

Ronnie I's Tribute & Christmas Party (December 22, 2007)

By Pamela Horner

The "Lead East" Parsippany (NJ) Hilton was the setting for the Saturday, December 22nd Ronnie I Tribute and Christmas Party. The event was divided into two segments; an afternoon acappella concert and, after dinner, the main show. The afternoon began with the five-man group from Westchester, NY, Magic Touch. After singing some selections from their new CD "Evolution," they closed out their set with "Peace of Mind". Next up was Long Island based 3rd Edition. Their harmony was anchored at both ends with the strong lead of Ron Ruggiero and the thundering bass of B J Jones. They sang The Jive Five song "Kiss, Kiss, Kiss" and acknowledged Eugene Pitt who was in the audience. Their Christmas songs were great to hear! They did "White Christmas" and the Moonglows "Hey Santa Claus". Ronnie received a plaque from the group in appreciation for all he has done. The Sheps were back, dressed for the holidays in white suits with red shirts and shoes. They sang several Christmas songs of their own composition. Bass Johnnie Barlow also sang "These Foolish Things". The Sheps closed with "Life is But a Dream". Magic Touch came back on with an up tempo encore rendition of "Silhouettes".

After the dinner break, Emil Stucchio and The Classics led off with some of their classic tunes including "Til Then". Returning to UGHA for the first time since 1989 were Who's Johnny (known earlier in their career as The Monels). Four of the five singers are brothers. Singing acappella, they opened with "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" and sounded as good as ever. Nicky Addeo & The Nite Owls followed them. They dedicated "My Hero" to Ronnie I. The group was very well received, singing the Pearls' song, "Let's You and I Go Steady". Champagne, an acappella group, did a superb version of the Aquatones' "You". John Carbones' Five Discs came out dressed in red jackets and black shirts and pants. They performed several of their songs including the often requested, "That Was The Time". Entertaining us next were Joe Favale's Emotions who sang their hits, "A Story Untold" and "Echo". The Fidelitys, singing as a trio, stirred the crowd with their well known songs, "Captain of My Ship," "Walk With The Wind," and "These Are the Things I Love". Dennis Doherty Jr. also joined them on stage to sing.



Original Heartbeats Wally Roker (left) and Vernon Sievers join the Limelites on stage at the 2007 Ronnie I. Tribute and Christmas Party

It was wonderful to see and hear two original Heartbeats, Wally Roker and Vernon Sievers, join the current Limelites on stage. The Heartbeats are Ronnie I's favorite group. They dedicated "Crazy For You" to Ronnie. The Limelights also did several numbers on their own, including "Daddy's Home". I loved their rendition of "Trickle, Trickle," appropriate since the original Limelights had roots in The Videos. Closing the show was Kenny Vance and The Planotones. They were nattily dressed in dark suits, hats, and sunglasses. As usual, they were a crowd pleaser. All in all, it was a fabulous evening and a great way to begin the holiday season with so many groups giving tribute to Ronnie I!