



**Ron Hawking**

celebrates

**“The Men & Their Music!”**

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# CHICAGO'S HOTTEST SHOW!



**Ron Hawking**

celebrates

**"The Men & Their Music!"**



*"Hugely Entertaining.  
Highly Recommended!"*

Chicago Sun Times

*"Ron Hawking is at his best!"*

Chicago Tribune

*"He's at his best...energized  
by a terrific band and  
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*"...pure entertainment,  
Hawking style. You won't be  
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For Immediate Release

*Let The Good Times Roll...*

**CHICAGO'S ENTERTAINER RON HAWKING IS HERE TO STAY!  
"THE MEN AND THEIR MUSIC"  
TO PLAY OPEN RUN AT CHICAGO'S MERCURY THEATRE**

Chicago (June 27, 2007) – The Windy City will be 'swinging' all year long as *Chicago's Entertainer*, Ron Hawking, announces plans to extend his new show *The Men and Their Music* by popular demand indefinitely at Chicago's Mercury Theatre (3745 N. Southport). The show is currently playing a limited four-week engagement June 21 through July 15, 2007. After a brief two-week hiatus, *The Men and Their Music* will be back in the swing of things, launching an open-run on August 2, 2007, with a press opening on August 9, 2007. With a live orchestra, vocalists and acclaimed showman Hawking as the headliner, *The Men and Their Music* is sure to be another long-running hit here in his hometown of Chicago.

Tickets for *The Men and Their Music* range in price from \$49.50 - \$55.50 and are available at the Mercury Theatre Box Office by calling (773) 325-1700 or logging onto [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com). Tickets are currently on sale for performances June 21 through July 15, 2007 and August 2, through November 21, 2007. Groups of 15 or more may receive a discount by calling Group Theater Tix at (312) 423-6612, (866) 809-3075 (toll free) or logging onto [grouptheatertix.com](http://grouptheatertix.com).

Dubbed *Chicago's Entertainer*, Ron Hawking returns to Chicago following the successful and critically acclaimed long-run of *His Way – A Tribute to the Man and His Music*, an homage to the late and great singer Frank Sinatra. After running for nearly a year at the Mercury Theatre, Hawking continued to breathe new life into these legendary tunes around Chicago for the following six years. Expanding on the thriving demand for the musical style of artists like Sinatra, Ron Hawking returns to the Chicago stage with *The Men and Their Music* – a repertoire of iconic numbers from many great male vocalists of all time including, Bobby Darin, Ray Charles, Billy Joel, and Frankie Valli, to name a few.

Ron Hawking's success is rooted in his ability to seamlessly step in and out of each personality he portrays on the stage. Going well beyond simply creating an impersonation, Hawking has an uncanny talent to reinterpret and redeliver each song with the same charm and charisma that made the original artists so beloved. With classic style and sophistication, Hawking's new show, *The Men and Their Music*, is the perfect reflection to the energy and enthusiasm of big band music, Vegas lounge singers, and musical legends.

**About Ron Hawking**

Ron Hawking is creator, producer and star of "His Way – A Tribute to the Man and His Music." It opened at Chicago's Mercury Theatre for a 6 week run, which ended up lasting 8 months and turned into the smash hit of the summer, fall, and winter season. The "His Way" album, which he produced, received distribution and airplay not only in the United States, but on the United Kingdom's BBC as well.



In September of 1998, Hawking wrote the music and lyrics for "Go Go Sammy Sosa" as a salute to the Chicago Cubs superstar. In addition to major media coverage and airplay on national radio and TV, the song made its Wrigley Field debut at the final home game of the cubs 1998 season.

Hawking has performed at New York's Carnegie Hall with the Philly Pops Orchestra and has opened for such notables as Carol Channing, Sheena Easton, Robert Klein, and The Temptations, just to name a few. In addition to being an accomplished vocalist, he is also one of the country's leading impressionists. Hawking created and has been performing his one man "Lively Art of Impressionism" show for corporate events and fund raisers since 1988.

He has been a member of the Screen Actors Guild and The American Federation of TV and Radio Artists for over 20 years. In addition, he's one of the most sought-after jingle singers and commercial voice-over artists in the country. The voice behind hundreds of TV and radio commercials, Hawking is called "the Chameleon" by his recording studio peers. He has been heard as Starkist's Charlie the Tuna, Jimmy Durante for Kellogg's Frosted Mini-Wheats, Louis Armstrong for Citizen Watch, Louis Prima for Progresso Soups, Ritchie Valens "La Bamba" for Subaru and Nat King Cole "Unforgettable" for Hershey's. He studied acting with Richard Pinter at New York city's Neighborhood Playhouse and improvisation with Jo Forsberg's Players Workshop of Second City.

Ron Hawking's *The Men and Their Music* plays Chicago's Mercury Theatre (3745 N. Southport Ave.). Tickets are currently on sale June 21 through July 15, 2007 and August 2, through November 21, 2007. The performance schedule is as follows: Thursdays & Friday at 8 pm; Saturdays at 5 & 8 pm and Sundays at 3 pm. Tickets range in price from \$49.50 - \$55.50 and are available at the Box Office by calling (773) 325-1700 or logging onto [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com). Groups of 15 or more may receive a discount by calling Group Theater Tix at (312) 423-6612, (866) 809-3075 (toll free) or logging onto [grouptheatertix.com](http://grouptheatertix.com).

