remember her in *Some Came Running*?) and Michael Anderson Jr. The film is in Technicolor and Panavision from Paramount, with Hal Wallis producing and Henry Hathaway directing. There are stacks of action in this Western and we think you'll really enjoy it! Go see it - twice!

## 1969

### Dean's Latest Album For Reprise

Last week, Dino completed his songs for the forthcoming Reprise album, again produced by Jimmy Bowen. The LP should be issued for the fall in the USA, with a release over in the UK at some point in the weeks following. Further details will be announced as soon as we have them.

This was I TAKE A LOT OF PRIDE IN WHAT I AM, recorded 11-13 June 1969, with the album released 7 August 1969.

## 1974

### Ricco

After a fair gap of time, with Dino undecided as to whether or not he would ever make a movie again, he has at last been persuaded by MGM to make a film for them. His contract has yet to be finalized and the full cast not yet in place, but the provisional title will be *Ricco*. We understand from Dean he will be playing a San Francisco attorney but he wouldn't elaborate any more than that!



## 1983

### The Nashville Sessions II

Dean is planning to record again, so his management tells us, although we are not able to get any further details as to when. We understand it will 'be a follow up to THE NASHVILLE SESSIONS and in a similar vein'. We would assume it will be in the next few months and after he has filmed the sequel to *The Cannonball Run*. He did say last year he wouldn't record again but we will bring you updates as soon as we have them...

## 1987

### Dean Martin At Seventy!!

As we are all aware by now, our Dino is seventy years of age on 7 June this year. He was born in Steubenville, Ohio in 1917, son of Angela and Guy Crocetti and, although he doesn't really want a reminder of his age, he sure will get plenty from his friends and admirers around the world. He has asked us to thank you all on his behalf for the cards and gifts you've already sent him (and we have more to ship to California!) and we all thank him for the very many years he has given us all great pleasure with the mere existence of that talent he has for making it look all so easy!

### MGM Bally's Show

Dean had every intention of cancelling his 9 April show at the luxurious MGM Bally's Hotel Casino. The shows were originally scheduled merely a few days after Dean Jr was found and Dean said he simply couldn't face anything. But after his son's funeral, he told Mort to prepare for 9 April after all: 'I'm gonna do MGM and I'm gonna put everything I've got into it,' he said.

Just before he sent on stage, he commented that this was '...the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. My son is gone and I feel like nothing, but I'm going to get out there on that stage because I know it is what my Dino would have wanted more than anything; it is my life and I must go on.'

To a packed house of over 1400, he walked on stage just before 9pm, singing 'Drink to me only...that's all I ask...ask...' then went on for almost eighty minutes (longer than normal), eventually breaking down in tears, unable to go on. Steadying himself on Ken Lane's piano with his back to the audience, he managed to turn back to everyone, saying 'God love you.'

He was giving a standing ovation and thundering applause. 'That was for Dino - we did it,' he said to Ken, as he left the stage, happy and relieved..

## 1996

### Martin & Lewis & Lugosi

We received a disgruntled letter recently complaining that we never ever mention the film that Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis made with Bela Lugosi. Well, that's because Martin and Lewis never made a film with Lugosi!

Called *Bela Lugosi Meets A Brooklyn Gorilla*, Duke Mitchell and Sammy Petrillo emulated Dean and Jerry in this 1952 farce from Jack Broder Productions.

Mitchell and Petrillo would copy much of the Martin and Lewis style in nightclub acts and the occasional TV appearance to such an extent that the real Dean and Jerry once considered taking legal action! JD



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### SUNDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024

3:00pm: Guests check-in  
5:45pm: Meet 'n' Greet - The Garden Room  
6:45pm: Three-Course Dinner in The Crystal Restaurant  
8:30pm: Film: Screening of A Classic Hollywood Film Musical

### MONDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024

7 - 9:30am: Full Breakfast in The Crystal Restaurant  
11:00am: Movie Quiz in The Garden Room  
3:30pm: Film: Screening Of Another Great Hollywood Film Musical  
6:45pm: Three-Course Dinner in The Crystal Restaurant  
8:30pm: Live Show: Fred & Ginger

### TUESDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024

7 - 9:30am: Full Breakfast in The Crystal Restaurant  
11:00am: Excursion  
3:30pm: Pianist Trevor Brown Plays Your Requests  
6:45pm: Three-Course Dinner in The Crystal Restaurant  
8:30pm: Live Show: From Broadway to Hollywood

### WEDNESDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024

7 - 9:30am: Full Breakfast in The Crystal Restaurant  
3:30pm: Film: Screening Of Another Great Hollywood Film Musical  
6:45pm: Three-Course Dinner in The Crystal Restaurant  
8:30pm: Live Show: Frank Sinatra - His Way

### THURSDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2024

7 - 9:30am: Full Breakfast in The Crystal Restaurant  
10:00am: Guest Checking Out

### BOOKING INFORMATION

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us by telephone or e-mail.

