



Spokane Now Has Soul IN ITS VERY OWN HOUSE

House Of Soul – Downtown Spokane, Washington

By Janis V. Bers

It's a bit like finding that final missing jigsaw piece which completes the puzzle. If you compare this analogy to the dynamic and vigorous live music and entertainment scene in the Inland Northwest, Spokane has now completed its full musical picture by slotting one final element right into the heart of Lilac City.

Local music enthusiasts already enjoy being surrounded by an abundance of live musical genres spanning pop, rock, blues, folk and country. Now, thanks to a novel and ambitious initiative, downtown Spokane can justifiably boast that it truly has soul, neatly packaged in its own beautiful new home called the House Of Soul.

Focusing on the wide-ranging appeal of memorable Motown classics, along with countless soul favorites from Stax, Atlantic, New Orleans and Philadelphia Soul recordings, Spokane's House Of Soul brings the music to our doorstep, where it is performed live on stage in this lavishly appointed nightclub restaurant.

Located at 120 North Wall Street in downtown Spokane, the building originally was a historical bank of old. When the bank relocated some six years ago, the building's owner Tom Stiritz was approached by an entertainment conglomerate, which leased and repurposed the vacant area into a bar venue and named it The Vault. The venture however never really met expectations and eventually was forced to close. Two years ago Tom decided to give the venue an exciting and decidedly expensive new lease on life, by investing in prestigious new furnishings, fixtures and fittings, to create an illustrious music club and restaurant, renaming it The Reserve.



The venue lived up to its promise by offering live local and regional music, along with elegant dining in a fashionable setting. Amongst the wide variety of musical genres taking to the stage at The Reserve, there was one band that definitely caught Tom's attention because they stood out with their contrasting and individualistic musical stylings.

That band was Spokane's acclaimed soul and R&B group Nu Jack City, fronted by flamboyant founder-musician and vocalist Max Daniels. Max has been a significant figure in Spokane's live music scene for well over two decades and has been at the forefront of presenting exciting and colorful soul and Motown styled shows in and around the Inland Northwest.

Max admits that initially it proved to be a bit of an uphill struggle to generate any kind of interest in his chosen genre of music in the Spokane area. He sensed some level of resistance from other musical acts around the city, who may have felt that their brand of music held more significance than his. But Max's single-minded determination drove him to persist and keep plugging away regardless of any obstacles.

Oddly, during this developmental period, Max discovered that North Idaho seemed to be far more receptive to his live soul and R&B shows, so he tested the waters by opening a small soul club, which attracted a measurable level of interest and gave him the incentive to effectively break into the Spokane music arena.





Through his sheer driving force and patience, Max and his band Nu Jack City began to get bookings to play their shows at The Reserve. It soon became obvious, due to the immense popularity of their performances, that this combination was showing great promise and potential as a winning formula for both the club and for Max and his band. Four months ago, owner Tom and Max agreed to join forces, giving the nightclub a solidly defined identity. Together, they have created the region's only truly dedicated soul music venue, featuring Nu Jack City as the House Of Soul's resident musical attraction.

The initial high interest and response by our community has been rapid and remarkable, with many fully sold (dare I say souled?) out evenings around the Christmas holiday period, New Year's Eve, and Valentine's Day.

This impact has not only encouraged and enlightened a new partnership, but also has deeply touched Max Daniels personally. As a passionate advocate of community involvement and togetherness, Max would love to see and promote more "Unity in the community through music." It seems to be working, and working extremely well.

Indeed, classic soul music is causing much interest within our music community, simply because of its refreshing departure from the norm. Mention names like Stevie Wonder, Smokey Robinson, The Four Tops, Supremes and scores of timeless hits by Motown artists and you've already got a flavor of the single-minded musical mission of House Of Soul.

Talking of flavor, the House Of Soul also invites you to enjoy its fully-appointed dining facilities catered by in-house chefs specializing in (you guessed it!) hot soul food!



Other notable, unique features that set the House Of Soul apart from other music venues, include one of the longest illuminated bars in our region, a very spacious dance floor perfectly situated right in front of the club's large raised stage where live bands perform, elaborate glass Art Deco chandeliers adorning the high-level decorated ceilings, and several large comfortable booth seating areas offering unobstructed views of every corner of the venue.

Such is the keen ambition of both owner Tom and manager Max, that they're already setting their sights on future expansion to build an even more attractive and diverse entertainment complex. I was very lucky to have been shown the real underground bank vault, located directly beneath the House Of Soul, featuring an immense, impressive, shimmering stainless steel vault door which will eventually form a unique gateway into their proposed live jazz club.

If your musical appetite tempts you to taste the soulful sounds of Motown and its contemporaries, performed in a superb Spokane live music setting whilst enjoying authentic soul food, then you'll be more than well catered for at the exciting new House Of Soul.



Conveniently located in downtown Spokane at 120 North Wall Street in the pedestrian zone between West Main and West Riverside, the House Of Soul is open every evening Tuesday through Saturday from 4pm to close, with varying late night closing times.

