

Eagles flying high on record-breaking tour



Timothy B. Schmit dazzles the crowd at Harveys on Aug. 30. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – I was 12 years old when the Eagles’ debut album came out. I spent so many hours in my room listening to it that my mom would occasionally feel the need to check on me.

I loved the melodic harmony and kickback California style so much that it set the ground for my longing to leave the East Coast for the West. More than half the songs off the album became hits, from one of their favorite early garage-type jams “Witchy Woman” and heavy guitar rhythm “Already Gone” to top-down cruisey “Take It Easy” and sway-inducing “Train Leaves Here This Morning.”

From there, I was hooked – gobbling up LPs from “On the

Border” to the more recent “Long Road Out of Eden.” This was the first full studio album in 28 years for one of the most popular rock bands of all time.

Some would say the group’s signature country-rock blend was a first for this popular mix and definitely not the last.

The Eagles wrapped up the Harveys Outdoor Concert Series this weekend with two sold-out shows. This part of their box-office record-breaking “History” tour was so named to coincide with a 2013 documentary of the same name. The band, which is led by front men Glenn Frey, Don Henley, Joe Walsh and Timothy B. Schmit, will continue on its massive \$145 million tour that started July 2013.



Glenn Frey and Don Henley

The core singers and musicians returned to Stateline for the second time. This time original guitarist and banjo plucker Bernie Leadon joined them, much to the delight of the heavy baby boomer crowd. The band members looked older, but still had it – as they were on key and in sync with their guitars, percussion and keyboards.

Always considered the proverbial bad boy of the band, the longhaired Walsh even delivered on his own major hits “Life’s Been Good” and “Rocky Mountain Way.” He engaged the crowd with

a call to perfect a guttural chant and provided his own classic contorted facial expressions.

Through the years, Walsh, Henley and Frey have shown their mettle in going solo.

Henley – always widely respected for his ability to sing as a drummer, launched the band into his own mega hit “Dirty Laundry.” The timeless piece showed news images depicting the public’s fascination with misfortunes in the news cycles.

Even Schmit, who mainly plays with the band, took the lead for his sweet, high-pitched honest depiction of a romance gone awry with “I Can’t Tell You Why.”

And later Frey tipped the band’s hat to the Beach Boys, indicating how the 1960s beach soft rock group led by Brian Wilson inspired his band’s harmonious sound.

“The Eagles were settlers, but the Beach Boys were pioneers,” he said.

With that, “Heartache Tonight” made the crowd rise again.

Then, Walsh cranked out the sexy “Those Shoes.”

After a fun-filled electric guitar challenge between Walsh and Frey in which the latter announced “you got to be funky,” the boys of summer got the crowd to its feet for “Life in the Fast Lane” – one of its biggest hits in more than four decades of making music.

The event brought hit after hit after hit.

I’ve never been to a concert where so many people knew most of the words to the songs. The couple behind us belted out a good majority of them.

Harrah’s entertainment director, John Packer, said before the Aug. 30 show to expect that based on Friday night’s concert.

“This is a bucket list show for people,” he said. “People hear they’re touring and don’t care what tickets cost.”

The Eagles shows are some of the priciest.

The first time the band played Stateline the shows sold-out immediately, prompting Harrah's management to add a performance.

The Eagles apparently like returning to Lake Tahoe for however long they play together.

"They find out what a lot of what locals know. It's nice here. And (the band members) get that vibe," Packer said.

Some people don't think twice about seeing this band more than once, as in Joe Patone of Belmont.

"I like the venue here," he said, while the band opened with country tune "How Long."

The group followed up with the audience sighing with a big "ah" for its soft melody "Take it to the Limit."

From start to finish, the band gave the audience a walk down memory lane. When Henley and company left the stage before a triple encore; I could hear concertgoers declaring the band had to play "Hotel California." The song, with its so-named album, became one of its biggest hits and marked its peak of commercial success in 1976.

But it was Henley standing in a plaid shirt at the mic for his melancholy "Desperado" that is moving enough to make the emotional cry. The lights even came up for the entire audience to sing, "you better let somebody love you."

With yet another special pinnacle in the band's storied career, the Eagles have sold more than 120 million albums worldwide, earning five No. 1 U.S. singles and six Grammy awards. In 1998, the band was inducted in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.