

# KEY-NOTES

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**Inside:**

- ♫ Music Offer
- ♫ Doo-Wop 51
- ♫ The Four Tops
- ♫ Johnny Maestro

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Summer greetings to all of you. I hope you are enjoying a pleasant (and humid-free) summer.

This time of the year signals concerts of all types and musical styles, indoors and out, from all kinds of venues. This issue of **KEY-NOTES** features reviews from three of our members on events they saw first-hand over the past few months. Perhaps by reading these reviews may spur you on to check out some concerts yourself, and ultimately share your experience with fellow KRC members in future editions of **KEY-NOTES**.

Our June show was a bit hot and July was a little short on vendors and customers. President **Welch** has a few comments on this subject in his column this month.

We've seen the return of a few old friends who used to provide food at our shows when we were in the Blue Ball Market House. Jackie's Snackettes (who operates as S&S Catering) set up a tent at the May and June show, offering a variety of food and drink items. They plan to set up at our show when their schedule allows. Bricker's Concession Trailer will be on hand the other months, so no one will starve at the show!

This issue contains another great music offer from the folks at Live Gold Productions. Look for the complete Whitburn/Record Research catalog to be offered in the October issue of **KEY-NOTES**. You've been warned - start saving your money!

Until next time, keep on collecting.  
Musically Speaking,

*Derek*

**B. Derek Shaw**  
**KEY-NOTES** Editor  
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## VIEW FROM THE TOP

"The first summer of the new century is now upon us, with another century of record collecting to look forward to. The KRC will be there to help sustain each and every individuals collecting preference.



A few comments have recently been made concerning a slight decline in attendance at the last several shows. Shows of note include Mother's Day, though there is a reasonable allowance for this date.

The KRC utilizes an advertising campaign & public service announcements in a wide variety of publications. However, dealers and shoppers alike can do their part in the following ways: ① Word of Mouth discussions. ② Enclose KRC fliers in any music-related mail. These suggestions will have an impact by providing increasing Knowledge of our unique club and its eclectic diversity of music related collectable.

The KRC is here for you. Your continued support and attendance will keep our club "in tune" throughout the new century."

**Kevin Welch**  
2000 KRC President

The title of the next two CD's suggests that these are for beginning collectors, however that is not the case. "Doo-Wop For Dummies" are two 25 song discs with some familiar tunes, with the majority being rarer sides. All play off of featuring nonsense titles.

Some titles on Disc One include: Golly Gee by the Zodiacs; Oo-La-La by the Five Lords; Pitter Patter by the Five Fleets; Shimmy Shimmy Cha Cha by Herb Price and the Darts; and Tippi Tippi Wang Wang by the Kashairs.

Disc Two contains these songs: Wham Slam Bam by Fred Green & group; Bon Bon by Sandy Powell & group; Itchy Twitchy Too by the Metalics; Vip A Drip by the Mint Julips; and Boo Wacka Boo by the Velvetears.

For a list of song titles for "Doo-Wop For Dummies," see either Club Treasurer Charlie Reinhart or **KEY-NOTES** Editor, **Derek Shaw** at the August or September shows.

Bob has agreed to offer the discs to KRC members at \$9.00 each. If you want the CD(s) shipped directly to you rather than picking them up at the September or October shows, then add \$2.00 each to your order. Complete the Order Form below to get your copies. You'll be glad you did.

## ANOTHER MUSICAL OFFER FOR KRC MEMBERS

It's been some time since Bob Miles (Live Gold Productions) made his "Million Dollars Worth of Doo-Wop" material available to KRC members. (**KEY-NOTES** #103, October 1997). Although that series is now out of print, Bob's new label, Sound Hog Music, has four titles that may be of interest.

Two of the offerings are live concerts with artist interviews mixed in between. The other two are compilations every Doo-Wop collector will want.

