

THE LAS VEGAS MANDOLIERS

By Geri Cofone Jeter

The Las Vegas Mandoliers are a part of a musical tradition that has its American roots in the latter half of the nineteenth century.



Mandolin popularity in the U.S. began around 1880 when a Spanish student troupe played throughout New York on *bandurrias* (an instrument similar to the mandolin). Italian immigrants copied the style, forming groups in New York and elsewhere, using Neapolitan mandolins. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Gibson Company introduced an entire mandolin family of instruments in varying sizes and tone ranges. To promote the products, the company introduced the concept of the mandolin orchestra, which could play the full range or orchestral music — but all on mandolins.

In Las Vegas, the Mandoliers formed in 2004 with core members

Dave Carroll and Lisa Fiorenza. Lisa, was always interested in the mandolin, as it was her grandfather Salvatore Fiorenza's favorite instrument. The Mandoliers now play a style of music from the Mandolin ragtime rage from the 1900s to the 1930s, along with traditional Italian folk music. The group has about 150 arrangements that they play regularly. "I think Dave made about 80% of the arrangements," Lisa says, "and I did the other 20%." The core group has five members and currently has sufficient arrangements to expand to an orchestra.

"The players in our group treat each other as family," says Lisa. "It's just great to get together sometimes and play old favorites, even if we don't have a gig coming up. That was an unexpected part of being in the group for me, the members (Curt, Tom, Carolyn, and Dave) are very down to earth and fun to be around!"

The next performance for the Las Vegas Mandoliers is Oct. 5, 5:30 p.m. at Christ The Servant Lutheran Church on 2 So. Pecos Rd., Henderson. Admission is free. To find out more about the Las Vegas Mandoliers, or to purchase recordings, see the group's Web site at www.mandoliers.com for information.