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### Big band ace happy to play smaller stage

By Josh Layton

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Big band ace happy to play smaller stage

ONE of the UK's leading big band musicians is gearing up for his next date at the Las Vegas-themed Charity Ball in Swindon.

Elliott Henshaw is fresh from a 25th anniversary memorial concert for world renowned drummer Buddy Rich, which took place at the London Palladium on Monday.

Elliott cites Rich as an inspiration for his own drumming talent, which has led him to the West End's biggest stages.

But he is looking forward to getting back near the audience when he graces the Marriott Hotel next month.

Elliott, 37, said: "When you play in the West End the band are quite far back from the stage. In a more intimate kind of venue it's nice to see people's reactions and it's great for the audience as well because they are closer to the action.

"It breaks down the barriers and lifts the spirit. My policy is to get people involved as much as possible and what's so great about the Vegas cabaret night is that the audience will feel part of the show."

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The event is being headlined by the West End's original Ratpack tribute act, while the Sophistication dancers will add a swish of glamour.

The frontmen are Mark Adams, who stars as Dean Martin, George Daniel Long, as Sammy Davis Jnr, and Stephen Triffitt as Frank Sinatra.

Mark, who is Swindon born and bred, personally invited the band members, all veterans of the West End, in a surprise move agreed by the show's organisers.

Elliott, who lives in London, will be joined by musical director and pianist Dominic Barlow, guitarist Tony Barnard, Bob Sydor on saxophone and bass player Rob Levy.

The Ratpack will stay true to the original spirit of the US act, which includes playful ribbing of each other and the band.

But Elliott, who is familiar with Swindon having performed shows at the [Wyvern Theatre](#), promised to be wise to it after four years playing with the trio. He said: "The Ratpack do like a bit of banter and it's primarily aimed at each other. I like to give as good as I get though."

The ball, which is organised by the Rotary Club of Swindon, will take place at the Marriott on May 19. Four local charities will benefit. The event is sold out but a reserved list is operating for tickets, priced £75 per person.

Contact 01793 610222 or [sharding@dpds.co.uk](mailto:sharding@dpds.co.uk).

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