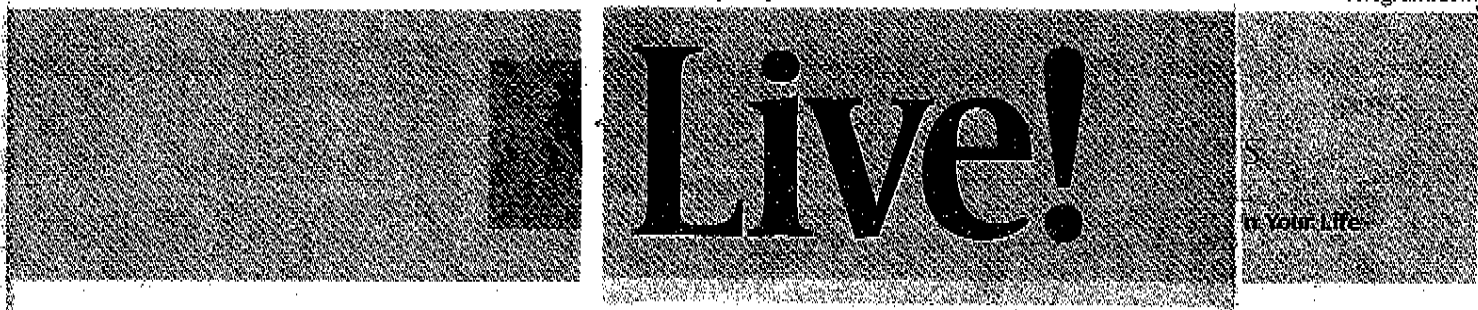


To: CHUCK ADOSKI  
 From: Bass-Performance Hall  
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REVIEW

# Robinson hits all the high notes

By **DARREN WHITE**  
 Special to the Star-Telegram

Few stars in Motown history are bigger than the songs themselves, and at the top of that short list is Smokey Robinson.

The "King of Motown" not only performed many of the label's biggest hits with the Miracles — like *Tracks of My Tears* and *Tears of a Clown* — but also wrote a host of them for his label mates. *My Girl* by the Temptations? That's his. *I'll Be Doggone* by Marvin Gaye? That's his, too.

Robinson's show at Bass Hall on Saturday hit all the high notes of his legendary tenure at Motown. And when I say high notes, I mean high notes. Time has done little to curb Robinson's majestic vocal register, which is both delicate and assured.

He's touring in anticipation of his upcoming disc *Time Flies When You're Having Fun*. That's an impressive feat for a man whose first national hit, *Bad Girl*, charted in 1959.

Dressed in a peacock-blue suit — the first of three outfits during the night — Robinson, 69, kicked off the set with *Going to a Go-Go*, which segued directly into *I Second That Emotion*.

Robinson was backed by a six-piece band, three backup singers and two dancers. There are a lot of big Motown



Smokey Robinson brought Motown to Cowtown on Saturday at Bass Hall. SPECIAL TO THE S-T/BRANDON WADE

hits to fit into one set, and Robinson took the liberty of removing certain instrumental passages from songs like *You've Really Got a Hold on Me* to make room for everything. Fortunately, he took his time with the classic *Ooo Baby Baby*, a tune that brought the audience to its feet.

"We should have played that one first," he joked. Even though Robinson's

voice sounded great — and I mean, really great — the band's instrumentation could not have been cornier.

The original recording of *Tracks of My Tears* has some bite to it, but the arrangement onstage was totally docile, with the smooth jazz keyboards and guitars producing a lulling, hypnotic effect.

Robinson's cover of North Texan Norah Jones' *Don't*

*Know Why* made its live debut and was the perfect forum for Robinson to show off his impressive vocal skill.

To see Robinson in his element is to see one of America's finest singers and songwriters. Bob Dylan once acknowledged Robinson as "America's greatest living poet." With his undeniable songcraft and lyrical delivery, Robinson has surely earned the title.