

ENTERTAINMENT

The 50's are back, jack!

Dianna Saffold
Sentinel-Voice

"That which was great in the past, will be great again"—a quote most befitting the lead singer of the Coasters, just one of three groups destined to be part of an emerging cultural renaissance.

The Coasters, Platters and Drifters are performing in the Congo Showroom at the Sahara Hotel, 2535 S. Las Vegas Blvd., from May 17 until October 21.

Setting the stage afire in their blazing red suits, the Coasters moved from hit to hit, instantly pleasing old fans and winning over new ones. Known as the "Clown Princes of Rock 'N' Roll", the Coasters combined comedy, music and dialogue to create an atmosphere of "Coaster Mania".

Early clover, 12-year member and group leader, describes "Coaster Mania" as a "way of life, projecting positives, laughter, joy, well being and an ease of mind."

The audience, filled with

young and old, sang Coaster hits as if they were last week's top 40's. Old favorites, like 1958 hits "Yakety Yak" and "Charlie Brown, He's a Clown", may have brought the audience to their feet, but when they began to sing the 1957 million-seller "Searching", that brought group leader Early Clover to your seat.

While members Steve Smith, Ken Peeler and Ron Richardson continued to fuel the Coastermania from onstage, Clover worked the audience masterfully, moving throughout the entire showroom, shaking hands, extending blessings and kissing what must have been dozens of women. The whole experience left you wanting to hug your neighbor.

Stetson, the excellent backup band revved it up for each group, jamming without pause.

They played on as one of the most known vocal groups in the world burst forth; silvery and smooth came the Platters. With hand



Photo special to Sentinel-Voice

The Drifters, Platters and Coasters (L-R) are in concert at the Congo Showroom in the Sahara Hotel through October.

movements so fluid, you could see the years of experience, commanding the stage.

The Platters were obviously young, but definitely delivered the unmistakable, melodic sound of the original group, singing such songs as "Only You", a Platter trademark hit, "Twilight Time", "Harbor Lights", and "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes".

Lead singer Curtis Michael, spreading his voice like honey, was

complimented by fellow group members Tony Fonchez, Smokey, and also a female singer, Lady Christie. The combination of great costuming, an impressive light show and the exquisite delivery of the distinctive Platter's sound left you with the urge to add a wet kiss to that neighborly hug you just gave up after seeing the Coasters.

Just as you turned to give that wet kiss, the stage erupted, yet again. This time with four white-suited

gentlemen ready to rock then roll. The famous Drifters, having appeared in every major night club and concert hall in the US, from Las Vegas to Madison Square Garden, gave a tasteful mixture of their hits and music featured on their compilation CD. Crowd favorites like the 2 million seller "There Goes My Baby" and "Lights on Broadway" brought the crowd once again to their feet.

The polished choreography dazzled the audience as they slid, dipped, and group

member Caesar Valentino even flipped.

Flanked by soulful crooners, members Russell Henry, Bobby Ruffin (cousin of David Ruffin of the original Temptations) and the last remaining original member, Rich Shepherd. Their showmanship and style confirmed their endless ability to spit out hit after hit.

For an evening filled with a variety of tempos and flavors to suit, the Coasters, Drifters, Platters show is a must see.

Warwick raps about life, joy of making new album

Janice Malone
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Whether she's dressed in a designer gown or in jeans and cap, Warwick is always stylish. Her current CD, "Dionne Sings Dionne" marks her 66th album release.

"When the word got out that I was recording an album, a lot of new songs were submitted and I chose materials that would be mostly associated with what people know me for and that's where songs like "Love Begins With You" fit in. Industry professionals from radio and record labels and notable celebrities were asked to name their favorite Dionne Warwick songs. And, based on their answers, Warwick and producers assembled the material for the final product.

With acclaimed producers like George Duke and her sons David Elliott (co-writer of Luther Vandross' 1987 hit "Here and Now") and Damon Elliott (known for his work with rap group Bones, Thugs-n-Harmony), Warwick's latest release covers the musical gamut. Her classic 1964 hit "Reach Out For Me" is given a whole new R&B

flavor from guest singers El DeBarge and The Emotions. And, special guest Jonathan Butler helps add a South African flavor to her 1968 pop hit "There's Always Something There To Remind Me."

"I wanted to give those songs a hip, up-to-date treatment, so I gave the producers complete reign as long as they didn't stray too far away from the original melodies," she notes.

It's still fairly early in the year, but Warwick's plate is already full into the new millennium.

Her one-woman Broadway show, "Dionne Sings Dionne—I Won't Stop Now," opens in September. She's the national spokesperson for AMSTED; co-chairperson for SMILE, an organization that helps children with facial and birth defects and she's working on a cosmetic and skin care line of products, which should be launched later this year.

Her interior design firm, The Dionne Warwick Design Group, has also done the interiors of over 200 Best Western hotels throughout



North America. And that's not counting her worldwide touring schedule, which usually takes up about 265

days a year.

SCOOP: YOUR LATEST CD IS CALLED "DIONNE SINGS DIONNE." HOW

MANY ALBUMS HAVE YOU NOW RECORDED IN YOUR CAREER?

WARWICK: I think this marks my 66th album. I don't know where the time has gone

over the years. But I'm really pleased with this one because there's something for nearly everyone on it. There's hip hop style songs from some of (See Warwick, Page 9)

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