Gene Vincent, "Rhythm In Blue" features an interesting interview conducted by Red Robinson between a 1958 performance in Vancouver. Red mentions in the liner notes that this is the only live Gene Vincent concert and interview in existence today.

Jackie Wilson..."Final Curtain" is a recording of his first show at a two show concert in September 1975. (During the second show is when he suffered a stroke). The concert tracks are intertwined with an interview conducted by WCBS-FM's Norm N. Nite. Both CD's are highly interesting and fascinating.

Both interview/live concert CD's are well done with surprisingly good sound quality.

## Sound Hog Music CD Offer

Qty	Title	\$2 shipping (If sent directly to you)	Price (\$9 each)
___	Jackie Wilson...Final Curtain	\$ ___	\$ ___
___	Gene Vincent Rhythm in Blue	\$ ___	\$ ___
___	Doo-Wop for Dummies, Vol. 1	\$ ___	\$ ___
___	Doo-Wop for Dummies, Vol. 2	\$ ___	\$ ___
Name _____		Total Order	\$ ___
Address _____		Total Shipping	\$ ___
City, State, Zip _____			
Phone _____		<b>Grand Total</b>	\$ ___

Mail this form with check or money order payable to Keystone Record Collectors to: Charlie Reinhart, 1616 Robert Rd, Lancaster, PA 17601 Order deadline: September 10th show, CD's distributed at the October 8th and November 12th shows.

### KRC in 2000

EACH SHOW 9 AM TO 3 PM SECOND SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH  
**LANCASTER CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA**  
 FLYERS ARE AVAILABLE, SO TAKE SOME AND SPREAD THE WORD!  
 ANNOUNCEMENTS AVAILABLE FOR WANT LIST ITEMS.  
 BUSINESS MEETING FOLLOWS EVERY OTHER SHOW AT 5PM.  
 (DURING THE MONTH THERE IS NO KEY-NOTES)

It was the hottest ticket in town, and one that sold out within 80 hours of offering. It's not surprising, considering the phenomenal success of last year's historic PBS documentary on rock & roll group harmony. Doo-Wop 50, which aired on PBS stations across the country, set records in merchandise sales. The Rhino label video, for which PBS held exclusive rights until earlier this year, went gold, and took with it the Doo-Wop CD box-set as evidenced by some of last year's participants displaying their RIAA-certified plaques backstage. The ticket I am talking about was Doo-Wop 51, held May 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> at the Benedum Center in downtown Pittsburgh.

Entrepreneur and radio host T.J. Labinsky, grandson of the founder of Savoy Records, along



**The Daddio of the Raddio:** Legendary Porky Chedwick is still the king of Pittsburgh radio even in his eighth decade. (L to R) **KEY-NOTES** Editor **Derek Shaw**, Co-author of this article **Steve Yohe**, and musicologist **Bill Trousdale** pose with "Pork the Tork."

with Henry Deluca, produced the show, which was again hosted by Jerry Butler. Pioneer radio disc jockey Porky Chedwick, now 82, made several cameo appearances on stage. As promised, this year's event was even bigger, featuring 17 acts the first night and 11 on the second. KRC was well represented, with **Bill Trousdale**, **Steve Yohe**, **Derek Shaw**, **Terry Stewart**, and **Phil Schwartz** making the trip into the steel city.

Musically, the first night featured groups which required the more lush arrangements, with string-arrangements an integral part of most sets. The original Velvets, featuring Virgil Johnson, opened the show, which started punctually against the backdrop of colorful 50's sets. The Velvets were originally from Lubbock, Texas, and performed their trademark, "Tonight (Could Be the

Night)," a record that has become increasingly more beloved and embraced by oldies radio over the past decade. Virgil's voice was good, not great, however, the group got stronger and more together as the song unfolded. When it was over, about 2½ minutes later, we wanted more. Unfortunately, they did not perform their other well-known song, "That Lucky Old Sun."

