

'Solid Gold Soul' – a jewel of a show



Bobby Brooks Wilson, center, et al will be at Harrah's Lake Tahoe through Labor Day. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – A new summer show at Harrah's Lake Tahoe not only returns audiences to the roots of soul with rhythm and blues, but it even takes back the performers.

"Solid Gold Soul" staged in the South Shore Room features an ensemble of accomplished singers accompanied by a five-piece band of highly-skilled musicians.

Leading the pack is Bobby Brooks Wilson, who is the son of the late soul-singing star – Jackie Wilson. This is something the younger Wilson found out later in life. He was given up for adoption before landing in South Carolina foster care homes in a Dickens-style account of his childhood.

While he was entering the music industry, those working with him couldn't help but notice his moves and voice resembled his father in an uncanny way. That's what led him to discover his roots.

The music industry often comes full circle.



Bobby Brooks Wilson is singer and showman in "Solid Gold Soul." Photo/Kathryn Reed

The young Wilson recounted being assigned to a doo-wop group called The Love Notes by the father of blockbuster singing sensation Bruno Mars.

Wilson consequently signed with Motown Records.

“That gave me my chops,” Wilson told *Lake Tahoe News* during a media event last weekend.

The record label welcomed the young Wilson to the world chosen by his father, who he credits for building Motown’s stellar reputation.

“It was 1959. It all started that year,” Wilson said during the opening of the Harrah’s show. About 100 people were clapping and cheering as he appropriately opened with his father’s mega hit “(Your Love is Lifting Me) Higher and Higher.”

“Welcome to the show. We’re here to have a good time,” Wilson declared. Even though he has his own music – most recently recording his “It’s About Time” compilation – one could say he was born to carry on the performances of his legendary father.

Plus, the audience appeared hungry to return to the days of great dance music, lyrics of innocent love and the aura of the social consciousness of the 1960s.

“This music is a part of our relationship,” Sandy O’Conner told *LTN*. The Arizona woman, who owns a cabin here, calls the genre “our time,” when the tunes on the radio were “uplifting.”



Listening to the music it was hard to know these weren’t the “real” Supremes. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Other performers beyond Wilson graced the stage with their renditions of the music by Otis Redding, Diana Ross and the Supremes, Marvin Gaye, Little Richard, Stevie Wonder, Donna Summer, Martha Reeves and Sly and the Family Stone.

Denita Asberry rocked the house with her flattering rendition of Aretha Franklin's timeless hit "Respect." No one in the crowd was sitting down.

"I think Aretha was amazing. We liked it all," Fred Padilla of San Carlos said, while still like his wife Sandy, was grinning from ear to ear afterward. They were bumping during the 80-minute show, which featured some of the biggest hits of Motown producer Berry Gordy's era from "Sitting at the Dock of the Bay" and "Baby Love" to "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" and "What's Going On."

The 24-karat party will last through Sept. 3.