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# The Entertainer Who Sang

Dean Martin was an artist who could do just about anything. As Cindy explains, he wasn't just a singer who entertained, rather, he was...

So often when you think of someone as being an entertainer, you tend to sort them into specific areas: there are those who sing, some who dance, some have the gift of making you laugh, some are actors, etc. When you look at the years that Dean spent in the industry, you will see him dabble in each of those areas and more. But the one area that he is known for more than any of them is the area of singing. The "singing entertainer." And while he did spend time as an actor, as the host of radio and TV shows, it was the beauty of his voice that made a name for him and took him to heights that he did not see on the radar of his life.

The truth to the matter is that Dean was the true sense and definition of the word *entertainer*. The Collaborative International Dictionary defines it as such: 'one who amuses people, such as a singer, dancer, comedian, etc., a person who tries to please or amuse.' The definition describes Dean to a "T."

In many interviews over the years, Dean himself stated that he did not have professional acting or singing lessons. In other words, he watched, he listened, and he learned.

During those early years spent with family on Sunday afternoons singing the songs of Italy, learning the art of storytelling through song and amusing people seemed to fit him like a glove. One might go as far to say that even in his early childhood, the days spent with his family and in the Italian community of Steubenville, were moulding him for what lie ahead for him. He would go from the local hometown boy, son of a barber, to an international success.

From an incredibly early age, Dino Crocetti participated in musical activities which ranged from playing the drums in his Boy Scout Troup to participating in musical productions in his community to "bumming around" with a song on his lips at other establishments in and around the town of Steubenville and Ohio. It was a talent and passion that was obvious to anyone

who heard him sing, and one that would be an integral part of his life.

In those early days he spent his time listening to Bing Crosby, The Mills Brothers, Russ Columbo, and others. He spent his time watching western movies at the theater.

And it was during all these moments in time that he began to perfect his style and build his dream.

When his first attempt to be an entertainer failed and he returned home to work in the gambling joints in Steubenville, the story goes that it was his friends who believed in him and pushed him to pursue his dream. Regardless of who or what speared him on or how it really happened, it paid off for him in many ways. The crucial factor in this leg of his journey was that he took the first step to pursue his dream and most importantly, he never gave up. In doing that, obviously there would be many obstacles that Dean would face along the way in his career. But it was through those very obstacles, however, that refined his vision and his dream.

Dean had a few things going for him right from the beginning. He was good looking, but he also had a very distinct style and charm, even as a young man. It was the style and charm that set him apart from others, and it was a tool that captivated his audiences with what has been referred to as an "effortless charisma, laid-back demeanor and a charm which flowed naturally through his veins." You see it as he takes the stage, as he interacts with guests, and you hear it as he drops the first note of a song. With those elements in place and awareness they bring of his presence, you are now in position to be completely and totally captivated by this man.





It didn't matter what he did, he had your undivided attention. He just made you laugh. He made you reflect. And for a small fraction of time, you were transported into his presence. He made you feel as if you were sitting front and center of his performance. It was as simple as the delivery of his music and his stage presence.

In an interview many years ago, Greg Garrison challenged people to watch Dean when he had a guest and see if you could pay any attention at all to his guest.

I have tried multiple times over the years and the simple answer is no, you are watching Dean from start to finish. Even when he is gazing upon the one who is singing with him or performing a skit. Your eyes are on him. Period.

One may ask "what exactly sets him apart?" or "what portion of his career draws you to him"? I think for most of us, the answers could be, and quite possibly, are endless.

There was just something magical and captivating about him. It was his humble but determined persona he exhibited. It was the kindness that was obvious as you watched him interact with others. It was just watching him truly have fun at what he was doing

During a recent conversation, DMA consultant Ron Iveson pointed out this most obvious thing: that Dean was an entertainer who sang, not a singer who entertained, say like Frank Sinatra (and hence the reason for this article's theme!).

Yet Dean's main calling card in his career was his velvety voice. The voice cast a spell upon his audience and made them want to come back repeatedly. This was much the case whether he was singing a beautiful love song or one of several other genres of songs. Regardless of what genre of song he did sing, he displayed a versatility that would become synonymous with Dean Martin. As you go through his discography of songs and listen to the many different genres, the different tones and projections of his voice, the deliverance, and the interpretation, it is quite clear that Dean had found his calling in life. Especially when the projection of one simple voice has to the power to leave us with the impression that the song had been written specifically for him. And we see that repeatedly throughout his career.

As we take that thought to the next level, we need to realize that when Dean sang a song, whether it was as a solo piece or with a guest, you automatically had the sense that he was singing specifically to you or to his duet partner. You felt the warmth, you felt the emotion, and in some small way, you even felt eye contact and you sensed for that moment in time, this was your song. And the beautiful thing about Dean was that he didn't do it for applause or for show. He was simply in his element, doing what he loved to do and what he had been cut out to be...an entertainer.

