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The Frank Sinatra Show: Welcome Home Elvis (R0, America)

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The Frank Sinatra Timex Show: It's Nice to Go Traveling - Welcome Home Elvis (1960)

R0 America - (Quantum Leap/Music Video Distributors)



THE FILM:

To me the greatest singer and entertainer outside the rock/traditional pop-genre, probably of all time, has got to be [Frank Sinatra](#). There are many highly respected performers in show business when it comes to America alone and many great singers before him (Bing Crosby anyone?), but it's hard to achieve something that Sinatra did in his long career - in today's world almost impossible. Starting as a young singer in the popular "Tommy Dorsey Orchestra" in the early 1940s, shortly after that as a superstar to the screaming teenage-girls at "Columbia Records" (now as a solo artist), then in the 1950s recording several albums at "Capitol Records" that are considered as timeless classics now, and finally the era starting from the 1960s, when he founded his own record company "Reprise" and which lasted all the way to his death. Along with the hundreds of songs that he recorded, he made over 60 movies (he got the Oscar for "From Here to Eternity (1953)"), countless live performances - both solo and with "The Rat Pack", and several radio and TV-appearances. By studying his life and work, it seems that he never stopped working. He did his last big concerts in 1994, at 79 years old. In 1998 "The Voice" was gone.

In television Sinatra had "The Frank Sinatra Show" in the years 1950-1952 and also in 1957-1958, both surprisingly shortly lived, but he also did a series of TV "Variety Show Specials" for the ABC Television Network in 1959-1960, sponsored by "Timex". The last of these specials included something special indeed, and it was called: "The Frank Sinatra Timex Show: It's Nice to Go Traveling - Welcome Home Elvis (1960)". Yes, the other legendary figure in American popular music, [Elvis Presley](#), appeared in the show, even when Sinatra didn't exactly like "rock and roll" (still, Sinatra later recorded e.g. "Love Me Tender", and Elvis did e.g. "My Way"). Since this was a "Variety Show", it meant that Sinatra was a host, singing a couple of songs, and along with Elvis there were also other entertainers closely connected to Sinatra; "The Rat Pack" (60s line-up) was on stage (only Dean Martin was absent) - Sinatra, [Sammy Davis Jr.](#), [Joey Bishop](#), and [Peter Lawford](#) - and among them was Sinatra's daughter [Nancy Sinatra](#), early in her career. Also the dance group "The Tom Hansen Dancers" performed. The show also included some brief stand-up comic, along with a few "Timex"-commercials in-between (so the show is indeed complete in the DVD). Here's the track list of the show that is running 59:25 minutes (NTSC) - not listing the brief comical moments:

- Frank Sinatra, Nancy Sinatra, Joey Bishop, Sammy Davis Jr., and "The Tom Hansen Dancers": "It's Very Nice"
- Timex commercial
- Elvis introduction, with the song "It's Nice to Go Traveling"
- Frank Sinatra: "Witchcraft"
- Timex commercial
- Sammy Davis Jr: "Come on Bess"
- [Leona Irwin](#) & "The Tom Hansen Dancers": Oriental Wedding Celebration
- Frank Sinatra: "Gone with the Wind"
- "The Tom Hansen Dancers": Chipmunk Mania Tribute
- "Sammy Davis Jr. Recalls the Oscars"-segment
- Sammy Davis Jr. & Peter Lawford: "Shall We Dance"
- Timex commercial
- Elvis Presley: "Fame and Fortune"
- Elvis Presley: "Stuck on You"
- Frank Sinatra & Elvis Presley: "Love Me Tender" & "Witchcraft" (medley)
- Timex commercial
- Frank Sinatra & Nancy Sinatra: "Love Makes You Feel So Young"

- Nancy Sinatra: "Let´s Dance" (dance number)
- Frank Sinatra: "Goodbuy" (Sinatra thanks his guests and the audience)

So, how good is this type of show? In the end it probably comes down to which performer you enjoy the most, since this offers plenty of everything, but not really focusing on anything. For the Sinatra-fans, the highlight is probably the famous song "Witchcraft", and along with that the only solo number that he does is "Gone with the Wind". For "The Rat Pack"-fans the show offers some of their routines (like e.g. the jokes by the others when Sammy Davis Jr. is trying to perform), and Davis Jr. is also offering some of his celebrity imitations such as Cary Grant, Nat King Cole, Louis Armstrong, and also the fellow "rat", Dean Martin. The show also includes some dance-numbers from "The Tom Hansen Dancers", which are probably a mixed pack for the majority of the viewers (some could say that they are a waste of valuable time). Some Elvis-fans however are probably disappointed that "The King" does only two songs of his own, but he´s a "guest" after all. He looks nervous (in the "TV Guide" in 1960 he admitted that: "I wasn't nervous. I was petrified. I was scared stiff."), but does very enjoyable numbers (especially the latter song is very catchy). The medley with Sinatra and Elvis is a minor classic-moment, even when the actual music is nothing that special (Elvis performs better, I have to admit it).