For more information log onto [www.ronhawking.com](http://www.ronhawking.com)

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# Daily Southtown

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August 17, 2007

## TGIF!

### THEATER

## Hawking's new show goes beyond Sinatra

Following his homage to Frank Sinatra in "His Way A Tribute to the Man and His Music," Ron Hawking is now swinging to the beat of other crooners in "The Men and Their Music" at the Mercury Theatre in Chicago.



**BETTY MOHR**  
Theater critic

### REVIEW

For those who like their music smooth and sophisticated and their jazz hot, Hawking's velvety voice and cool form make for memorable nostalgia.

If you remember necking in a car to the romantic ballads of Johnny Mathis

or listening to Perry Como on Saturday night TV or dancing along with Frankie Avalon on "American Bandstand," then this show definitely is for you.

But if you're too young to be familiar with the musical legends of the 1950s, which Hawking celebrates, here's your chance to find out what you've been missing.

Hawking's imitations aren't exact, but he does a nice job with many singer's mannerisms and vocal inflections. Most of all, though, Hawking's easy charm and great warmth comes through as he portrays a pantheon of musical greats. From the loving way he sings their songs, it's obvious he has a deep and abiding admiration for those legendary performers.

He opens the show with a rousing take on Bobby Darin singing "Mack the Knife," then continues with the silky sound of Nat King Cole in "Unforgettable," Sam Cooke's "You Send Me" and Ray Charles' "Georgia On My Mind."

There's still more as Hawking shakes up the theater with a rendition of Jerry Lee Lewis pounding away at the piano (Hawking not only sings but

### 'The Men and Their Music'

**When:** Through Sept. 9  
**Where:** Mercury Theatre, 3745 N. Southport Ave., Chicago  
**Tickets:** \$49.50 to \$55.50  
**Information:** Call (773) 325-1700 or visit [www.ronhawking.com](http://www.ronhawking.com)

plays the keyboard) to "Great Balls of Fire," and dons sunglasses for Roy Orbison's "(Oh) Pretty Woman."

Still, Hawking can't get enough of Sinatra. He devotes the second act of the show to Ol' Blue Eyes and his fellow rat packers, Sammy Davis and Dean Martin. Here we are treated to Sinatra's "Chicago," Davis' "Candy Man," and Dino, with a drink in his hand, doing "Everybody Loves Somebody Sometime."

The only thing that might top "The Men and Their Music" is if Hawking makes his next show for and by himself. The guy has a nice mellow sound, a wonderful way with a lyric and is charming in his own right, so he should celebrate himself.



Ron Hawking's new show at the Mercury Theatre, "The Men and Their Music," expands on his previous tribute to Frank Sinatra.

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August 16, 2007

**N** **The Men and Their Music** More than just a human jukebox, Ron Hawking brings as much appreciation as impersonation to his Rat Pack impressions, especially of Frank Sinatra. As in the eight-year hit *His Way*, Hawking's earlier musical memory album, his songs here are energized by a terrific band and a female backup duo. Paying the highest compliment—imitation—to the singers who shaped him, Hawking obligingly delivers the voices and moves, if not bodies and souls, of Bobby Darin, Ray Charles, Nat King Cole, Jimmy Durante, and Frankie Valli. Though in the second act Hawking expertly imagines a posthumous Rat Pack reunion in a heavenly Copa Lounge, he's at his best in a first-act salute to Burt Bacharach that's less impersonation than tribute to a soul mate.  
—Lawrence Bommer ➤ Open run: Thu-Fri 8 PM, Sat 5 and 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, Mercury Theater, 3745 N. Southport, 312-423-6612 or 866-809-3075, \$49.50-\$55.50.



# Hawking finds dozens of artists in his own voice

CONCERT REVIEW | Impressionist calls up Sinatra, Durante, Bocelli and others

August 14, 2007

BY [HEDY WEISS](#) Theater Critic

Any performer who can knock out a steady stream of vocally impressive, stylistically evocative numbers by such distinctive, widely varied pop recording artists and songwriters as Frankie Valli, Frankie Avalon, Roy Orbison, Ray Charles, Burt Bacharach, Jerry Lee Lewis, Lou Rawls and Johnny Mathis is bound to attract attention.

But when you toss into the mix such additional voices from the distant past as Jimmy Durante and Nat King Cole, move on to conjure the ghosts of that infamous trio known as the Rat Pack (Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr. and Dean Martin), and then finally top it all off with an impressive homage to Andrea Bocelli, an operatic tenor and pop idol of a very different sort, you can only come to the conclusion that the man in the spotlight is either half mad or engaged in some phenomenal form of karaoke.

Neither is the case. Ron Hawking, proud native of Chicago's Cragin neighborhood, is the real deal, whether singing in a style that faithfully evokes the timbre and tics of a particular performer, or conjuring the game timing and gently salacious humor of television legend Johnny Carson. And for audiences of a certain age, Hawking's new show, "The Men and Their Music," might just be the next best thing to a quick zip along the American pop music highway, circa 1950 and on.



