

Beatles' solo hits come to Chelmsford



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AfterFab, a tribute to the Beatles' solo projects, performed at Chelmsford Center for The Arts on Jan. 31. From left are keyboardist and former Chelmsford resident Adam Boc; behind, keyboardist Bryan Eyburg; lead vocalist Jon Paquin; drummer Tom Evans; bassist Mike Bstop and far right, guitarist Laruren Passarelli. Courtesy photos/John Collins



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CHELMSFORD

With wearying winter weather appearing determined to end, a concert at the auditorium at the Chelmsford Center for The Arts on a recent Saturday night was filled with the warmth of fandom, friends, music and memory.

Every song, it seemed, was a favorite to someone, with cries of appreciation and singing along lyrics known by heart -- with forever favorites from Beatles alumnae Paul McCartney, John Lennon, Ringo Star and George Harrison.

They inspired the creation of After Fab, a rare tribute to their post-Beatles careers, which played from this panoply of instantly-recognizable tunes on Jan. 31.

To watch a video, [click here](#).

'Places I remember'

One of the band members is Adam Boc, keyboardist, a Dorchester native who grew up in Chelmsford and graduated from Chelmsford High School. His band mates are keyboardist drummer Tom Evans; Bryan Eyberg; lead vocalist Jon Paquin; bassist Mike Bishop and guitarist Laruren Passarelli.

Now a Waltham resident, Boc started with the band in 2012 with two other band members. "It took a year just to find the right people," said Boc, adding that the band debuted in performance in October 2013.

Boc's own love of the Beatles goes back to age 5, when his father bought the album, Meet The Beatles. At age 12, with his paper route money, he would bicycle to the Chelmsford Mall to buy another Beatles LP, slowly and methodically amassing a collection and also borrowing some from the Chelmsford Public Library.

Boc said, "I knew the group's whole catalog by age 13 and then started digging into the mountain of Beatles scholarship that is out there and still growing. I was introduced to the solo works via a special radio weekend on the old WBCN [a prominent rock station in the Boston area] called The Beatles A to Y (Everyone Knows There Is No Z)."

"It's been a lot of work, but we believed in the concept and the band's ability. It has been a pretty fast rise, with some significant venues coming up on the calendar. It's really just getting started and there's a vision of much more we'd like to do," Boc said.

'It's all right'

The Beatles disbanded in 1970 and among admirers and music historians, their breakup remains a source of controversy and debate. "I was thrilled to hear so many solo songs with the same Beatles magic in them," Boc said. He added, "I'd heard about the growth of the tribute scene, so I thought of a Beatles Solo Tribute back around 2006 or so, because every fan wonders what it would've been like had The Beatles not disbanded in 1970."



Page 2 of 5 - Boc said, "I never wanted to play Beatles songs because they're so ingrained in me that it could never sound right - not to mention that there are thousands of Beatles tributes blanketing the earth. But, the solo

works seemed much more approachable, modern, and, surprisingly, I found absolutely no one else doing it. I thought it would appeal to the forever-renewing Beatles audience as something new and different."

It can also be a chance to educate audiences about the Beatles as individual artists in their own

right, and their respective contributions to popular music. "The solo Beatles actually had more chart hits than they did as a group, but fewer of them achieved the massive classic status. We want folks to know that there's a whole new frontier of Beatles fandom in the solo years if they haven't explored it. There's so much more Beatle joy to discover there," Boc said.

Music that matters

Lauren Passarelli, lead guitarist and backing vocalist, has been with the band for four months. She said the band found her on the Internet, and that as the Beatles professor in the guitar department at Berklee College of Music, she also toured with a Beatles tribute band for 12 years, with several videos on YouTube.

"All Beatle music is important to me. The Beatles taught me everything about music, life, optimism, humor, and connection," Passarelli said. "Celebrating the moments that fill our time, and making them extraordinary by caring and investing ourselves, the Beatles gave the world permission to dream, desire, to wake up and be conscious, and use our power for the good. "

Passarelli -- whose favorite Beatle is George Harrison, added, "I am forever grateful that I was on the planet when all four Beatles were here. I've loved them since, 'Please Please Me,' in 1963. It was heartbreaking when The Beatles broke up in 1970. I was 10 years old, and so I was thrilled that they made solo albums. That was how they continued and how I could continue and grow with them."

She observed, "Afterfab is an amazing idea and such a cool, band for me. Many of these songs and guitar parts I had never played before, so I'm programming the right sounds, and working out the parts and having tremendous fun being a part of this group. Bryan, Mike, Tom, Jon, and Adam are great guys and it's a blast to recreate these masterpieces with them."

Believe in yesterday

Keyboardist and backup vocalist Bryan Eyberg, of Framingham, has been playing with the band about a year and a half. "I got involved with AfterFab when I was looking for a new band to play in. I saw the ad on Craig'slist, and called Ad, [Adam Boc,] who explained the concept of the band to me."



