

Can you remember when music was a joy for the ears, rather than a pain in the ears and elsewhere. Las Vegas is a treasure trove of old-fashioned jazz joints where you can see and hear the real stuff, in the mode of Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald and John Coltrane. The good joints are just too numerous to list, so I'll try to give a few favorites of mine and those recommended by old Vegas friends who live in Sin City and appreciate jazz.

My first choice is a place where Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung would probably hang out if they could have solved the space-time continuum and get themselves to the present time. The Las Vegas Hilton offers "Group Therapy Thursdays" at the hotel's Tempo Lounge. Ja, are you listening, mein freunds?



It features the Nova Jazz Group, which performs in a room just off the main casino, in an atmosphere dedicated to pure jazz, booze and blackjack. Group Therapy Thursdays also provides private canoodling rooms in the back for couples, who can try to get lucky with another kind of therapy. For more information and reservations, call Hilton at 888-732-7117 or 702-732-5111.

Another good choice is the Las Vegas version of the House of Blues, located at Mandalay Bay, probably the classiest super-resort in town. Where else in the middle of the desert can you actually ride a surfboard on pumped-up waves in a huge pool? For seven nights a week at the HoB Music Hall, you can enjoy all kinds of contemporary and vintage music: rock, reggae, rap, rockabilly, blues and real New Orleans-style jazz.

If all the music makes you hungry at the club to extend your New Orleans nostalgia, you can go next door to the HoB Cafe. There they serve hot, hot Cajun/Creole food that's almost as spicy

as the music. And speaking of hot and spicy, if you go to the Cafe on Sundays, you can enjoy a good ole Southern buffet and participate in a real, foot-stompin' Gospel Brunch, led by real go-to-meetin' gospel singers. For information and reservations about all HoB events, call 702-632-7600.

If you're a bit older than most of the music fans in Vegas, and want to roam a few blocks off the Strip and find a somewhat quieter jazz joint, try the lounge of the Gold Coast Hotel. Featured is the Royal Dixie Jazz Band that started there on a temporary gig in 1988 and has been rockin' the place and loyal followers ever since. The group features New Orleans-style jazz, sometimes with a bit of country and bluegrass, with volunteer performers sitting in. For information and reservations, call 702-367-7111 or 800-331-5334, or contact online at www.goldcoastcasino.com.

I sort of hesitate to recommend The Joint at the Hard Rock Hotel, way off the Strip and just a couple of blocks from the Las Vegas Airport. One reason is that the name, theme and atmosphere of the hotel is all about rock, with a very occasional nod toward good old traditional jazz. To me rock and all of its worse modern variations is loud, discordant and obnoxious noise. At least that's how this old music lover feels whenever within its shaking walls.

Also, the Joint is about as intimate as 1969's Woodstock mudfest, and too much of the music and attitudes are the same. With 1,800 seats, sometimes it seems all it needs are hippies sloshing and thumping around in the slime. However, on some occasions, the Joint features some very good jazz. So, if you want to find out the schedules for music you like, call 702-693-5000 or 800-HRD-ROCK.

Among the dozens and dozens of other Vegas jazz joints are Tommy Alvarado and his Jazz All Stars at the Bellagio Resort; The Chrome Showroom at Santa Fe Station; Bourbon Street Cabaret at The Orleans; Drai's at Barbary Coast; Just Jazz off the Strip at 1000 E. Sahara and Maryland Parkway; and the Jazz Lounge at Como's Steakhouse on Vegas outskirts at Lake Las Vegas Resort.