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Coasters, The Platters, The Drifters

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February 14, 1998 Valentine’s Day
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Welcome to the Coasters of the 21st Century courtesy of Billy Guy; founding member, Rock and Roll icon, creative force behind these Rock and Roll legends, as well as the comedy inspiration that made the group the “Clown Princes of Rock and Roll,” and the first group inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

And today, more than forty years after the Coasters stormed the pop and R 'n' B charts with their first million seller, “Searchin’” it is still Billy Guy’s touch that makes the Coasters show a “Nostalgic treat for the senses,” “A rock and roll comedy riot,” and “As exciting in the nineties as it was in the fifties,” to quote three recent reviews.

Billy Guy still inspires their team of comedy writers, oversees their choreography and of course, blends their unique vocal arrangements, not to mention occasional cameo appearances that still bring down the house.

Billy performed as the baritone lead on all of the Coaster’s hits including their million sellers, “Searchin’”, “Yakety Yak,” “Charlie Brown,” and “Poison Ivy.” The famous writing team of Lieber and Stoller was the creative force that led the Coasters (as well as such other rock and roll icons as Elvis Presley and the Drifters) to the top of the charts in the 50’s and 60’s. So great was the magic of the team of Lieber and Stoller and so inspirational was their collaboration with Billy Guy and the Coasters, that the 90’s saw a show business honor reserved for only a few special greats—a hit Broadway show inspired by the collaboration and based on the hit “Smokey Joe’s Cafe.” That song was an early hit for the Billy Guy led Coasters and is still a show stopper every night as Smokey Joe’s Cafe is now not only one of the top running shows on Broadway, but also one of the most successful road shows touring the country. And if this isn’t honor enough, the Coasters will be appearing in “Love Potion #10,” a multimedia rock and roll extravaganza with a cast of 26 and magic, special effects, and original choreography and a score by a variety of legendary Broadway talents.
The Platters formed in 1953 in Los Angeles and signed to Federal Records. Songwriter, Buck Ram heard their music and soon after had them audition for him. In 1955 the group changed labels and recorded the ballad "Only You" on Mercury Records. This recording of course was the beginning of stardom for the group that was to become the most popular vocal group of the fifties.

The Platters cover songs done by the likes of Jerome Kern and Rudy Vallee, as well as recorded some original material, between 1955 and 1960. The Platters had four number one songs and sixteen gold records, most of which can still be heard on any easy listening or oldies station throughout the country today. Record sales to date are in excess of 80 million copies and most of their recordings were transferred to CD.

The Platters have now toured in some 75 countries across the world and still spend much of their time abroad. Playing venues from Madison Square Garden to the Bottom Line, the group is still delighting audiences from coast to coast.
THE DRIFTERS

There Goes My Baby  Please Stay
This Magic Moment  A Lover's Question
Save the Last Dance for Me  Treasure of Love
Upon On the Roof  Spanish Harlem
On Broadway  Don't Play That Song
Under the Boardwalk  White Christmas
Dance With Me  When My Little Girl is Smiling
True Love, True Love  Ruby Baby
I Count the Tears  Saturday Night at the Movies
Some Kind of Wonderful  Oh My Love

Surely, there is no more aptly named group in show business today than the Drifters. The group that was formed 40 years ago to be a vehicle for top talent to drift in and out of, has become the showcase for over 100 performers. In fact, over 50 singers recorded with the Drifter's 18 hit records and 15 top album reign including no less than 7 different lead singers.

While no one single Drifter really stands out, at least two individuals whose careers originated with the Drifters achieved superstardom on their own. Both Ben E. King and Clyde McPhatter went on to sell millions of records as solo performers and were ultimately inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame after their careers ended with the Drifters. But that doesn't begin to account for the numerous group members whose careers blossomed in Broadway theatre, on television, in commercials, in jingles—truly every aspect of the entertainment business.

And for their long careers as trendsetters in the music industry, the Drifters were honored with the ultimate music business accolade in 1988; induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame—prophetically in the same year as such other rock and roll icons as the Beatles, the Supremes, Bob Dylan and the Beach Boys. Can you imagine any greater sampling of the greatness and diversity of American pop music than this quintet of inductees?

The current act blends a tasteful mixture of The Drifters' million sellers with contemporary standards and many hits lifted from their new album, "Then & Now" which promises to soar up the charts—all presented within the context of the Drifters' unique style.
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The CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS wishes to thank all of our corporate sponsors for their assistance in the essay competition RACIAL HEALING, NOW MORE THAN EVER! Students grades 5-9 responded with heart-felt concerns and solutions.

Thanks to Chicago's very own, WGN CHANNEL-9, WFMT-FM 98.7 FINE ARTS RADIO Chicago, and WLTH-AM INFORMATION RADIO, Gary for all of their support.

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Mar. 28  8 p.m.  $30.00
Mar. 29  3 p.m.  $30.00
Apr.  4  10 a.m.  $7.00 & $14.00 (w/Lunch)
Apr. 18  8 p.m.  $17.50
Apr. 25  11 a.m.  $7.00
May  2  8 p.m.  $18.00
May  3  3 p.m.  $18.00
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