

D.C. GIGS FREQUENT FOR PIANIST

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When Bellagio pianist David Osborne plays the White House next week, he plans to perform one of Michelle Obama's favorite songs. "She loves Stevie Wonder's 'Overjoyed,'" Osborne says.

So, you can go see Osborne do his usual free gig from 8 p.m. to 12:45 a.m. tonight and Saturday, playing next to the Bellagio lobby. Then he flies to Washington, D.C., for a Monday holiday gig for Democrats, Republicans and probably the Obama family.

The Oklahoma native is a go-to guy for presidents of both parties. Laura Bush invited him to the White House the most, 16 to 18 times, he says. Bill Clinton gigged him "a bunch." He played for the Obamas last holiday season.

And every year, Osborne—who holds a master's degree in liturgical pipe organ—plays a 32-pedal pipe organ in Georgia for friend Jimmy Carter's birthday.

After Carter won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002, he came to Vegas with son Jack, eating at the Bellagio. "I told the (restaurant) manager, 'He just won the Nobel Peace Prize. I want to take care of the check. Please give me the check,'" Osborne says. Yet, someone handed the former president the bill, he says. Osborne was embarrassed. But the Carters weren't.

"Jack said, 'This is hilarious. I haven't seen my dad pay a check in a while.'"

Around the same time, Jimmy Carter also saw a magic show at the Bellagio "Magicians pick-pocketed the watches off the Secret Service, just by shaking their hands," Osborne says. "They were looking for their watches" until the magicians finally returned them.

On Monday, Osborne's play list includes Gershwin, John Lennon's "Imagine," The Beatles' "Let It Be" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," a song dear to Osborne because it was written by his mentor, the late, great Ralph Blane.