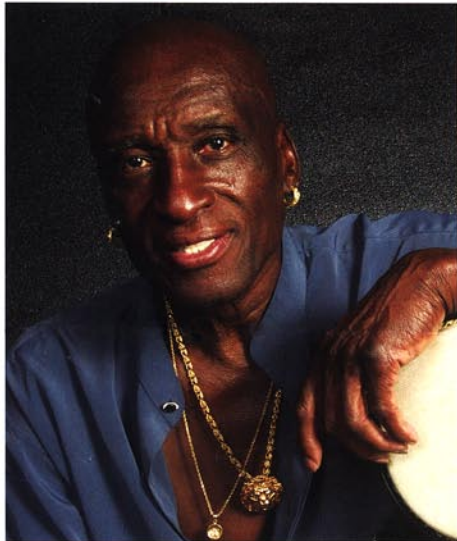


MY VEGAS

KING ERRISSON

Conga-man for Neil Diamond muses on a local impersonator, bonefishing and Michael Jackson.

BY KATE SILVER



HE'S THE INTENSE ebony face working the congas behind Neil Diamond, with whom he's been beating his drum for almost 30 years. King Errisson has played as percussionist with about everyone who's anyone in the Motown scene—The Jackson 5, Marvin Gaye, Diana Ross and more. A native of Nassau, Bahamas, Errisson now lives in Las Vegas, where he spends his time on the golf course, or sometimes jamming with his favorite Neil Diamond impersonator. When he's not here, and he's not on tour, Errisson relaxes on

Factoid: King Errisson began performing professionally at age 13.

Acklins Island, one of the Bahamas' more remote spots, where he has his own hotel, the Pestell Beach Resort. There, he enjoys the challenge of bonefishing. (He'll get to that.) Errisson recently stopped in Vegas on a break from Diamond's international tour, having just returned from Australia.

When I'm in Las Vegas ... occasionally I'll go play with a guy named Jay White, a Neil Diamond impersonator [at the Riviera]. He's so good the people walk up there sometimes and say, "Oh, I saw your concert last year at Madison Square Garden." Even Neil gave him a thumbs-up. As

a matter of fact, Neil's mother saw Jay once and said, "Oh my god, he looks just like my son. If I close my eyes he could be Neil."

My favorite Neil Diamond song is ... I have two of them. One is "I Am ... I Said" and the other is "I've Been This Way Before." I think those are two of the most profound songs I've ever heard.

I truly believe that ... Australia has the strongest Neil Diamond fan base. Even his old albums are still on top of the list.

People (over there) are always thinking "... well, it's the last time I'm going to see him, I better go see him." They act like 64 years old is old. He's still got another 10, 15 years, as far as I'm concerned. He's in good shape. He's pretty strong.

Bonefishing is ... one of the biggest fishing sports in the world. A bonefish is a fighting fish. Once you catch it the trick is to bring it in. Lots of people fly in from as far away as Germany and Russia to fish for this fish. They catch it and turn it loose, of course, they don't keep them. It's such an elusive fish it can change colors in the water and unless you have a good guide you won't even know it when you see it.

Michael Jackson ... is a great kid. Unfortunately, he's going through so much foolishness, but he's a wonderful young man. I knew him when he was a 12-year-old boy. I played on his record *I Want You Back*. He was a sweet little kid, very shy and very inquisitive.

My favorite artist ... aside from myself would be Neil. I love his writing. He writes very beautiful songs. ■

MEDIA



BOOKS

From the mind of local poet, occasional judge and attorney Dayvid Figler comes the 30-page novelette, *Grope* (Future Tense Books, futuretensebooks.com, \$4), an apt title for a book that details a Thanksgiving night in a strip club where the smart-alecky Finn goes to catch up with a friend. The comical trek both accurately, and somewhat sadly, portrays the customer-stripper banter and lap-dancing experience that millions have experienced in one of Las Vegas' signature industries. The book's cover was designed by Benjamin Purvis, art director of *Las Vegas Weekly*. —J.S.

From Sally Denton, co-author of *The Money and the Power: The Making of Las Vegas and Its Hold on America* (2001), comes *Faith and Betrayal: A Pioneer Woman's Passage in the American West* (Random House, \$23). Denton traces the journey of Latter-day Saints from England to Utah in the 1850s, using the diary accounts of Jean Rio, her own great-great grandmother. The book details the rugged journey, which tests the resolve of Rio's family. In the end, after all of the monetary and physical sacrifices, keeping the faith becomes the most difficult aspect of all. —K.S.