Page 3 of 5 - Eyberg added, "I was hooked on the idea when he told me about it. I was just thinking about all of the cool music we would be playing. I was a little disappointed when he told me we couldn't do any songs by the Traveling

Wilburys (no collaborations) but now we are!"

As for many, the link between music and memory runs strong for Eyberg. "The work of the solo Beatles is important to me because I grew up with many of these songs. I remember riding around in my parents Chevelle with my sister and my mom while she did errands," Eyberg said. "The radio was constantly playing music by George Harrison and Paul McCartney. I remember hearing 'Band on the Run,' 'Live and Let Die,' 'My Sweet Lord,' 'Silly Love Songs,' 'Let Em In,' and many others."

Eyberg noted, "Playing with AfterFab has been a little bit like revisiting my childhood. My favorite Beatle is George Harrison. I feel like I have the most in common with him. He was such a kind person and was interested in spirituality. He was also responsible for so much of my favorite music throughout his career. He wrote Here Comes the Sun with the Beatles, My Sweet Lord as a soloist, and then went on to found the Traveling Wilburys. All aces in my book!"

Silly love songs -- well, maybe

Lead vocalist Jonathan Paquin, of Worcester, a band member for two and a half years, also answered an online ad. "I ended up talking with Ad [Adam Boc] that night and we had a really long, very pleasant conversation," Paquin said. It became obvious to me that he was super deep into the the details of the Beatles as well as the music industry. He had the concept very well mapped out. We talked about tribute bands in general and Beatles tribute bands specifically, and the overall absence in the market of any real bands that covered the material of John, Paul, George and Ringo concurrently in one act."

Album devotees, take heart, you're not alone. "We were both dyed-in-the-wool vinyl-philes and liner note readers, so the subject of the vast map of band personnel throughout the four repertoires was a fun subject to discuss," Paquin said. "I think Ad and I really came to an understanding about each others level of interest when we talked at length about the rather intense bonds that the ex-Beatles had after the 1969 breakup of the group and how that deeply affected their song writing. We talked about the huge number of solo songs that reflected their emotions and thoughts about each other and how they could possibly be linked together on stage in a more expository fashion. That brought us back to the gaping absence in the market of any act having that angle of approach."



Page 4 of 5 - Paquin had long worked with original bands and some cover bands, but never a tribute band, and said his appreciation for the Beatles was something that came to him later in life.

"I'd traveled across country multiple times with my Air Force family in the early seventies, so again, it was all about the radio. Pop radio airplay was prime with the material of all four solo gents, so naturally I took in what I heard at the deepest level," Paquin said. "It was literally the music of my childhood. I later discovered the genius of the pre-70's Beatles, of course, as every serious musician must, but the damage was done. As I said to Ad that first night we talked, as a 70's kid, I knew Uncle Albert before I knew 'Lovely Rita.' That's just the way it worked out and that's what was in my wheelhouse."

These days, Paquin cites Paul McCartney as the Beatle with whom he strongly identifies, cryptic words and all. "I have pretty much always been a Paul guy. I always thought he was the ultimate chameleon," Paquin said. "His lyrics sometimes made no sense to me (and still don't), but his delivery was always so on point and his technique was mystifying. To this day I listen to 'Getting Closer' from 'Back to the Egg, and I am blown away by the sheer intensity and chillingly effective qualities of his voice."

Paquin's favorite Beatles song is either "Paperback Writer", "Get Back", or "Lovely Rita", he

added, "depending on what I had for breakfast that morning. I am so immersed in the solo material right now that it is impossible for me to have a favorite. But I must admit, I absolutely love performing 'Eat At Home.' Oh, and 'All Things Must Pass.'"

Long and winding road

Drummer and backing vocalist Tom Evans, of Waltham, and an original band members, said he and Boc had worked in original bands together since the early 1990s.

"At one point he came up with the concept of a solo Beatles tribute band, and it sounded like a great idea to me," Evans said. "In 2013 we discussed it again, and decided the time was right so we started auditioning for other band members."

Evans added, "I grew up listening to the Beatles and their solo work. These songs are such a part of my musical education and examples of some great songwriting and performances. Some songs we've heard and studied so many times that we can just call one out and start playing it. Of course the challenge and the real fun comes in getting the details right. A drum fill or kick drum pattern here, a harmony vocal there."

Asked if he has a favorite Beatle, Evans said, "Everyone loves Ringo! I'm also a big fan of [Paul] McCartney. His body of work is staggering, and the drumming he did on his records was always interesting."



Page 5 of 5 - With a nod to the durability of the vinyl form, Evans said, "My favorite Beatles album (yes, I said album!) is 'Sgt. Pepper'. When I was young, my grandmother gave me her copy of the album on the Capital label. I still

have it!"

Come together

Among those at the Jan. 31 performance were Chelmsford residents Denise Dunn and Leanne Vincent.

Dunn said, "I knew Adam Boc. I went to high school with him. He really was an avid musician."

Both observed that the auditorium drew many friends and family members who know Boc, as well as Beatles fans from near and far.

Dunn said of the Chelmsford Center for The Arts, " This is a great place. This is really an asset to the community."