## **RON HAWKING: 'THE MEN AND THEIR MUSIC'**

### **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**

**When: Through Sept. 9**

**Where: Mercury Theater, 3745 N. Southport**

**Tickets: \$49.50 - \$55.50**

**Phone: (773) 325-1700**

A self-professed fan of "American Bandstand," as well as a devoted listener to radio's best pop music stations of earlier decades, Hawking is a wonderfully gifted vocal mimic with an unaffected and likable stage presence. I found his earlier, long-running show, "His Way: A Tribute to the Man and His Music" (a program almost totally devoted to Sinatra) lacking in personal interpretation, but I think I missed the point. Hawking is a superb vocal impressionist, which is a very different thing from being an individualistic stylist. And one of the reasons this new production proves so hugely entertaining is that it is such a wide-ranging showcase of the singer's very special skills.

And in one case Hawking puts quite a distinctive spin of his own on things. In "Time to Say Goodbye" ("Con Te Partiro"), the aria that put Bocelli on the charts, he sings in Italian, but rather than going for the lyrical beauty, he brings an almost raw, street-y bite to the lyrics that proved quite thrilling.

In the intimate confines of the Mercury Theater, there is a touch of cabaret as well as Las Vegas nightclub about it all. And backed by a brass-rich, powerhouse band of seven (led by ace music director-keyboardist Michael Hanko), and by a pair of very polished backup singers (Lorraine Denham and Kathy Sparrenberger), Hawking's blend of homage and nostalgia is ideal for a hot summer night.

[hweiss@suntimes.com](mailto:hweiss@suntimes.com)

## Chicagoan Hawking is at his best when he's himself

Reviews by By Howard Reich, Tribune arts critic, Alison Bonaguro, Joshua Klein and Althea Legaspi

August 13, 2007

It would be difficult to name a singer who admires other singers more than Chicagoan Ron Hawking.

The veteran vocalist has devoted a large chunk of his career to paying tribute to his vocal heroes, most notably Frank Sinatra. Nearly a decade ago, Hawking opened his phenomenally successful Sinatra homage at the Mercury Theatre, drawing capacity crowds to "His Way -- A Tribute to the Man and His Music" for nearly a year.

The hit transformed a once-obscure jingles singer into a noted concert attraction, with Hawking performing his Sinatra show in various rooms across the country. Yet one often wondered what Hawking would do for a second act.

The answer has emerged at the Mercury Theatre, where Hawking returned last week to open "The Men and Their Music," a salute to Ray Charles, Bobby Darin, the Rat Pack, Andrea Bocelli and others.

How effective listeners find this show will depend mostly on their interest in the objects of Hawking's affection. For those who enjoy retrospectives and impersonations of great singers (and lesser ones, as well), **"The Men and Their Music" will be a feast. Certainly the audience that nearly filled the Mercury Theatre on Saturday night embraced this show, rewarding Hawking with enthusiastic applause and standing ovations.**

Yet, for this listener's tastes, Hawking was most effective when he steered clear of mimicry and sang this music on his own terms. The more he focused on the songs, rather than the singers, the better.

**So when Hawking offered self-styled readings of tunes by Burt Bacharach, deftly assisted by two female vocalists and a terrific jazz band, this show made music.** Even a medley of tunes associated with Charles had impact, because Hawking didn't try to echo a genius. But because so much of this show was laden with re-enactments of Louis Armstrong, Perry Como, Johnny Mathis, Nat "King" Cole, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., and other figures, Hawking's own identity often disappeared.

One of these days, it would be great to hear Hawking sing Hawking.

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### The Men and Their Music

Performed by Ron Hawking and his Orchestra

At the **Mercury Theatre**

3745 N. Southport

Chicago, IL

Call 773-325-1700, tickets \$49.50 - \$55.50

Thursdays & Fridays at 8 pm

Saturdays at 5 & 8 pm

Sundays at 3 pm

Running time is 2 hours with intermission

Through October 28, 2007

Polished, tuneful night club act thoroughly entertaining

**Ron Hawking** is an experienced showman in the best of that tradition. He is charismatic, engaging and polished. He created, produced and starred in the long running hit show "*His Way - A Tribute to the Man and His Music*" a tribute to **Sinatra** and his **Rat Pack**. He also has performed his own one person show "*Lively Art of Impressionism*" for corporate events and fund raisers. This guy commands the stage.

**Ron Hawking's** new show is a celebration of some of the greatest male vocalists from the 50's through the 70's. Known as "**the Chameleon**" because of his ability to step in and out of each personality he portrays on stage, **Hawking** is more than simply an impersonator, he captures the style, sound and spirit of each character. **Hawking's** enormous range carries him from **Bobby Darin**, **Ray Charles**, **Lou Rawls**, **Jimmy Durante**, **Johnny Mathis**, **Nat King Cole**, **Tony Bennett**, **Barry Manilow**, **Frankie Valli** and more in a seamless show filled with old classics that you'll easily recognize. These



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