

The Shirelles: an enjoyable reminder of the sixties

By JANICE WALSH

They've played at Radio City Music Hall. They've starred in the movie *Let the Good*

Times Roll. Groups like the Beatles have recorded their songs, and their impact on the music of the late 50's and 60's has been compared to that of The Supremes.

Gosh, they've even been on the Merv Griffin Show! Twenty years after recording their last hit *Soldier Boy*, The Shirelles played the Odeon Ballroom in Halifax, making us cognizant of what great things they did to enable them to meet the great Merv himself.

The Shirelles are Doris Jackson, Beverly Lee, and Louise Bethune (Bethune replaced the late Micki Harris McFadden who passed away in 1982).

After seeing their show on Tuesday night, I realized what all the fuss had been about. Although I cannot say that I am a big fan of the 'black female singing group' music of the '60's, The Shirelles' charm, presence and energy (oh, what energy) on stage possessed me and even made me forget the fact that their show was 30 minutes late in beginning—well, I almost forgot.

What enthralled me the most

about their performance was their charisma. Jackson, the lead singer and the apparent stage spokesperson for the group immediately established a rapport with the audience with her humour, style, and merely by the fact that she bothered to acknowledge the audience.

In an age where many bands feel that just playing their music is enough for the crowd, it's refreshing to find a group who actually pays attention to their audience.

The first set of songs included three of their hits, *Dedicated to the One I Love*, *Soldier Boy*, and, of course, *Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow*? With these songs, it became apparent that the vocal talents of the group, especially the vocal strength which Jackson possesses, have not diminished with the passage of time.

The vocal harmonies were a little weak but this did not deter the audience from dancing, nor did it prevent me from clapping along. Their rendition of *Johnny B. Goode* was especially pleasing—perhaps the best song of the set.

The Shirelles also performed the first song they recorded—a tune

they wrote in 1958 entitled *I Met Him On a Sunday*. As to be expected, because it was their first recorded song and it was written while they were in high school, it was the weakest song of the set. I suspect that it was included merely for the sake of personal nostalgia rather than for musical quality.

The back-up band, consisting of local studio musicians such as Bruce Jacobs and John Alphonse, was excellent. If I had not been told who the musicians were, I would have assumed that they travelled with the group. They kept the show up-beat with the classic rhythms of the sixties. There was a problem, however, with the P. A., but this was remedied after the third song.

Is it worth paying the five dollar cover charge to see these ladies? Well, if you are looking for something different from the heavy metal, "new" music groups of today and do not have a strong aversion to 'Sha-la-las' and 'Do-do-dowops', The Shirelles are the group to see.

And, if you are one of their fans from the sixties, the trip down Memory Lane will definitely be worth the cab fare. □

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