

# Las Vegas Weekly



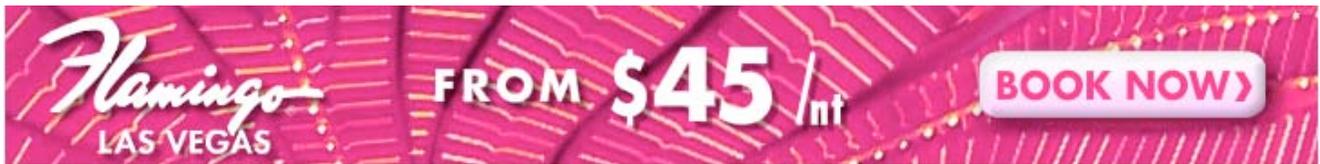
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## News



# NOISE: Lon Day's Journey into Night

## C'mon in: Bronson's back with a big-band bang

Steve Bornfeld

Thu, May 20, 2004 (midnight)

Lon live the music, man.

*"We're alive, we're doin' it, we're back from the dead!" exudes the cat in black slacks and crew-neck shirt from his perch on the backlit bandstand, a rainbow glow of stage lights lending him a hipster's halo. A light blue sport coat, snakeskin footwear and sleek shades beneath a boyish, teen-holdover haircut finish off the carefully casual ensemble.*

*They're back? That's a fact, Jack. So strike up the band, Stan: Sexy sextet of brass vibrates with sass. Seductive guitars got ya seein' stars. Keyboard dude kickin' it with 'tude. And the sensual bass man cometh.*

*"You're still a young man, baaaaa-by / Whoa-oooh / Don't waste your time ..."*

*Gimme that slo-mo soul, Joel.*

"We're trying to give that retro-Vegas, Rat-Pack feel back to everybody," claims trumpeter and bandleader Lon Bronson. The live-music warrior and his 12-piece All-Star Big Band recently returned to rockin' action at its new digs in Downtown's Golden Nugget, a few months after being turned out by the Riviera, ending a 14-year gig when the Strip stalwart reshuffled its entertainment policies.

"Opening night was killer! The place was completely packed, must have been 400-plus people in there. Around here, headliners and different artists can sit in at the drop of a hat—or not, you know what I mean? It's totally improvised, more like a flying circus. If you're an established artist, you've got an invitation."

*Bearded, shaggy-haired, a Joe Cocker doppelganger, singer Rick Friedman's body nearly collapses in on itself from tuneful intensity. He's contorted himself into a pretzel crouch, nearly swallowing the mike, when he jumps off the bandstand in mid-song as a table-side chick wraps her arms around his shaking torso, band propelling him to a roiling, rockin' climax.*

"The second you mention trumpets, it's all over in some people's minds, but you really have to sit through the whole show to understand what we do," Bronson insists. "When I say Rat Pack as applied to us, that's a state of mind. It's not strictly that genre of music, it's the concept of people having a loose show where the music is the star. We do everything from Steely Dan to Led Zeppelin to all manner of soul and classic R&B, anyone from the Tubes to Alanis Morisset

*Tangy horns—saxes, trumpets, trombone—punch out staccato blasts that jab the soul in the feverish brushfire, "Tower of Inspiration." Spanking every nasty little note. And leavin' marks. Bronson prowls his stage, checking the set list, cueing his sound man, grabbin' his horn and layin' it down. Then they peel away, drummer and bassist left to trade crispy-fried funk riffs, shuckin' and duckin' and pluckin' the boogie.*

"We're not a lounge act, and we're drawing real headliners to sit in with us, and we're the only thing in Vegas trying to fill that gap," Bronson says. "The lounges that aren't pay-to-play are techno-dance lounges, and that's fine and well, but not a lot of musicality involved there."

*Dig the cocked-hat cool. Crooner Rick Michel, in white-banded black fedora, sloping, Sinatrasque, across his forehead. "Luck Be a Lady"! "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)"! And an apropos salute in the key of swing.*

*"I've sung with the best and I've had it all / I've gone from neighborhood saloons to Carnegie Hall / I've been down and out and I've been in demand / But I wouldn't have made it without them / Here's to the Band!"*

"He's sat in with us a lot over the years" Bronson says, "but I didn't know he was coming. He just showed up."

*Holy Soul Man, Batman! Ray Charles is in the house! Helped to the stage. Wearin' that boundless, beautiful grin. Bubbling with a joy on loan from God.*

*Sing to me, Ray!*

*"Hey everybody, let's have some fun / You only live once and when you're dead, you're done / So let the good times roll, I said let the good times roll / Don't care if you're young or old, get together and let the good times roll."*

*Now slow it down, Brother Ray. Give us that tune that makes us all swoon.*

*"Georgia, Georgia, the whole day through / Just an old sweet song keeps Georgia on my mind / Georgia, Georgia, a song of you / Comes as sweet and clear as moonlight through the pines."*

"We've got a very strong following," says the leader of the band, "and they're all coming out."

Lon live the music, man.

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[Xania's Hot Spots](#)

[Emily Gimmel's birthday party at Tao Beach](#)

- **Sunday**

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[Xania's Hot Spots](#)

[Ferry Corsten at Wet Republic](#)

- **Sunday**

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[Xania's Hot Spots](#)

[RNR CD Release Party at Wasted Space](#)

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[Dirty Shame Karaoke Night at Beauty Bar](#)

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[Living Room Lounge at Prive presents Dirty Vinyl House Sessions](#)

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[Blues Monday at the House of Blues](#)

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[Opportunity Boulevard Summer Career Fair at Green Valley Ranch](#)

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2009-05-20

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- **Wednesday**

2009-05-20

Yellow Brick Road performs at Ovation at Green Valley Ranch

[Green Valley](#)

[Yellow Brick Road at Ovation](#)

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2009-05-23

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## Xania's Hot Spots - This Week's Special Events



- [Emily Gimmel's birthday party at Tao Beach](#)
- [Ferry Corsten at Wet Republic](#)

- [Via Brasil presents Skip the Pool Sundays](#) (Sunday, May 17)
- [Las Vegas Magnums at the Bank](#) (Sunday, May 17)
- [Goodlife Sundays at Moon with Seb Fontaine and Noel Sanger](#) (Sunday, May 17)
- [RNR CD Release Party at Wasted Space](#) (Sunday, May 17)
- [Village Arts Festival/Vino di Lago at Lake Las Vegas](#)

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MAY 14 - MAY 20

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