Carl Gardner's Coasters were next. The group suffered a loss earlier this year with the death of bass singer Will "Dub" Jones, who's "Why's everybody always pickin' on me?" has become a household cliché. However, we were treated to a fine replacement bass singer, Ronnie Bright, originally of the valentines and of the Johnny Cymbal hit, "Mr. Bass Man." Carl is a throat cancer survivor of 7 years and is still the one and only voice that should ever be billed as The Coasters. A special treat was Carl's rendition of "Smokey Joe's Café," on which he was featured as the lead of the Robins in 1955. The song has enjoyed a much-deserved revitalization as the title for the Broadway play, and seeing Carl sing it was phenomenal.

Several groups were reunited for this event that normally appear as two or more acts, in an attempt to reunite as many original members as possible. The Tokens were such a group, with Jay Siegel and Mitch Margo (wearing his trademark hat) reunited. They opened with "Tonight I Fell in Love," delighting those who appreciate the less overplayed early Tokens sounds. The arrangement on their second offering, "Portrait Of My Love" sounded especially well rehearsed, and the first full-house standing ovation came with their signature "The Lion Sleeps Tonight." Siegel's falsetto lead was right on, and the group was very polished, even adding a young lady to do the high soprano, as heard on the record.

In cases where the original lead singer is no longer living, groups were chosen that front a close-sounding lead. Since the death of Richard Blandon, first tenor Cleveland Still has carried on the name, with a new lead singer added to the lineup. "Chapel of Dreams" was a must, which was done between their biggest sellers, "Don't Ask Me to Be Lonely" and "Could This Be Magic."

Don and Juan are always fun, especially when they do "Chicken Necks," with the story and dance which go along with it. Unfortunately, time did not permit, but the duo (1 original), did their wonderful "What's Your Name," teasing the audience by leaving the stage before the "Shoo-doo-a-yop-ba-ba" close. It's surprising that the hometown audience allowed them to

leave without performing "Magic Wand," since it was a big Pittsburgh hit.

The first of the girl groups to perform was The Chiffons. Judy Craig, the original lead singer looked great and can still hit the notes. Judy has retired from performing with the group, and reportedly is retiring again. However, her

## DOO-WOP 51-

### EVENING ONE

A Review by **Phil Schwartz**

presence made the three numbers they sang especially enjoyable. The Shirelles, featuring Shirley Alston Reeves, and The Crystals with Dee Dee Kenniebrew were the other girl group harmony acts.

Randy and The Rainbows were another reunited group, bringing Randy Safuto and Mike Zero to the stage together. "Denise" was their sole offering.

Another group to suffer a tragic loss in the past year is the Five Keys. Rudy West's sudden death marked the passing of one of the most important voices of the era. Maryland Pierce, the other Keys' lead, was in good form, supplemented by Thomas Treat, who sang the lead on the King sessions. They opened with the up-tempo "Ling Ting Tong." Supplemented with original choreography, and the audience loved their rendition of "Close Your Eyes." None of the Aladdin material was performed.

As in the real-life arena, two different Drifters groups took to the stage. On the left, the surviving members of the pre-1959 group, fronted by legendary bass singer Bill Pinkney. On the right, Charlie Thomas, representing the Ben E. King / Rudy Lewis / and sometimes Johnny Moore group. (Read the history; it gets confusing!) Clyde McPhatter is difficult to emulate, as many rock and roll historians consider him one of the greatest voices in the entire generation. However, two singers; Bobby Hendricks and Richard Dunbar- did a good job in blending with Pinkney's still-strong bass. Charlie Thomas was also excellent, particularly with the collector's favorite, "I Count the Tears." The two groups dueled back and forth, with Pinkney and Thomas eventually embracing. This part was gratifying, especially because of the rumors of friction between the groups in the rehearsal stages. The best number was, from my perspective, Pinkney's rendition of "White Christmas." It's a record we all get out every December. TO hear him do it live was tremendous!