Regardless of what part of his career he was in, Dean had the innate tendency to draw all eyes on him just by walking on stage. It was through these very subtle moments and gestures that he would work an audience right into the palm of his hand. He had his facial expressions. His comments. Movement of his hands. He didn't do anything spectacular with lights or effects.

whether that was singing, acting, making an audience laugh, working a table in a casino, riding horseback, or swinging a golf club.

It should come as no surprise that Dean Martin has been referred to as one of the most popular entertainers of the 21st century. He was an icon both on and off the stage during the years he was active. He set the precedence in many areas of the industry when he was just starting out and that trait carries on even today. It was Elvis Presley who named him "The King of Cool."

But how did one guy achieve so much success?

It is truly very simple. Dean never grew too full of himself.

He always remembered where he came from, and he never forgot the importance of his audience.

He was a singer who truly adored the talent that he had been given so much so that you can hear it in every note he sings.

Dean Martin himself was humble about his own talents.

'I want to be remembered as a damn good entertainer, nothing spectacular,' he said, 'a good entertainer who made people enjoy themselves and made them laugh a little. I want them to think, "He was a nice guy. He did pretty good, and we loved him."' And it's obvious we do love him yet even with that statement, he found it hard to believe that he actually was adored.

How many solo entertainers can you name that have their own festival every year, without fail, in the town where they were born? I bet it's not many..

And on this, his 107th birthday month, we are still celebrating him, his life, his career and his achievements.

He'd think it amusing, but wouldn't dismiss it. He'd laugh and nod, and probably crack a couple of jokes at his own expense. But he would know that he is adored. *And always will be.* **JD**

**Above:** Dean onstage, as one half of Martin and Lewis, at the Paramount Theater, NYC, 1951

**Opposite:** with the Goldiggers from an episode of *The Dean Martin Show* (NBC)

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# Six Of The Best



Regular **Just Dino** readers will know that our Movie Moments section focuses on one of Dean's movies each month. But for this special edition, while it's important to celebrate all aspects of his life and career, Marisa is taking the opportunity to remember Dean's incredible growth and success in the film industry.

The trajectory of Dean Martin's film career is quite staggering, with his start being in slapstick comedy movies opposite Jerry Lewis, then evolving to more serious dramatic roles in films like *Rio Bravo* and *Ada*. Dean's film career is an excellent example of his breadth of talent and versatility that made him the successful entertainer as we know him today.

On July 25th, 1946, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis made their debut appearance together at Atlantic City's 500 Club and established themselves as one of the most successful comedic duos in Hollywood history. While their nightclub acts were successful, they had not even considered the opportunity for them to take their act to the big screen. It wasn't until 1949 when they were noticed by Paramount studio executives and offered a highly competitive contract to the duo, making them one of the highest paid entertainers at that time. The Martin and Lewis films provide a broad range of insight into the talents between each member of the comedic team. While Lewis has a manic and louder take on comedy, Dean was smoother and had impeccable comedic timing. Of Dean's comedic capabilities, Jack Benny had said that Dean was "the best straight man in history." His ability to remain grounded in the force of Lewis's



comedic style helped to maintain a balance in these films, and make the characters more relatable to the audience. Dean was meant to represent the audiences reaction to Lewis's antics, which is why we were always graced with the occasional raised eyebrow or confused look from Dean. As the team's success continued to grow, their relationship became strained. The scripts of these films were cutting Dean's role down to a fraction of what they were previously, and even gave Lewis solo musical numbers, therefore taking the place of Dean's main appeal in these films.

On 25 July 1956, Martin and Lewis split and went their separate ways, with many fans of the comedic duo worried about what Dean's career would turn out to be like after this hit to his career. Little did they know that his success with Lewis was just springboard of an incredible film career.

With as many successful and memorable films Dean had after his split from Lewis, there are many memorable movie moments that one can pinpoint both from his comedic and dramatic works.

## 1. *The Young Lions* (1958)

In this World War II epic drama, Dean debuted his first dramatic performance as Michael Whiteacre, a musician who is hesitant about enlisting himself into the war effort. In this film, Martin has several dramatic scenes that showcase his ability to perform strongly in dramatic roles alongside other successful dramatic actors such as Montgomery Clift.



One scene that comes to mind is between Michael Whiteacre (Dean Martin) and Noah Ackerman (Montgomery Clift) at a party where they are both discussing their place in the world and how their lives fit in the stress of a war torn world. In this scene, Dean is able to portray a complicated character who's political and personal views do not align with those around him, but he remains strong in his convictions and attitudes. Over the course of the film, Whiteacre has a dramatic arc and goes through enormous changes; Martin is able to handle these intense moments with ease, portraying a relatable and memorable character.

