



A BRIT-ISH INVASION Katie Murdock (as Britney Spears, left), James Lowry (Elvis) and Jazmine (Whitney Houston) are legends of the hall at Resorts through March 15.

Faux fame and real talent

'Legends in Concert's' mock celebs are back with genuine hits

BY PHIL ROURA

The real Britney Spears may have flipped her wig last week, but the one appearing at Resorts as the opening act for "Legends in Concert" is still beautiful, bouncy and very, very blond.

Whether Spears deserves to be anointed with legendary status at this point in her careening career is not the issue. There she is (or at least the woman who plays her) at the Superstar Theater, singing "I'm Not a Girl, Not Yet a Woman" and "Oops ... I Did It Again" without a care in the world.

"Legends" is the granddaddy of all tribute shows, on stage somewhere in the U.S. almost every day. It played Bally's for a dozen years and had a brief outing at Resorts last summer.

Now it's back with a new, not-to-be-missed edition.

"Legends" is great casino entertainment, the best show currently in Atlantic City. It features Katie Murdock as Spears, Steve McCoy as Tom Jones, New Yorker Jazmine as Whitney Houston, the Nate Evans Group as the Temptations and James Lowry as Elvis (there's always an Elvis). You'll have a hard time remembering they're impersonators.

As Spears, Murdock bears a striking resemblance to the punchy pop tart — before she hit the clippers, of course. Her voice is true Britney, and her stage presence is just as solid. It's rare that a tribute show clone can out-perform the original, but Murdock pulls it off with flair and a faux diamond in her navel.

McCoy, as Jones, reaches notes "The Voice" hasn't hit in years. His "Delilah" is delightful, as are "It's Not Unusual" and "She's a Lady." But it's McCoy's inclu-

sion of Tommy Tucker's '60s rock hit "Hi-Heeled Sneakers" that raises the bar for the other Jones impersonators out there.

The Evans Group may not look anything like the Temptations, but they bring the group to life with "My Girl," "Papa Was a Rolling Stone" and "Just My Imagination."

Meanwhile, Lowry is perhaps the best Elvis ever seen in Atlantic City — and there have been dozens since the dice started rolling there in '78. He bears an uncanny likeness to The King — not only in physical presence, charm and boyish silliness, but especially in voice. There's an audible gasp from the audience when the real Elvis appears on a jumbo video screen flanking the stage — the resemblance is uncanny.

But it's Jazmine who steals the show as Whitney Houston. The third perform-

er of the night, she commands the stage with all the assurance of the diva she portrays. She opens her segment in a tight-fitting leather outfit, pouncing like a tigress while belting out "I Wanna Dance With Somebody" and "I'm Every Woman."

Quickly changing into a purple sequined gown, she takes a sultry stroll through the audience while delivering "Saving All My Love for You." When she sings "I Will Always Love You," you won't believe you're not hearing the real thing.

It's a superstar performance that fully deserves the standing ovation she receives. Somebody please give this woman her own show.

The program runs through March 15 at Resorts Atlantic City. Showtimes: 9 p.m., Friday; 7 p.m., Sunday through Wednesday; and 3 and 7 p.m., Thursday; \$25. proua@nydailynews.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

(Dates are subject to change)

WEEK OF FEB. 25-MARCH 3

ATLANTIC CITY

At Bally's (609-340-2709)

Ongoing: "Il Circo: Viaggio" is in the Claridge Tower's Palace Theater through April 5. Showtimes Saturdays at 7 and 10 p.m., Sundays through Thursdays at 3:30 and 7 p.m.; \$25.

At Boardwalk Hall (609-348-7000)

March 2-4: The NJSIAA New Jersey High School

Individual State Wrestling Championships go to the mats on Friday at 6 p.m., Saturday at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., and Sunday at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Single-session tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for students and seniors. All session pass: \$40.

At Showboat (1-800-736-1420)

In the House of Blues

Tonight: Sevendust, an alternative metal band from Georgia, is the feature attraction at 7 p.m.; \$21.50-\$25.

March 1: Jonny Lang, the Grammy-winning blues guitarist and singer, takes the stage at 9 p.m. **Reeve Carney** is also on the bill; \$30-\$42.

March 2: Country twangers **Gary Allan** and **Jimmy Stewart** go on at 9 p.m.; \$27-\$42.

March 3: **Eddie Money** headlines at 9 p.m.; \$22-\$42.

At Resorts (1-800-322-SHOW)

Ongoing: "Legends in Concert" is in the Superstar Theater through March 15. Showtime is 7 nightly, except for Fridays at 9 p.m. (dark on Saturdays). Matinee each Thursday at 3; \$25.

At Tropicana (609-340-4020)

March 2-3: **Howie Mandel** brings on the laughs in the Showroom at 9 p.m.; \$20, \$30, \$45, \$75.

Ongoing: "Best of Broadway" is in the Showroom through March 21 on Sun. at 6 p.m., Mon. at 8, Tues.-Wed. at 3:30 and 8, Fri.-Sat. at 9; \$20-\$25 (may be preempted by headliner).

At Trump Taj Mahal (609-449-5150)

March 3: Greek singer **Thanos Petrelis** stars in the Etesa Arena at 8:30 p.m.; \$65, \$75, \$100, \$125, \$150.

BIG WINNER

\$80,000

Marfia Strauato, Springfield, N.J.

Trump Taj Mahal, Feb. 16

5-cent Spin Poker slot



CONNECTICUT

At Mohegan Sun (1-888-226-7711)

March 3-4: The Cheer and Dance Spirit Festival, a two-day cheerleading and dance championship, begins each day at 8 a.m.; \$15, \$25.

Phil Roura