Larry Chance has been a stalwart, active member of the group-harmony circuit since the 60's (He never left.) He showed a lot of courage in the "show-must-go-on" department in bringing The Earls to the stage, despite contracting a bad case of laryngitis earlier in the week. While his performance could not be up to his usual standard, the group did a nice job generally, singing "Never," "I Believe" (dedicated to group member Larry Palumbo who died in a paratrooper accident in 1959), and, of course, "Remember-re-mem-mem-mem-member."

The Teenagers were another much-anticipated act, as we were all anxious to see them with their new lead singer, Timothy Wilson. Wilson fronted the Salisbury, MD group "Tiny Tim & The Hits," with their 1958 record "Wedding Bells" being highly regarded by lovers of the sound. WCB's Bobby Jay (bass), and Frankie Lyman's brother Louis rounded out the group with original members Jimmy Merchant and Herman Santiago. The group opened with "The ABCs of Love" and closed with "Why Do Fools." In-between they had a lot of fun, performing the rarely heard, "I'm Not a Juvenile Delinquent." Louis was featured on his own "I'm So Happy," as was Wilson on "Wedding Bells," both nice

## KEY NOTES

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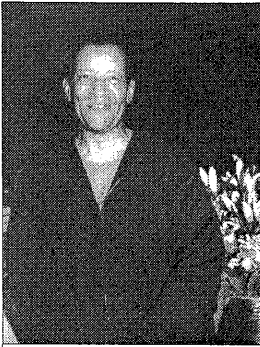
(Deadline for #121 is September 10)

Names in bold type are members of Keystone Record Collectors

# TWO NIGHTS OF HEAVENLY HARMONIES

touches which generally pleased both advanced collectors and casual listeners (if any) in the crowd.

Very few of us have ever seen Mel Carter perform. Today he is an actor in the Los Angeles area, currently working on TV pilots.



### Still a Thrill:

Mel Carter of "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me" fame will wow the crowd at Doo-Wop 51.

Pittsburgh's own Pure Gold was brought in to back him up, creating the full chorus arrangement on his classic "Hold Me Thrill Me Kiss Me." He began the song with the verse, "They Told Me, Be Sensible With Your New Love," completing the bridge before the orchestra opened. We were treated to two renditions and a false start, thanks to Mel's cracking up himself (Something

about having to wear underwear a few sizes small to hit the high notes these days.) He was spectacular; one of the highlights of the evening. One of the questions that we asked him backstage, was whether he was inspired by Sonny Till's (Orioles) rendition on "Hold Me." He said that he only heard it within the past few years, and was barely aware of the Karen Chandler version, both from 1952. He remarked about how incredibly fortunate he felt to have such a signature song that people still want to hear.

How many groups formed in the mid-50's still have all five original members? The Dells may be it. Marvin Junior (lead), Johnny Carter (high tenor lead), Chuck Barksdale, Verne Allison, and Mike McGill took the stage to complete the first night's show. Junior has had hip replacement surgery and has to perform recently, sitting. However, on the evening of the show, the hip was on the mend enough to allow him to stand, with a stool alongside as a backup. His voice is very unique and powerful, and still blends very well with Carter's falsetto notes. The Dells did the 1969 version of "Oh, What A Night," and closed with a long version of "Stay in My Corner," which the audience loved.

Interestingly, Johnny Carter will in all likelihood be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame twice. He was originally a member of the Flamingos, writing "Golden Teardrops" in 1953.



**An Excellent Evening:** Steve Yohe (L) and Derek Shaw (R) pose with the group that brought us "Coney Island Baby," The Excellents.

## EVENING TWO A Review by Steve Yohe

Partial standing ovations were in order for most of the groups in evening number 2 of Doo Wop 51 at the Benedum Center in Pittsburgh on May 16. The four exceptions were showstoppers that brought the entire audience to its feet. I was fortunate enough to be in the audience and also to be passed into the private party afterward, where I was able to meet several of the performers.

