

# Sandy Hackett resurrects Rat Pack fame



DEC 5, 2018

2:00 PM



When the national tour of *Sandy Hackett's Rat Pack Show* comes to the Valentine Theatre on Friday, the production will include contemporary songs, comedy, and numbers that are a reflection of what made the Rat Pack of the 1960s famous.

The production has been updated in several ways, said **Sandy Hackett**, the son of the late Buddy Hackett, a well-known comedian and actor who was a friend of the Rat Pack. "It's not a tribute show, it's a theatrical production that recreates what [a show] would have been like during their prime."

"There's a narrative that we follow, but there is a lot of room for improvisation," said Hackett, the show's director. "That's how it was with the real guys; you never knew what was going to happen when you went to see them onstage."

The 1960s Rat Pack featured three singers, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis, Jr., and one comedian, Joey Bishop, who provided the comedy continuity of the Rat Pack. They ruled the Las Vegas entertainment scene beginning in the 1960s.

Sandy Hackett will portray Joey Bishop. The cast also includes Angelo Babbaro, a native of Youngstown, as Frank Sinatra; singer, songwriter, and musician Doug Starks as Sammy Davis, Jr., and comedian, actor, and impressionist Tom Wallek, a Brooklyn native, as Dean Martin. In a comedy segment, the recorded voice of Buddy Hackett is heard, portraying God, and sending the Rat Pack to modern days for one more show, Sandy Hackett said.

Lisa Dawn Miller, Sandy Hackett's wife, portrays Sinatra's one love, Ava Gardner. Miller is the daughter of the late songwriter Ron Miller, who wrote many pop classics, including "Touch Me in the Morning," "Yester-me, Yester-you, Yesterday," and "Heaven Help Us All." She sings one of her father's songs, "Wasn't I a Good Time," with the Sinatra character. The show is expected to include some of her father's other original songs, such as "Will I Still Be Me" and "For Once in My Life."

Among the other musical numbers planned are "Hello Detroit," part of a medley that merges into "My Kind of Town"; "That Old Black Magic," "Volare," "What Kind of Food am I," and other Rat Pack hits.

Planned for Act II is a Sinatra medley with "Come Fly With Me," "The Best Is Yet to Come," "Fly Me to the Moon," "I Got You under My Skin," and more.

The music of that day continues to be popular, with performers such as Michael Buble, Hackett said. "There are people, Harry Connick, Jr., and others, who have performed some of the songs the Rat Pack made popular, and many of that music is heard in movies; the stuff seems to be timeless and still exist on many levels."

"The question is, are there any songs written today that will be around years from now, that young artists will be able to re-imagine? I'm not sure that there are," Miller said. "Every year, a young artist comes out with a new interpretation of one of my dad's songs, his standards, [such as] 'Heaven Help Us All,' 'Touch Me In the Morning,' 'Once In My Life.' That's what a good song is, and that's why great singers like Buble continue to celebrate them."

**Sandy Hackett's Rat Pack Show will be presented at 8 p.m. Friday at the Valentine Theatre, 400 N. Superior St. Tickets, \$29 to \$59, are available from [valentinetheatre.com](http://valentinetheatre.com) and 419-242-2791.**