## 2. *Rio Bravo* (1959)

In my opinion, one of Dean's best performances he has given in a film is that of Dude, opposite John Wayne, in Howard Hawks' classic Western *Rio Bravo*.

Dean plays an alcoholic sheriff who is trying to regain his respect and career in his small town.

The role of Dude once again allowed Dean to show his ability to perform in dramatic roles, while also adding an element of humor, allowing him to remain relatable. Throughout the film, the audience is captivated by Dean's character arc as he betters himself and helps his partner to solve a local mystery. In addition to a wonderful film, Dean also gave us a memorable theme song called *Rio Bravo*, depicting his characters love for his romantic partner, who we find out left him during the course of the film as well as the haunting "My Rifle, My Pony And Me". Hawks would go on to remake the movie twice: *El Dorado* in 1966 (starring John Wayne, with Robert Mitchum in a similar role to Dean's) and *Rio Lobo* (again starring John Wayne) in 1970.



## 3. *Ocean's 11* (1960)

This may be the film that is the most synonymous with Dean Martin and his career, particularly in the 1960s.

This wonderful heist movie starring Rat Pack members Frank Sinatra (as Danny Ocean), Sammy Davis Jr, Joey Bishop, and Peter Lawford, the audience is graced with a film that highlights the relationship between the pack including Martin's relationship with Sinatra and the other members.

Dean plays Sam Harmon, an ex-military member who returns to Las Vegas at the call of his old army pals to rob all of the casinos on the Las Vegas strip. This film is an ideal setting for Dean, and he gives another strong performance.

Not only does he have dramatic moments, such as when the gang is initially planning and carrying out the heist, but he also has many quick comedic moments sprinkled throughout the film. For instance, Dean shines as the quip man throughout the film, providing comic relief at the expense of other members of the gang. His character is there to provide comedic relief when Ocean's girlfriend throws a vase at his head in rage after breaking up with her.

My favorite scene in the film is when in the process of distracting a young woman outside of the casino (Shirley MacLaine in a fabulous cameo), she ends up flirting with him, which of course leads to a wonderfully light and funny scene that has remained a favorite of mine.

Of course, I cannot end the discussion about *Ocean's 11* without mentioning that Dean once again gave us a wonderful song in this film, his famous "Ain't That A Kick In The Head", which became one of his most successful in his career.

## 4. *Kiss Me, Stupid* (1964)

While not one of his most popular movies, I think *Kiss Me, Stupid* is an important film to mention.

Starring Kim Novak, Dean Martin plays Dino, an exact caricature of his Hollywood persona, a famous, boozy, Las Vegas performer, who's car is tampered with in order for the gas station attendant (Ray Walston) and the local piano teacher (Cliff Osmond) to attempt to sell Dino one of the songs they have written.

This film not only has an interesting plot, it also showcases Dean's comedic ability as well as the ability to laugh at himself and proves he was truly a humble and grounded individual. Many Hollywood stars of the time would never dream of portraying a character that was meant to make fun of →

Opposite: Peter Lawford, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr and Frank Sinatra in *Ocean's 11* (Warner Bos, 1960)

Above: Dean Martin in a publicity shot for *Rio Bravo* (Warner Bros., 1959)

Left: Two of *The Young Lions*, Montgomery Clift and Dean Martin (20th Century Fox, 1958)



themselves, but Dean did it beautifully.

### 5. *The Silencers* (1966)

Look out James Bond, Matt Helm is on the scene! With the increasing interest of James Bond in the era of the 1960s British Invasion, Dean was asked to play Matt Helm, a superspy with a keen interest in booze and relaxation.

"Undercover" as a photographer, Matt Helm along with a beautiful sidekick, goes on adventurous missions to keep the world safe from nuclear wars to alien invasions.

In these films, Dean is at his most relaxed and comedic self. Once again, he is able to carry a comedic character while remaining relatable and fresh.

I very much enjoy the moments of Matt Helm talking to himself, which is done through Dean Martin singing various songs to himself out of frustration that he would rather be splashing in his pool in his secret office.

Additionally, the occasional but consistent stabs at Frank Sinatra's music, whether that be a Sinatra tune playing on the radio while Dean turns it off to play his own tune, or shamelessly plugging his own records by holding them up to the camera during the film.

These are wonderful ways to break the fourth wall and reach his audience on a different level.

### 6. *Airport* (1970)

Something that many film fans may not realize is that Dean Martin established the disaster film genre.

He plays Vernon Demerest in *Airport*, an airline pilot who faces the incredible challenge of saving a flight from a plane bomber. While this may not seem like a unique plot to us today, back in 1970, airport security and procedures had not been discussed, and the thought of someone being able to harm those on a commercial flight was unthinkable.

That was the purpose of the disaster drama, to make moviegoers think of the new and current trends, and the issues that



may arise from them.

