

VOICE OVER

Danny Gans Takes The Spotlight

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By Hilary L. Green

Now and then, an entertainer comes along who raises the level of performance in the entertainment field. Danny Gans has permanently altered the quality and tone of Las Vegas entertainment. His history of consistently breaking box office records is only surpassed by the rave reviews he receives from audiences and critics alike. A ticket to his show at the Mirage is one of the hottest tickets in town.

So who is this dynamic young man, dressed in black, who has taken Las Vegas by storm? He is a singer-impressionist-comedian-actor-dancer without parallel. Bill Cosby calls him "the next Sammy Davis Jr.," and Natalie Cole says, "No one has ever done a better impression of my dad." Joan Rivers sums it up in one word, "Incredible!"

From the moment he walks on stage, Gans embraces the audience and takes them on an unforgettable journey, during which they meet some of the biggest stars in entertainment. He presents uncanny characterizations, one after another, with deft accuracy. More than that, he infuses each personality with such depth that it feels as if Gans actually becomes the celebrity.

Among Gans' ever-increasing repertoire of approximately 300 voices, there are tender vignettes and dramatic soliloquies. He evokes sweet memories with his George Burns segment, which includes a tribute to Burns' foray into the world of music. A stirring scene from *Scent of a Woman* highlights Gans' polished acting skills as he portrays Al Pacino's character with rare insight and precision.

Then there are duets. A rare coupling of Jimmy Stewart with Kermit the Frog, an on-the-money Willie Nelson and Julio Iglesias rendition of "All the Girls I've Loved," and Gans' "Unforgettable" performance during which he sings both parts of the famous Natalie and Nat 'King' Cole recording.

Gans is one of only a few performers whose focus is on giving the audience what they want to see and hear. He reads the audience and invites their requests, making each show unique. He hasn't been stumped yet, but it challenges Gans and his superb musicians to come up with new impressions on the spot.

Each performance comprises anywhere from 75 to 100 celebrity impersonations. Imagine a man with a big, powerful voice tackling the delicate phrasing and vocal range of singers such as Sarah Vaughan or Anita Baker and turning in a perfect performance. Then, in the blink of an eye, moving into a raucous Rod Stewart or a smooth Tony Bennett. Gans delivers all of this and much more.

Gans' cleverly written lyrics provide a lot of laughter for each show. And there are many highlights that include Gans performing in his own rich voice. He could easily have made a name for himself as a singing star in his own right. With this in mind, and with the recent release of his first album which is rapidly climbing the charts, it looks like Gans is well on his way to achieving yet another career landmark.

Gans brings a wealth of experience to his award-winning show. He is one of the most sought-after performers in the prestigious world of corporate entertainment, often playing to stadium-size crowds. He has appeared on "Roseanne" and "Married With Children"; he played Dean Martin on the "Sinatra" miniseries. He had recurring roles on the USA "Silk Stalkings" series, as well as on Fox TV's "Open House." Gans made his big screen debut as shortstop Deke Rivers in the hit movie Bull Durham, and he had his own one-man show on Broadway.

But the most important things in Gans' life are his family and his faith. He is a man of grace who is grateful for his success and who isn't afraid to show his depth and warmth.