

The Turtles still know how to entertain

By **CHUCK DARROW**
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David Bowie played the Wachovia Center and Bob Dylan was at the Tower Theater. But the region's hippest show Monday just might have been at the Atlantic City Hilton, where The Turtles continued a five-night run that concludes Thursday.

REVIEW

These Turtles are not all the same group that was among the first American pop-rock acts to hit the charts in the wake of the British invasion of the mid-1960s. Still, the unit continues to be led by 66-year-old charter member Mark Volman and Howard Kaylan, alias, respectively, Flo and Eddie. These two rock vets make the group one of the best oldies acts working today.

Kaylan, whom Volman rightly identified Monday as one of pop's greatest voices, has lost little through the decades. His warm, light baritone nailed all the notes it had to, infusing life and feeling in such signature songs as "She'd Rather Be with Me," "It Ain't Me, Babe," "You Showed Me," "Elemore" and, of course, the group's most enduring hit, "Happy To-gether."

The still-hefty, still-hairy Volman consistently added his trademark sweet harmonies to Kaylan's vocal leads. Volman's parts, plus those provided by the duo's impeccably sharp four-piece backing band, made the material sound surprisingly fresh, as well as faithful to the originals.

The group also scored on several lesser known tunes, including the cool "Let Me Be," as well as on some cover versions of 1960s numbers. The best of these was "Eve Of Destruction," whose alarmist sentiments don't sound nearly as outdated as they did 40

years ago. But a first-rate musical performance isn't what sets The Turtles apart from their golden-oldies brethren. What makes them so uniquely entertaining is the goofy sense of humor Volman and Kaylan bring to the stage.

The dynamic duo pokes fun at themselves, other acts and rock 'n' roll conventions. Monday, they created laughs from the jump, when Kaylan introduced himself and his partner as "Clay Aiken's father and Ruben Studdard's mother."

Among other funny bits were Volman's assertion that when the five albums the pair issued as Flo & Eddie have their planned re-release, "you'll be able to ignore them all over again," and his hilarious impersonations of rock icons Dylan and Jim Morrison.

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