While this film has a mostly dramatic tone, Dean adds levity to such a dramatic topic by using his ability to take advantage of scenes where comedy fits, and applying it skillfully.

For instance, while helping his fellow stewardess and mistress (Jacqueline Bisset) pack for their upcoming flight, he needles her for stealing liquor from the airplane to keep for herself in her apartment.

Moments like this are staples in Dean's film repertoire, but in this film these scenes help the audience to remain engaged in such a serious topic.

While Dean Martin was in over fifty films in his career, these six remain my favorite due to his dramatic and comedic ability, without sacrificing the storyline and arc that his character is supposed to reach. He was known as the funny and accomplished crooner, however alongside his musical talent he truly was a very talented actor, and gave us several films that we can enjoy for years to come. **JD**

Top, right: Dean Martin in a scene from *The Silencers* (Columbia, 1966)

Below: Jacqueline Bisset and Dean Martin in a tense scene from *Airport* (Universal, 1970)







## Listening Booth

ELLIOT THORPE *is listening to*  
"The Night Is Young (And You're  
So Beautiful)" (1947)

I chose this track, only the seventh in Dean Martin's recording career, because it was the first song he committed to shellac after he turned thirty years of age just four days before.

Recorded in New York for Embassy seventy-seven years ago on 11 June 1947, it's a lovely ballad coming in at two minutes forty-four seconds. It was released as the b-side to "One Foot In Heaven" (recorded in the same session) and released on 24 July the same year. In fact, this single was the only one he had for the label.

As we've seen many times when examining Dean's studio output, much of his repertoire stems back to pre-existing material, none more so than those appearing in his early years. "The Night Is Young (And You're So Beautiful)" is no different.

Originally from the stage production *Café Mañana* from 1936, it was written by Irving Kahal, Billy Rose and Dana Suesse, as performed by Everett Marshall.

Post-war music was coming in fast but Dean's version has a classic sound to it, the last of the kind of numbers that filled mid-war dance halls all across the US.

I'm extremely fond of Dean's fledgling recording career and one can easily signpost the beginning of his development and vocal complexity as a mature balladeer.

His vocals are still somewhat in the lower baritone register here but very much find themselves at home with Hal Kanner and his Orchestra's slow and marvelously rich accompaniment. It was obvious from these early songs that Dean was indeed emulating Bing Crosby, and it wouldn't be until a couple of years into his Capitol life that Dean would be identifiable by his own trademark sound.

The night is young and you're so beautiful  
Here among the shadows beautiful lady  
Open your heart

The sea is set the breezes sing of it  
Can't you get into the swing of it  
Lady where do we start

When the lady is kissable  
And the evening so cool  
Any dream is permissible  
In the heart of a fool

Oh the moon is high and you're so glamorous  
And if I seem over amorous  
Lady what can I do

The night is young and I'm in love with you

The moon is high and you're so glamorous  
And if I seem over amorous  
Lady what can I do

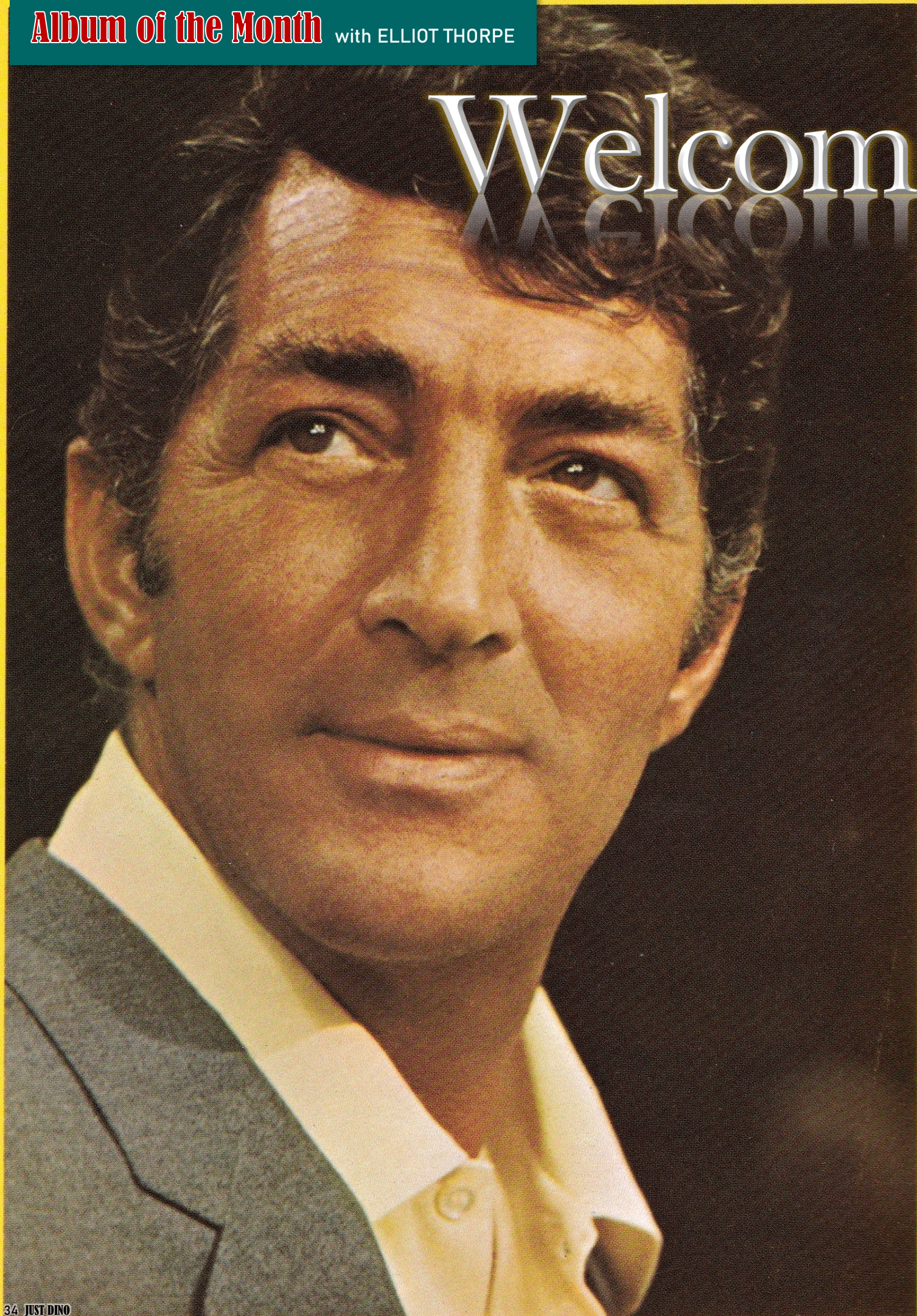
The night is young and I'm in love with you