From the outset we were reminded that this wasn't a concert, but a filming of a TV special to be seen on WQED, Pittsburgh's PBS affiliate, in the fall and available to the rest of the country late this year.

As with Doo Wop 50, Jerry Butler was the ever-charming host for the evening. His pleasing manner and sense of humor were in evidence throughout.

Hank Ballard and the Midnighters, the only group that did three numbers, opened the show. Back from a successful bout with cancer, Ballard sounded strong on lead as the Midnighters cooked with the strong harmonies we've come to expect from them. Their third selection was a medley of "Annie" songs that had people dancing in the aisles and rated the audience's first standing ovation. That was showstopper number one.

Next, before the second act was introduced, the legendary Porky Chedwick was called to the stage to be justly recognized for his contributions to the genre. I was excited to be able to meet him, shake his hand, and get a business card from him at the post-show party.

The Jacks/Cadets were brought out and performed their biggest hit as each group. "Stranded in the Jungle," their hit as the Cadets, was fine, but the real treat was "Why Don't You Write Me," which the same personnel recorded as the Jacks, with a lead whose voice has improved greatly with age and an exceptional bass singer.

The Excellents followed with one selection, their trademark "Coney Island Baby." If the lead

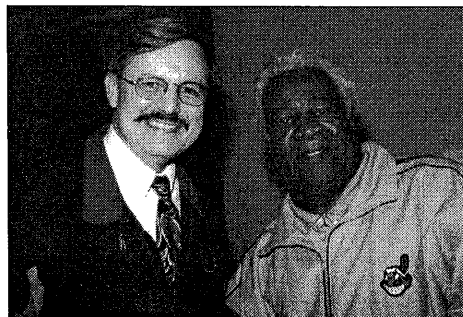
hadn't confided to me after the show that a younger member of the group hit the high notes for him, I certainly wouldn't have known, for the overall effect was right on the mark. They are a one-hit wonder, but what a wonder!

Next came the El Dorados with "I'll Be Forever Loving You" as the better of their two efforts. In it the lead was in good voice and the harmony was excellent.

The evening's second show stopper followed as host Jerry Butler was able to coax Betty Everett onto the stage to do a lovely performance of "Let It Be Me," with both singers in fabulous voice.

The duo was succeeded by the Clovers, who wowed us with "Love Potion Number 9" and "Devil or Angel," both featuring a strong lead, excellent harmony, and an exceptional bass.

Sporting striking black and silver outfits, the Magnificents followed with a serviceable version of "Up on the Mountain" that suddenly blossomed into an especially fine extended ending exciting, the audience with lively, gospel-flavored call and response that fit well with the group's strong voices.



**Caught in the Drift:** Phil Schwartz (L) with Bill Pinkney of the Drifters. Both touring Drifters groups were reunited at Tuesday's performance.

At this point in the program, the Tymes were introduced. George Williams, the original lead had been flown in from England just for the show. They hit their groove with their second number, "So Much in Love," with the lead in great voice, ethereal harmony, and another strong bass. This was the night's third showstopper.

The Edsels were next with unfortunately only one song, but it was "Rama Lama Ding Dong," accentuated by their powerful bass man. After the concert I found them to be group of affable gentlemen, who were easy to talk to.

All four original members of the Diamonds were next to do two numbers with powerful harmony, culminating with "Little Darlin'." The song's composer Maurice Williams, who sang lead on the original version when he was with the Gladiolas, joined them on piano. As the Zodiacs came on stage, Maurice then took the microphone for a reprise in which both groups performed together, switching leads. When the Diamonds left the stage, the Zodiacs joined their leader for an effective version of "Stay," which had a good lead, an excellent falsetto break, and especially strong harmony.

The penultimate act was showstopper number four. Five members of Johnny Reed's 1948 Orioles teamed with four members of the 1954 Orioles for an incredible performance of "Crying in the Chapel," replete with chilling harmonies and dueling leads that got better and better with each switch of lead singers.