The "Welcome Home Elvis"-slogan refers to the fact that Elvis had just finished his 2-year service in the United States Army, and the Sinatra-show was one of his first "comeback"-moments after that. Apparently he got \$125,000 for the 3 songs that he performed in the show (in a tuxedo, I might add). The show was recorded in the "Fontainebleau Hotel" in Miami Beach, Florida on March 26, 1960 (it was aired on May 8, 1960), and some of the Timex-commercials with the dolphin were recorded in "Marine Studios". There are probably people who don´t necessarily like these commercials, but it´s of course essential that they´re included, since they are clearly part of the show and after over 45 years they´re actually quite interesting to see (I want that watch now, waterproof and unbreakable!). The show also includes some important musical figures to Sinatra´s career, and serving as producers are songwriter [Sammy Cahn](#) and composer [Jimmy Van Heusen](#), and the show´s musical director is legendary arranger/conductor [Nelson Riddle](#). In the end the show, directed by [Richard Dunlap](#), got over 40% of the TV-audiences back then, and was a big hit. Still, it includes only a few truly memorable moments, since with the performers such as Sinatra, Elvis and Sammy Davis Jr., you should´ve been able to create something more unique. On the other hand, it shows that TV back then was probably a quite restrictive media for the entertainers, who were at their best in the smokey nightclub, somewhere on the Sands Casino.

THE DVD:

Video:

The transfer is obviously presented in 4:3, and the back cover is quite honest about the quality: "The quality of reproduction does not meet modern technological standards". It´s hard to say which was the source (there are some stories that the master videotape is now destroyed), but it was probably a "Kinescope"-source (filming of a TV screen during the broadcast, a common practice by TV Networks back in the day) and it´s quite difficult to find anything that good to say about it. B&W transfer is soft, washed out, and lacks detail. There´s also some annoying ghosting during the fast movement (such as dancing), and occasional dirt and specs. The framing is a bit too tight, so

(depending on the overscan of your TV-set) you might see occasional cropped heads from the top of the frame. The transfer is still a relatively clean (it still could be worse) considering the source material available, and with these type of TV specials, you have to lower your standards or forget the whole thing. "Single layer" disc is coded "R0", and there are 19 chapters.

Audio:

The only soundtrack is English Dolby Digital 2.0 Mono, and as you probably guessed it, it introduces heavy hiss on the background. Music and dialogue itself is still somewhat clear, but some distortion can be heard in selected moments. There are no subtitles.

Extras:

The main extra (listed as "Bonus programme") is "The Story of Elvis Presley: A Documented Legend" -**documentary** from 1990, running 46:43 minutes. Despite the fancy name and the running time, this is a very amateurish and rushed "documentary", which basically includes a constant narration with photos and some live-footage, along with some movie-trailers. For the newcomers this might offer a few interesting moments here and there (e.g. the first TV-appearance by Elvis), but usually the live-footage is cut short, and the endless narration fills the speakers again. It's a bit ironic, that when we finally get a change to enjoy some of the music, it's the same footage from the "Sinatra-show", that is the main feature on this DVD. For the hardcore "Elvisphiles" only.

There are also a series of fairly interesting **text notes**:

- Frank Sinatra (Albums/Singles/Filmography/Wives & lovers/The New York Deli/Memorabilia/Biography/Website; www.sinatrafamily.com)
- Joey Bishop (Biography)
- Peter Lawford (Biography)
- Nancy Sinatra (Discography/Nancy & Elvis/Filmography/Website: <http://www.nancysinatra.com/>)
- Elvis Presley (Discography/Biography/Priscilla/Lisa Marie/Vernon Presley/Gladys Presley/Colonel Tom Parker/Memorabilia/Filmography/Website: www.elvis.com/)
- Sammy Davis Jr. (Biography/Discography/Filmography/Website: www.sammydavis-jr.com/)
- "Quantum Leap" website: www.qleap.co.uk/
- "Also available" (covers of the other releases)

OVERALL:

For the serious Sinatra and Elvis-fans, this is a must, and for the average music fans this is still a nice way to spend an hour of your life. It isn't anything that "special", though. Do note, that you have to be quite forgiving when it comes to quality of the transfer.

For more info, please visit the homepage of [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

View the comparison for this film [here](#).

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"There is no normal life, there's just life. You live it."

-Tombstone

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