You can find it on *MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS* (Bear Family, 1997) and *YOUNG DINO* (Proper, 2006).





# Welcome





Elliot heads straight into Dean Martin's world with  
an examination of the classic 1967 Reprise album...

# To My World

**I**n "The Chapel In The Moonlight" leads off Dean Martin's ten-track *WELCOME TO MY WORLD*, an interesting choice lifted from the 1964 Reprise release *DEAN MARTIN HITS AGAIN* and one that was recorded 23 December 1964.

The remaining songs were all taped in one session on 23 June 1967, and are the reason we're looking at the album for this month's birthday edition of **Just Dino**.

Produced by Jimmy Bowen, the album features a nice variation of songs, with only three that are more familiar Martin numbers (the aforementioned "In The Chapel In The Moonlight", the pseudo-eponymous "Little Ole Wine Drinker Me" and "Welcome To My World", the latter track soon finding its way on to Dean's cabaret set list). The sleeve notes are less tongue in cheek than others from Reprise:

There aren't many singers in captivity who can perform "In The Chapel In The Moonlight" and then follow it with the confession "Little Ole Wine Drinker Me". But Dean Martin can. And does. With conviction, charm, and his usual high spirits.

Martin, as a matter of fact, is rapidly becoming the nation's number one you-name-it-I'll-sing-it kind of guy. He used to be strictly the ballad man. Then he unleashed a lot of vocal Dixie, his southern comfort period. And more recently, of course, he has hit the country trails, racking up a whole series of hits that were born in Nashville and reborn in Hollywood.

One thing about Dean, he's not uptight about beginning a song. If he's the one who finds it, jolly good, up and away we go. But just because Elvis held a first mortgage on the chapel didn't mean that Dean was about to pass it by. Nor was he going to let big Tom Jones be the only one to tromp around on "The Green Green Grass Of Home". No, Dean picks 'em as he likes 'em, and by the time he gets through singing 'em you don't much care about anyone else.

Nor are Mr Martin's talents limited to picking and singing. He likes to be smack dab in the middle of all the pretty sounds. Hence his all-star lineup of arrangers - Billy Strange, Bill Justis, H B Barnum, and Ernie Freeman. And it's Ernie Freeman conducting the sessions, as he has done in the past, solid and sympathetic.

The reason why very few people suspect that America's national beverage, the Martini, was named after Dean Martin is because it wasn't. In spite of that oversight, however, Dean manages to fill the air with a singing sound that is, indeed, tasty, relaxing, and a bit intoxicating. Maybe that's why when he sings "Welcome To My World" so many of us go right in. Let's face it. It's one of today's better worlds.

"Release Me" is perhaps more familiar to listeners as being one of Engelbert Humperdinck's early hits (in February 1967), Dean subsequently taking on the song as a result. Remaining solely as an album track, it's nevertheless a solid version of the 1949 original (having been covered by at least fourteen other artists before Engelbert made it his own), with a fabulous organ glissando throughout, an unusual backing instrument for Dean.