The closing act was appropriately "Til Then" by the Classics, who sounded so much more polished than they did in 1963. As the song drew to a close, the appearance of all the other acts joining the Classics for a few closing stanzas signaled the much-too-early end of an unforgettable evening. I'm eager to see and hear how the show is edited with evening number one for the TV debut of Doo Wop 51. Watch for it.

## THE FOUR TOPS, AMERICAN MUSIC THEATRE, MAY 26, 2000 A Concert Review by Denise Haage

This would be the fifth time since 1983 that I was fortunate enough to enjoy this Motown Legend in concert. Although excited, I had a concern about the group's replacement of the late Lawrence Payton with Theo Peoples. He had been one of the Temptations numerous replacements in the nineties. Their 1998 Labor Day Concert at Penn's Landing lacked some of their usual electricity. My hope was that Theo would help correct that problem.

After the orchestra's opening medley, the Four Tops began with the Levi Stubbs' solo "MacArthur Park," his voice as strong as ever. "Baby, I Need Your Loving" and "Shake Me, Wake Me" followed. The next selection started with Theo singing lead. My fears were unfounded. The Tops were back!

They continued with some of their later familiar hits, a Frank Sinatra tribute and another excellent Levi Stubbs' solo, "I Believe in You and Me." The Four Tops closed their 75 minute show with a seven-tune medley of their earlier Motown hits. By the concert's end, they had the audience standing and singing along.

After the show, I hurried to the backstage door in hopes of getting the chance to meet my Motown favorites. Abdul (Duke) Fakir, Obie Benson, and Theo Peoples, already seated in their limo, were whisked away a few minutes later. However, Levi



Denise Haage with lead singer Levi Stubbs.

Stubbs remained on the tour bus. The road manager tried to encourage the persistent few to leave, without success. Levi finally emerged to spend a few gracious minutes with us, chatting, signing autographs, and posing for pictures. Now that they are back on tour, I hope to see them again in concert soon.



**One of the Best:** Never missing the beat or a note, Maestro is always in perfect voice wherever he performs.

Smooth Harmonies: Johnny Maestro (Center) is surrounded by his group, The Brooklyn Bridge at a concert in Lykens, PA.

## JOHNNY MAESTRO, LYKENS FIRE COMPANY A Review by Steve Yohe

After paying over \$30 to hear Johnny Maestro and the Brooklyn Bridge about 1 and 1/2 years ago, I was amazed to learn that I might be able to hear them for free this June 10th in Lykens PA.

After many phone calls, KRC member **Derek Shaw** was able to track down enough details about the appearance for several of our members to make the trip to Lykens, a small town about 40 minutes north of Harrisburg. Since this was a grossly unpublicized show, we had no idea what kind of crowd or environment to expect.

Upon arriving at the Lykens Fire Company grounds we observed several fire engines zooming around the block; people drinking beer, eating food, and playing games of chance; and an outdoor stage set up with Johnny Maestro and the Brooklyn Bridge's equipment. The concert was to be the entertainment for the annual Dauphin County Fire Convention.

Despite the lack of publicity, the group played to a sizable and receptive crowd. Even though the humidity was high and the temperature was in the 90's, the group looked professional in slacks, blazers, and ties.

This group does group harmony as well or better than anyone out there currently. There were numerous highlights during the hour-long show, besides the Crests' and Bridge's biggest hits.

For example, there were a fine acapella version of "I Thank the Moon" and a rocking version of "People Got to Be Free." Their performance of "Blessed Is the Rain" never ceases to move me with its powerful arrangement and choir-like harmonies. Also, few artists have the nerve and the ability both to pull off great versions of Jackie Wilson's hits, but Johnny Maestro really cooks with such songs as "Lonely Teardrops."

All in all, the trip from York to Lykens was well worth it. If Johnny and the Brooklyn Bridge comes near you, I'd heartily recommend catching this polished act.

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