

AfterFab eyes post-Beatles favorites



COMMENT



AfterFab The Beatles Solo Years, performs at 8 p.m. 8 p.m. Jan. 23 at ull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Road, Shirley. Promotional Photo

By Craig S. Semon
Telegram & Gazette Staff



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A band doing the music of the Beatles is here, there and everywhere.

But a band doing the music of John, Paul, George and Ringo after the Beatles broke up don't come easy. That is, until now.

Fixing a hole for Beatles fans and showing that the genius of John, Paul, George and Ringo didn't stop after "Abbey Road," AfterFab is a whirlwind, magical mystery tour featuring solely the solo works of the Beatles.

Performing at 8 p.m. Jan. 23 at The Bull Run, 215 Great Rd. (Rte. 2A), Shirley (and 7 p.m. Feb. 19 at Wight Farms, Sturbridge), audiences can expect a "high-fidelity tribute" to the greatest band that never existed, according to AfterFab's guitarist, keyboardist, cofounder and unofficial spokesman Adam Boc.

"It's a music first tribute, so there are no impersonations. There's no role playing because the solo Beatles didn't exist as a band. We're trying to cover the obligatory parts of every song and we try to get the vocal phrasing and the melodies exactly right," Boc said. "Playing it like the record is what people enjoy and the most successful tributes are bands that do that."

Boc — who was a key fixture in Boston indie scene for 20 years with three original and recording bands (Beginners Only, Miranda Warning and Jump Rope) — came up with the idea of AfterFab back in 2007 but didn't get around to pursuing it until 2012.

All solo Beatles stuff, all originals and no covers of covers (So, no, you're not going to hear "You're 16" or "The No, No Song" associated with Ringo Starr), the idea of AfterFab was so good that it seemed like a no brainer that someone had to come up with the idea and was doing this already, Boc initially thought.

While there are at least 500 bands in America that are Beatles acts alones, you would practically have to search across the universe for solely a solo Beatles act. With a little luck, all that Boc could find was an occasional "one offs" or an established Beatles tribute band that might throw in a set of solo Beatles material.

"It's special. No one else in the country, actually in the Americas that is, is doing the solo Beatles only," Boc said. "The only other one we could find in the world is a little band in Wales but they do don't a high-fidelity tribute. It's, sort of, a fun thing. They do their own interpretations."

Spending a full year rehearsing before leaving the basement, AfterFab is made up of life-long Beatles fans and "heavy-duty" experts of that era.

With more than just a little help from his friends, AfterFab features lead singer and percussionist Jonathan Paquin (who is quoted as saying, "I knew 'Admiral Halsey' before I knew 'Lovely Rita'."), guitarist and Lunenburg resident Lauren Passarelli (the first woman ever to graduate as a guitar performance major from Berklee College of Music, where she now teaches and is known as "The Beatles Professor"), bassist Mike Bishop and drummer Tom Evans.

In addition to Paquin singing lead, the rest of the band provides backing vocals.

Rounding out AfterFab, two "incredibly skilled and long experienced" keyboard players, Alan Cameron and Larry Novack, who are taking turns filling in until the band has a permanent second keyboardist.

"We started with five members and always knew we needed six, particularly for George's stuff. Seems like it takes 10 people to play any George record because he never shied away from huge production," Boc said. "In general, everybody has played for 30 years and all have done original music."

While one can expect such solo Beatles classics as "All Things Must Past," "Band on the Run," "Coming Up," "Give Peace A Chance," "Handle with Care," "Imagine," "Instant Karma," "It Don't Come Easy," "Jet," "Junior's Farm," "Live and Let Die," "Maybe I'm Amazed," "My Love," "My Sweet Lord," "Photograph," "Watching the Wheels," "Whatever Gets You Through the Night" and "What Is Life," there's a practical component in setting the AfterFab set list.

"I play three different guitars and secondary keyboards. And it simply takes time for me to switch instruments. So the number one driving factor is can I stay on the same instrument two or three songs in a row," Boc said. "Then, you have to consider the flow of the show. You want to break it up with something slow but you don't want it to drag. You want to start with bullet-proof songs. You want to have a nice big rave-up at the end. You want to leave with a strong encore."

While there are 210 "official" Beatles tracks, there are roughly 700 solo Beatles songs to choose from, half of which McCartney contributed. Although their solo hits had less staying power than the Beatles, the Beatles, collectively, as solo artists had more Top 40 hits than as a group, Boc said.

"When the Beatles split, they no longer had each other as filters. They didn't have the producer, George Martin, and they weren't particularly adept producers themselves," Boc said. "So what you get from the solo Beatles is unfiltered, I can do anything I want and no one is going to stand up to them. So you get these continued flashes of brilliance, along with mediocre material like anyone else would put out if they're not being challenged or filtered. And they had the ability to do that, particularly in the '70s, basically to put out whatever they wanted ... Up until 1975, pretty much anything any of them did was a huge hit until that guarantee started to fade with time."

When it comes to whose music of the four Beatles, solo-wise, is the most profound, most poppy, most rocking and the best overall, Boc said the answer is "Paul" for all four, adding it's simply because McCartney has made so much more and so much different kinds of music over the years, compared to his fellow Beatles.

"A lot of people didn't follow Paul after the '80s and don't realize all the things that he's done. I don't think there's a genre that he hasn't tackled all the way from classical to industrial. It's astonishing," Boc said. "So people think of Paul as the pop hit writer with the shallow lyrics and that is one of his shortcomings because he's not a word guy. He can write some excellent words but he just doesn't always do that."

Boc said a vast majority of George's music is sonically rich and complex while John has a very solid solo career but it was cut tragically short.

Email Craig S. Semon at Craig.Semon@Telegram.com and follow him on Twitter @CraigSemon.