"I Can't Help Remembering You" has all the hallmarks of a Bert Kaempfert classic, from its wide ranging instrumental tones to a bouncing melody. Indeed Kaempfert co-wrote it and it's a fresh sound for Dean. The gentle ebb continues with "Turn To Me", a tale of unrequited love that gives Dean a great chance to vary his approach, enjoying the playful feel to the song, rising to join "Wallpaper Roses" as a bright rendition of a painful loss of love. Only Dean can do this: sound like he's enjoying a maudlin

loss of love!

Side 2 kicks off with the hugely popular "Little Ole Wine Drinker Me" before heading into Tom Jones' territory with a melancholic interpretation of "The Green Green Grass Of Home". Jones has a whole different energy to Dean and for Dean to have emulated the great Welsh powerhouse would have been wrong. Instead Jimmy Bowen was savvy enough to ensure the force of the song was toned down by his arrangers to match Dean's classy crooner visage.

What a joy "A Place In The Shade Is"! A Baker Knight marvel, Dean really relishes this fabulous track, holding onto those notes with ease before he tackles "Pride" where he almost sounds plaintive. One can't imagine Dean having to beg for anything, let alone a lover, but his ability to think he does throughout this song is quite remarkable.

Then we finish with the title track, one that surprisingly sounds entirely like it's on the wrong album. No, that's not a criticism at all because it really is an absolutely beautiful song and full of Dean's trademark vocal inflections. Coupled with choral and strings, this really is a *bona fide* tear-jerker, and almost a companion piece to "For The Good Times" which wouldn't enter Dean's repertoire until 30 September 1970.

Peaking at no.20 on the Billboard album charts, it's absolutely deserving, and really should have attained higher.

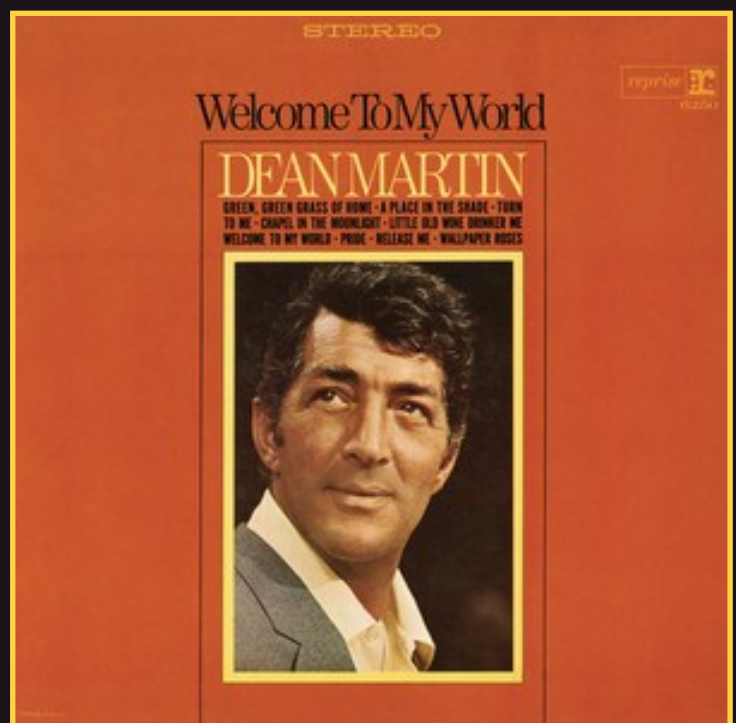
Released on 15 August 1967, *WELCOME TO MY WORLD* isn't an album I usually pick off the shelf to listen to, but I hold my head in shame now. It's a incredibly enduring album, full of varying arrangements by Ernie Freeman, Billy Strange, Bill Justis and H B Barnum all overseen by the inimitable Jimmy Bowen.

It's a sensitive album, crafted quite sublimely in an existential vat of olive oil - and one as Dean Martin fans we should certainly be very proud of.


Welcome to Dean's world indeed. **JD**

Opposite: detail from the cover of *WELCOME TO MY WORLD* (Reprise, 1967)

Below: *WELCOME TO MY WORLD* (Reprise, 1967)







Every June all across the world, fans of Dean Martin remember his birthday, and celebrate his life and legacy. But there's one place that does it best: the town he was born. **Cindy** traces the history of Steubenville's annual Dean Martin festival that began nearly thirty years ago.



**F**or over 27 years, the town of Steubenville has set aside one weekend in June for the Dean Martin Festival. The annual festival not only brings a community together to reminisce about Dean Martin and enjoy his music, it also brings together a new community of friends and entertainers who travel to Ohio Valley each year to take part in the celebration. One has to wonder what Dean would think if he knew of the relationships which have taken place simply because of him. Dean truly ever fully understood the depth of love and admiration people, not only from Steubenville, but from all over the world that people had for him.

