

'A New Day' put a new face on entertainment

Dion's partnership with Dragone raised the bar for shows in Las Vegas

BY JERRY FINK
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Fans will sorely miss Celine Dion when the curtain drops after her final performance on Dec. 15, bringing to a close one of the boldest entertainment ventures attempted in Las Vegas.

By all accounts the venture has been a success. Whether it can be repeated by replacing Dion with Bette Midler and (perhaps) Cher remains to be seen.

Midler debuts her show in February. No word yet on Cher.

When "A New Day" debuted at Caesars Palace in March 2003 it was indeed a new day in the Entertainment Capital — an international superstar in a 4,000-seat, \$95 million showroom in a production by the creative genius Franco Dragone.

Dragone created "Mystere" at Treasure Island and "O" at the Bellagio for Cirque du Soleil. He's produced "A New Day" and "La Reve" at Wynn Las Vegas under his own banner.

The creative marriage between



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Celine Dion's show at Caesars Palace, "A New Day," has just more than five months left. She will be replaced by Bette Midler and, perhaps, Cher.

Dion and Dragone has been an interesting one — half concert, half production. Her beautiful music was framed within an artistic setting inside one of the most technically advanced theaters in the world.

The show has evolved since its premiere. Dion no longer soars above the

stage. Scenes have been altered. Songs have been dropped, others added. Most of her hits are still there, including "The Power of Love," "I Drove All Night" and "My Heart Will Go On."

The piano still floats above the stage, crossing from left to right, pushed by two cast members who

seem to be walking on air. A tree still sprouts up in the middle of the stage; a cast member's head explodes into a bouquet of flowers.

Through all of the changes, "A New Day" remains one of the most popular shows in town.

What will Vegas be without "A New Day?"

Around town

DeJa Vu, a dance band that plays everything from country to disco and rock, starts at 7 tonight at the new showroom at South Point. The dance band already is a regular at the Rocks Lounge at Red Rock casino at 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays

... Tommy Thompson Project plays the smooth jazz series at the Rampart casino, in conjunction with 105.7 FM The Oasis. Future performers: the Julius Show, July 18; Ghallib Ghallab, July 25; and David Van Such, Aug. 1. (6 p.m. Wednesdays; Addison's Lounge; free) ... Actress Parris Lane sings jazz standards at the Bootlegger (8 p.m. Sunday, 736-4939) ... "Shades of Sinatra," featuring a trio of tribute artists, performs at the Suncoast throughout July. (7:30 p.m. Mondays, \$22 to \$33, 883-6733).

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