

He Recalls Hey Days

3/31/78

Cocoanut Grove Sold Out For Return Of Les Brown

By RICK CHATENEVER
Sentinel Staff Writer

Riding the crest of recent musical trends — including the rediscovery of such anachronisms as melody and cheek-to-cheek dancing — Les Brown brings his 17-piece Band of Renown back to the Cocoanut Grove tonight, for an evening of dancing and musical memories from 9 to 1 a.m.

For the Grove, which refurbished and launched its return to the Big Band Era with an appearance by Brown last year, the popular bandleader's return marks a "first" — the first time one of the Big Band series has sold out on advance sales alone.

By order of the fire marshal, the Cocoanut Grove capacity is 1,400. The big band record is

more than 4,019 (3,894 paid) for Kay Kaiser's "College of Musical Knowledge" March 8, 1941, when there was an arch-way to the Casa del Rey. Kaiser also drew 3,589 June 19, 1939.

Speaking by telephone (from his Southern California home earlier this week) Brown discussed the audiences who had packed most of the stops on a recent 37-day tour.

"Young people look at the sound historically," said the band leader, whose career has spanned more than three decades, including extensive radio and TV conducting and arranging, as well as 18 Christmases — "on the road" with Bob Hope's tours for American soldiers stationed overseas.

"Older people look at it nostalgically," he went on.



(Photo Courtesy of Skip Littlefield)

The beautiful Cocoanut Grove looked like this in 1937 when Big Bands played here regularly.

Estimating that 60 percent of the listeners who turned out along the tour through the South and Southwest were over 40, he added that the band stays current, supplementing its old standards with such new selections as "The Theme from Rocky" and "You Light Up My Life."

Born in Reinertown, Pa., Brown organized his first "band of renown" — the Duke Blue Devils — while he was still a Duke student.

His role as musician on saxophone and clarinet gradually gave way to more and more conducting duties, as he toured the United States and Canada, hitting all the major ballrooms, as well as colleges, theaters and supper clubs along the way.

In 1947 he joined forces with Bob Hope, traveling overseas with Hope for almost 20 years.

The tours generated immeasurable morale boosts — but Brown expressed his relief that they now are no longer necessary, adding that he and the band members "like to be home for Christmas."

Working for years as the mu-

sical director of Dean Martin's television series and specials, Brown served in the same capacity for Steve Allen's programs on two networks. His television credits go on and on, including the "Hollywood Palace" and "Milton Berle Show."

Characterizing work in tele-

vision as especially lucrative, Brown also pointed out its demands on the band.

"We do whatever the star wants," he said, "anything from country and western to Hawaiian."

Although the market for TV variety specials is diminishing,

Amazing Rhythm Aces To Play Civic Sunday

The Amazing Rhythm Aces, known for their unpretentious but perfect style, will play Sunday evening at the Santa Cruz Civic.

Opening will be Bonnie Bramlett, originally of Delaney & Bonnie.

The Rhythm Aces are probably best known for their hit of a couple years ago, "Third Rate Romance." The band's mu-

sical, though, is not third rate, as they mix fine country rock with tastes of jazz and rhythm and blues.

The Aces are, composer-lead vocalist Russell Smith, drummer Butch McDade, bassist Jeff "Stick" Davis, keyboardist Billy Earhart, pianist-composer James Hooker and multi-instrumentalist-handyman Barry "Byrn" Burton.

The group's latest album on ABC Records, "Toucan Do It Too," is possibly the band's best effort to date.

Tickets for the MorningSun show, scheduled to begin at 8 p.m., are available at Santa Cruz Box Office.

Santa Cruz Hotel

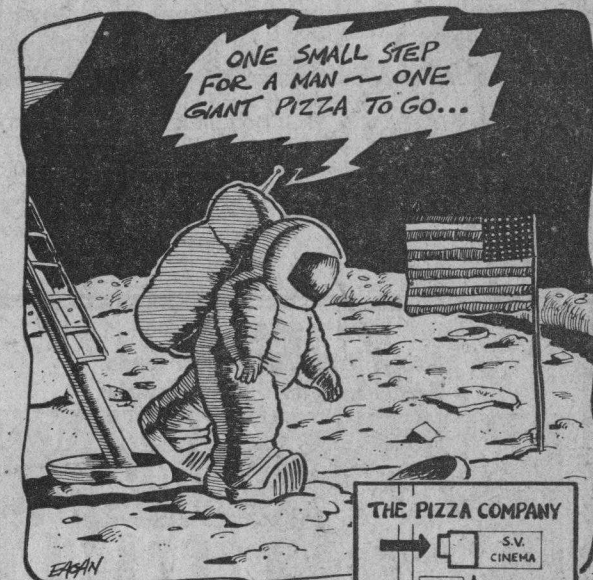
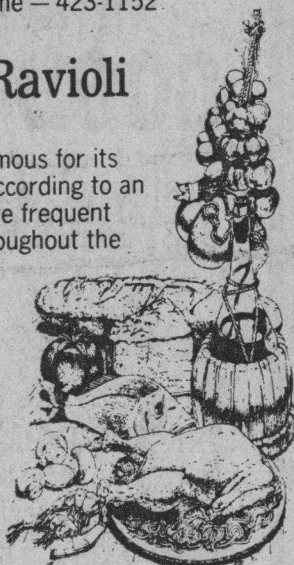
LUNCH • DINNER • BANQUETS
Reservations welcome — 423-1152

Home style Ravioli

The Santa Cruz Hotel is famous for its home style raviolis made according to an old world recipe. We receive frequent requests from markets throughout the Monterey Bay area to sell them our uncooked raviolis. Unfortunately, we can only produce enough to satisfy the demands of our patrons. Next time you feel hungry, enough for a hearty Italian ravioli dinner — try the Santa Cruz Hotel.

Corner of Cedar & Locust — Downtown
Serving Santa Cruz over 100 years

A VERY ITALIAN RESTAURANT



IT MAY TAKE A GREAT
EXPLORER TO FIND
THE PIZZA COMPANY,
BUT IT'S WORTH IT...

THE
PIZZA
COMPANY

KING'S VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTER, SCOTT'S VALLEY, CA. • 436-4848

ENTERTAINMENT
AND DANCING
Every

Isaac Graham's Restaurant & Distillery

Dinners by Chef Borelli