

#24 The Composers Room

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Today, we are publishing **the 24th in a series of stories** focusing on Commercial Center as written by noted long-time Las Vegas journalist, Diane Taylor.

In this article, Diane visits with Damian Costa of The Composers Room to learn more about the exciting food and entertainment venue:

- *How did Damian's multi-faceted prior career set him up for big success at The Composers Room?*
- *What are his family's links to Las Vegas entertainment history?*
- *What notable Vegas comedy club does Damian's company, Pompey Entertainment, also oversee?*

Read on and find out...just by scrolling down in this email.

Thanks again to Diane for her continued help with uncovering the fascinating stories that live throughout Commercial Center every day.



Damian Costa, the man in charge at The Composers Room.



The Tavern bar features great food and live music.



The Tavern bar's gaming machines.



On one of the walls in The Composers Room Tavern is this shadow box of the original music that Damian's grandfather recorded with Vic Damone. The woman in the photo is Damian's grandmother, Jeannie Costa.



In The Composers Room's Showroom, the multi-talented Kelly Clinton performs her Thursday night "Sit-In" with singer Avana Christie.



The Composers Room Wedding Capital of the World studio enables today's newlyweds to share a celebration with Elvis.

The Composers Room's Damian Costa Talks History, Entertainment and a Positive Future

Visitors to The Composers Room in Commercial Center don't typically come to look at pictures, though the Tavern walls are filled with them. Most visitors come for entertainment, food, and perhaps a little gambling. Owner Damian Costa proudly says his establishment can be open to customers, depending on schedules, from lunchtime to 4 AM.

When people come to The Composers Room, Damian may show up to say hello, offer to solve a problem, or make a drink or menu suggestion. Most customers probably have no idea that the boss is one busy man who absolutely loves the idea of people finding a home at his establishment.

In the Tavern portion of the venue, the pictures on the wall are all of composers, and Damian can talk for quite a while about their talents. In the area between the Tavern and the Showroom, lots of family pictures are on display.

A life-long Las Vegas resident, Damian as a youth was a wrestler and a choir member. He and a friend, Nicholas Cordaro, had marketing talent (even in high school!), managing the student store, establishing lunchtime sales of fun foods and later even opening a clothing store. Damian and Nicholas today are partners in Pompey Entertainment, a young entertainment company that operates the Jimmy Kimmel Comedy Club and The Composers Room.

When Damian graduated from high school, funds for college were not available. He held a couple of early jobs with UNLV and eventually talked himself into helping with the installation of the first Jumbotron sign in Las Vegas. That job gave him lots of early technical experience and the inspiration he needed for the rest of his career.

He started taking classes as needed, even being a guest speaker at times. He also had a role with UNLV as their Director of Video Facilities, a job he held for nine years.

Other stops along the way: Five years as Director of Operations for the Orleans Arena, one year as Project Manager with Echelon/Boyd Gaming, four years as Director of Entertainment with South Point Hotel Casino & Spa, and nine years as Regional Director of Entertainment and Vice President –Entertainment Operations and Programming with Caesars Entertainment.

Reflecting on his early career, Damian takes pride in having driven technological advancements that helped evolve the local industry. For example, he brought the first LED screen into a Sportsbook, a groundbreaking feat at the time.

He's also proud of his contributions in event production, including video editing and 3D animation. He also spearheaded bringing the immersive LED Arena experience to Vegas which included a "Video Ribbon" at the Orleans Arena, a visual spectacle that set a new standard for immersive experiences.

As a key figure in Boyd Gaming's multi-billion-dollar Echelon Project, Damian was challenged with much of the design, construction and navigating complex contracts even though the project was ultimately halted.

Joining Caesars Entertainment marked another milestone. Damian elevated their number of showroom operations from 23 to 32, enhancing the company's entertainment portfolio. This success fueled his ambition to launch his own entertainment business, a venture that thrives today.

To that point, three and a half years ago, he went out on his own and The Composers Room was born. He says his vision was to combine visual art, entertainment, food and a bit of Las Vegas history in one location.

Damian's mother, Therese, is in charge of all the family history at The Composers Room and she handles the food set-ups there, as well.

Therese's father was Bob Hartman, a well-known horn player in early Vegas. He toured with Elvis Presley, appeared in a number of his movies and is pictured with Elvis on the walls of the venue. A song, "Touched by an Angel," was written for Therese. Damian's grandfather, his father's father, was Tony Costa, musical arranger for Vic Damone, among others, and one of the spirits behind the founding of the Las Vegas Symphony.

Personally, Damian and his wife, Gina, have three natural children, three adopted children and one grandchild. They all know about the family's talents both past and present. It's also not uncommon to hear that Damian is on the football field or at wrestling practice as he is a dedicated youth sports coach, too.

About The Composers Room, it has a new ticketing system, and a recent show with two performances sold out in two hours. A small room in the venue is a place for newlyweds to come and have photos taken. A larger space for wedding photos is in the planning stages. The Composers Room also has a Spring brochure featuring a number of The Composers Room's neighbors. Damian is the editor.

Talk to Damian for a while and you'll hear many enthusiastic stories of Las Vegas and its past. You'll also learn about the many Las Vegas entertainers who have performed at The Composers Room or who have been in the audiences for other entertainers there.

Damian attributes his achievements to the genuine, long-lasting relationships he's cultivated with talent and industry leaders. For him, success in entertainment hinges on trust and collaboration - values, he says, that continue to guide his work and legacy.

About Commercial Center, Damian is very positive. Cooperating with other business owners, he eagerly participates in charitable events for UNLV, local police departments, cancer charities, etc. A poster for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society currently greets visitors arriving at The Composers Room.

Damian is convinced that the Commercial Center of the future will be more successful than it has ever been in the past. And, he's definitely planning that The Composers Room will be part of that long-term success.