Although I greatly looked forward to seeing reggae legends the Wailers last Friday night, I had my doubts about the venue. Quad City Live had already advertised an incorrect day for the concert ("Saturday," April 15), and as we drove past its billboard, I saw employees had written the "Whalers. " I got a good laugh at that one!

My spirits lifted when I saw the club's large wooden deck with huge troughs of ice-cold beer, but then we went inside and stupidly waited in a long line at the bar (attended by one barmaid who was completely out of change). While waiting I noticed several Paris Hilton wannabes milling about in stiletto-heeled boots and Stetson hats. Hmm. My spirits started to fall again … .

But then Del Sol, the second opening act for the Wailers, brought that place to life. From Asbury Park, New Jersey, this rocked-up, Latin-style band is pure, joyous energy. Led by two brothers, Del Sol is a seven-piece dance band with bass, electric guitar, acoustic guitar, keyboards, a drum kit, and two frenetic percussionists who played congas, cow bells, snare drums, the djembe (a Middle Eastern drum), bongos, and myriad other instruments. There was a whole lotta rhythm goin' on.

The band played several original melodies that made me think of Counting Crows meet Gin Blossoms (grittiness with smooth harmony) with a salsa beat. Their songs were catchy, well-structured, and exceedingly danceable. They also covered Santana's "Monte Negro" and played an honorable rendition of Tito Puente's "Oye Como Va" (made famous by Santana, of course). Keep your eyes open for Del Sol's debut CD coming out in July.

Then there he was. Wailers sax player Glen DaCosta came onstage to get the party started. Wearing a colorful African shirt and a huge grin, he assured us we would be dancing all night.

DaCosta was joined by horn player Vin Gordon, who looked like Shaft in his safari vest and shades. The rest of the musicians (including "Family Man" Barrett on bass, Al Anderson on guitar, and organist "Wya" Lindo) came out to serenade us with some lively instrumental pieces before the vocalists came on.

Finally, the gorgeous backup vocalists came and stood in front of our side of the audience, and lead vocalist Gary "Nesta" Pine (with his beautiful long dreads hanging free) took center stage. Then the party really began! The Wailers rocked and chopped and drummed and danced while the audience swayed and sang all night long.

They played so many great songs it's hard to remember them all. Everyone got happy with "Is This Love" and "Lively up Yourself." Cheers broke out when they played "I Shot the Sheriff" and "Rebel Music," and the entire house sang "No Woman, No Cry." We were also treated to "Message to You," "Roots, Rock, Reggae," and "Get Up, Stand Up," among several other classic Wailers hits.

It wasn't just the familiar music that had the audience so entranced. We were lulled by the hypnotic reggae beat and rhythmic guitar, the heartfelt brass solos, the vocalists' honeyed voices, and Pine's passionate singing. This concert was as happy and as memorable as the

Wailers' famous reggae music.