



**DeSol/ Raul Midon/ Helena & Maria - Riverside Gardens, Red Bank, NJ
July 6, 2005**



DeSol - Photo by Phil Rainone

By Phil Rainone

Photos by Jeff Raspe

Summer's here, and the time is right for... Song Writers in the Park!

"90.5 The Night" FM is hosting a month-long series of free shows throughout July entitled "Songwriters in the Park," every Wednesday at 7pm. For more info, visit www.90.5thenight.org.

I went to the first show strictly as a music fan (hey, if it's free, it's for me). I knew of De Sol. Starting out four years ago, they've made a name for themselves playing all around New Jersey, even playing The Pavilion in Bradley Beach. I've heard that no matter what the gig, or how many people show up (I'm guessing about 250-275 at the Red Bank show), they play their collective hearts out!

The night was hosted by 90.5 The Night's Jeff Raspe (if the name sounds familiar, Jeff use to be one of the original DJ's on the pioneering radio station 106.3

WHTG-FM, along with Mike Marrone, Bart, Matt Pinfield, and Loretta Windas).

Local musicians Helena & Maria (twin sisters) opened the show with a set of harmonious pop tunes (do NOT think Britney Spears) that were real, and... well yeah, real. No sad, 'He broke my heart,' or 'I am woman, hear me roar' tripe, just heartfelt and fun. What also sets them apart are the vocal harmonies. At times their voices locked together, creating an exceptional musical experience. Helena & Maria are part of the Red Bank Music Community that offers a free songwriters workshop every Tuesday at 7:30 pm at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank. At each of these shows they'll have other artists from the Theatre performing.

Raul Midon opened his set (after about a 20 minute rain shower) with upbeat, heart warming songs. Raul could have easily headlined. With just an acoustic guitar, he held the crowd's

imagination with celebratory songs of hope and joy. Singing at times in English and Spanish, the songs seemed to brighten along with the sky as the clouds parted. He's a classic original, inspired by artists like Stevie Wonder and Jose Feliciano. Raul pushed the crowd through some romping, danceable tunes, and upbeat, soulful melodies.

De Sol jumpstarted their hour long set with songs from their major label (Curb Records) self-titled release. Fierce and bubbly, De Sol channeled Rock, Cuban, a little Reggae music, and a whole lot of everything else through songs like "Karma," and the cool rockin' "Spanish Radio." The audience was vibing off the band, getting up and dancing in front of the stage, giving back some high energy vibes to the band. Guitar driven melodies, along with De Sol's exuberance (they were grinning ear-to-ear practically the whole set), were a perfect match for a gorgeous summer night, in the park with The Navisink River in the background. This was one of those perfect summer shows.

DeSol closed the night out with a by-the-numbers cover of Santana's "Oye Como Va." In this case, by-the-numbers means that their version was as smooth, passionate, and fiery as the original. It was a terrific way to end a great night of music.

I guess I should have known better than to think that I could just get away with just being a spectator, and not bring a pen and notebook (I ALWAYS bring at least a camera - ya never know when Bruce – Springsteen - will show up). So please forgive me if I didn't go into more detail about the artists. They all helped make this a memorable evening!