



OPENING NIGHT

by Caley Cook

When the House of Blues location outside Disney's new California Adventure theme park in Anaheim opened on Jan. 12, 2001, Lit rocked out O.C.-style for a raucous hometown crowd. More than four years later, San Diego's own House of Blues goes a bit deeper into the cultural xylem and phloem of popular music with a performance by the ubiquitous Wailers and young Spanglish rockers deSol.

The first night at the former Woolworth building at 1055 Fifth Ave. kicks off a week of performances from iconic artists ranging from George Clinton to Audioslave, from Queens of the Stone Age to David Lee Roth and The Blues Brothers.

The other band

It wasn't that long ago that artists who used dozens of world-music references in their work were the norm. There was a reggae lilt wafting up from the islands and informing the blues brothers along the Mississippi; there was a Latin dance rhythm enlightening big-band bops; and African beats influenced almost all of them, especially modern jazz. The young band named deSol, which loosely means "of the sun," seems excessively capable of harnessing all of these influences while still channeling the muscle of classic American rock.

Guitarist Rich Soto can't hide his Jersey accent when he speaks of his band's combined Salvadoran, Mexican, Peruvian, Puerto Rican, Cuban and Portuguese descent.

"I never wanted to listen to Latin music as a kid," he remembers. "I basically learned Latin music in spite of myself just because it was playing in the house. Our cultures have a huge influence on what we play and the way deSol makes music."

DeSol's seven-man bilingual fusion is bridging gaps with rappers like Outkast's Big Boi, rockers like R.E.M. and with the jam crowd on a recent Dirty Dozen Brass Band tour. Now in The Wailers' wake, deSol doesn't have many more genres left to blend.

"We're a stew," says Soto, "a savory Afro-Latin-salsa-dance-funk-soul-and-everything-else deSol stew."

The Wailers and deSol perform the opening night of San Diego's House of Blues, 9 p.m. on May 11. \$25. 619-299-BLUE.