Upon hearing of his death on Christmas Day of 1995, Dominick Mucci, who was the Mayor of Steubenville at the time, announced that the city which had been instrumental in Dean's early upbringing would find a way to honor their very own, often dubbed "Steubenville's favorite son." Committees would be formed, and plans put into place to launch The Dean Martin Festival, which would become an annual event set aside in the month of June to celebrate the life and accomplishments of the town's very own legendary star.

The Dean Martin Committee was founded and formed by Mayor Mucci in April of 1996.

The group had the task of planning, scheduling and holding the event. Rose Angellelica and Carol Weber were part of the beginning stages of the Festival with Mayor Mucci in 1996, but the two would take charge of the festival going forward in 1997.

It was in 1996 that a group called the City of Murals wanted to erect a mural of Dean in his hometown. The Dean Martin Committee began fund raising appeals to fund the project which would be created by Robert Dever. The fund raising for the mural gave folks from all over the world to contribute to the project. Dever spent seven weeks painting this work of art which is located on the front of Kroger. The project was completed in 1997.

While the first festival in 1996 was a small gathering of local folks, over the course of time it would grow attracting thousands of people from all over the world. Through the collaboration of the Committee and others, industry personalities and movie stars would descend upon the town of Steubenville to remember and join in the celebration.

In order to offset the cost of expenses for personalities traveling, sponsorships and fund-raising events such as bake sales and auctions took place to offset the costs.

Personalities such as Regis Philbin, Lou Hotz and Lou Martini have served as Grand Marshalls of the parade over the years. Tribute artists such as Joe Scalissi takes part in the celebration with performances and appearances around Steubenville. Events over the years have included a Dean Martin Parade, karaoke contests, concerts at the Berkman Amphitheater, the Dino 5K Dash / Walk, tribute artists shows at The Spot Bar and numerous street vendors. It is just mind boggling the number of people who wanted to be a part of this celebration.

It became very clear what the town of Steubenville truly thought about this man.

Mayor Jerry Barilla said, '[While Dean] didn't graduate from high school, he became an icon in entertainment.'

Attorney Francesca Carinci said, 'He is our most famous son, really. He was an amazing man. He was not only a singer, he was not only an actor, the man was just multitalented. He sat with

kings and presidents. Where he started and what he achieved is nothing short of monumental. We deserve to come out and honor him for everything he did for Steubenville.'

Why do the people of Steubenville continue this tradition after 28 years?

Simple.

It was Dean Martin who offered his services to raise funds for Underprivileged Children of Steubenville in 1950.

It was Dean Martin who after visiting the campus of Franciscan University in 1950, that he made a gift of \$5,000 to the College's Expansion Fund.

It was Dean Martin who provided entertainment for the Italian Women's Club of Los Angeles annual philanthropy dinner.

It was Dean Martin who provided the funds for the first Cobalt Cancer Treatment Center.

It was Dean Martin who made financial contributions to his Boy Scout Troup 10.

It was Dean Martin, along with Frank Sinatra, who provided funds to Catholic Central High School to purchase new band uniforms.

It was Dean Martin who placed an ad in the Steubenville High School Yearbook each year.

And these are just a few of the contributions Dean made to his hometown.

And so, this is why this little town in Ohio goes all out to celebrate its favorite son.

No matter where you go or who you meet while in Steubenville, chances are you will run into someone who knew Dean. Stores and restaurants have photos of him hanging in their establishments.

Not every star has a span of three days set aside to bring homage to them. Not every star has a highway named after them. Not every star has a proclamation stating that a certain day on the calendar is to be set aside for them.

But there's one thing no one can ever take away: Steubenville is - and always will be - the proud birthplace of the late, great Dino Paul Crocetti.

It's one thing they can do celebrate at the annual festival. People come from all over the world to pay homage to the great and humble man who was unaware of the true impact he had on people.

For me personally, through being a such an admirer of Dean, I literally have friends all over the world.

And that makes me feel very humble indeed. JD

Opposite: the Dean Martin mural, Steubenville, painted by Robert Dever, 1996-97

Below: an historical marker on the edge of Steubenville



# FAVORITE SON



**7 JUNE 2024:** *Just Dino Shorts* is our brand-new YouTube series containing standalone, bite-size shorts and features launches today! Subscribe to our existing YouTube channel now if you haven't already done so



**DEAN MARTIN**  
FESTIVAL  
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13 - 15 JUNE 2024

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Elliot would like to thank Cindy for taking the time out of her busy life to go to the ARSC ceremony on his and his sister's behalf.

For Dino. For you. For the good times.

**NEWSMAX** The new documentary that Elliot and Thomas were involved in the production of for Newsmax broadcasts on their streaming channel on 16 June 2024, 9pm EDT. For UK viewers, you *should* be able to see it on Freeview.





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