

EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW



BOBBY VINTON IN AGONIZING PAIN BEFORE COLLAPSE

'Blue Velvet' singer's daughter thought he'd had a heart attack

BOBBY VINTON still packs 'em in at concerts, but he's unlikely to impress anybody with his football skills — which led to him collapsing in the middle of a performance.

The veteran singer — who's had more than 30 hits since he shot to stardom in 1962 with "Roses are Red" — was nearing the end of a two-hour concert in Pennsylvania recently when he became dizzy and fainted onstage.

"I had been playing touch football with my kids early that morning, and I pulled a muscle in my leg," Vinton, 68, told *The ENQUIRER* in an exclusive interview.

"But I'm from the old school — no matter what, the show must go on. And for me, any pain, fatigue or illness I might be feeling is gone the minute I step onto the stage — the energy from the audience is an instant cure for anything.

"I managed my afternoon performance just fine. But that evening, while onstage, the pain in my leg was getting worse and worse.

"In my show, I dance around and play instruments. As I was blowing into my clarinet and trombone, all the pain in my leg was shooting up, and getting stronger and stronger.

"I was getting dizzy, but I had three songs to go, and I thought I could make it — until my last song.

"I couldn't stand any longer, so I sat down next to the piano player.

"But then I fainted. Luckily, my daughter, who was right behind me singing backup, caught me. Otherwise, I would have cracked my head open."

The hard-driving entertainer, who performs year round, was taken backstage.

"My daughter Hannah thought I had died of a heart attack. She said my chest had blown up and she couldn't see if I was breathing. They popped open my shirt, and I started taking deep breaths.

"I came to — and my first thought was that I

hadn't finished my show. I was so embarrassed. But my daughters went back out and finished up the last song for me."

Paramedics were called, but by the time they arrived, Vinton was up and feeling O.K.

"I didn't let them touch me. I knew I was fine. I knew exactly what had caused it — a sprained muscle in my leg, and nothing more," the star told *The ENQUIRER*.

"But I should have known better and have done an intermission. Two hours straight through, after having performed two hours that afternoon and hurt my leg in the morning, was a little too much."

The singing sensation — dubbed The Polish Prince — had more No. 1 hits during the 1960s and early 1970s than any other performer, including Elvis and Frank Sinatra.

His legendary recordings include "Blue Velvet," "Blue on Blue," "Mr. Lonely," "Please Love Me Forever" and "I Love How You Love Me."

The only child of a bandleader, Vinton hit it big in his late 20s.

He has never stopped performing — and these days, he's turned his appearances into a family enterprise!

Vinton's three daughters and his two daughters-in-law sing backup. A son plays bass, and another is his manager. Dolly, Vinton's devoted wife of more than 40 years, produces the show, overseeing everything from the costumes to the choreography.

"I tour most of the year, doing two shows a day. I'm really in great shape," Bobby told *The ENQUIRER*. "And no matter how many times I sing the same old songs, I still love performing them. I'm a real ham — and I get such a charge that people pay to see me perform."

"I'll be 69 years old in April — and I plan to keep performing for another 69 years!"

— ROBIN MIZRAHI



POLISH PRINCE: Bobby tried to finish his performance — now he wishes he had called an intermission mid-show.