

TRIBUTE MANIA

How local bands are bringing old-school music back to life



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By Angie Sykeny
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Off stage, local musician Stephen Murry is a fan of John Lennon and The Beatles. But catch him on stage with his band Studio Two and you'll find that he's more than just a fan — he is John Lennon, alongside his fellow mop-topped Beatles.

musical subtleties.

"You can listen to any album, or watch any video, but to see and hear the music performed live right there in front of you, it's a different experience," Murry said. "A tribute gives anyone who didn't get to see a certain band a chance to have that live experience."

Studio Two is one of many local bands using the spotlight to pay tribute to the music

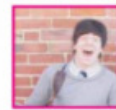
and of Oz. If country is more your style, give The No Shoes Nation Band Kenny Chesney tribute a try. Whether it's at a local bar, performance venue or community event, there are tribute bands playing all the time, and you don't have to travel far or clean out your wallet to see them.

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BEHIND THE TRIBUTE: THE BEATLES



"My dad came home one day with a [Beatles] cassette tape... and right from the get-go, at 2 or 3 years old, it was like, 'Beatles! Beatles! Beatles!' You wonder why The Beatles still have fan clubs all over the world... I think it's that they have this mystique, especially since the four of them were only together from 1962 to 1970. In that short amount of time, eight years, look at all the albums they made and all the stuff they accomplished."

AL FRANCIS, "PAUL MCCARTNEY"

It's not how you guess it is. I'm talking about a real, focused tribute where every member studies the person they're supposed to play and learns the part note for note."

Cold As Ice even went so far as to contact real Foreigner guitarist and founding member Mick Jones to settle a question on one of the lyrics, with which he was happy to help. In fact, Foreigner is exceedingly supportive of Cold As Ice, deeming them the No. 1 Foreigner tribute and honoring them with a signed platinum record. Original Foreigner frontman Lou Gramm even gifted the band with a video in which he introduces them to stage. They screen the video at the beginning of every show.

"Any member of this band could step up on stage with Foreigner tomorrow and play a set with them," Bismarck said. "If they're calling us their No. 1 tribute, you know we're going out of our way to play their music and represent them as professionally as possible."

Marc Pilcher, frontman for Deerfield-based Lynyrd Skynyrd tribute Southern Breeze, said that while his band isn't an exact replica of Lynyrd Skynyrd — it has five members, whereas the real Lynyrd Skynyrd had up to seven at points — what it lacks in technicians it makes up for in energy.

"It's one thing to do a song as a cover band and go through the motions, but if you call yourself a tribute, there can't be anything

The real deal

A serious tribute band studies not just the original band's songs but also their attire, mannerisms, speech, instruments, equipment, audience interaction and general live show atmosphere. It's no easy task recreating the concert experiences of some of the biggest acts in music history, especially when there are diehard fans in the crowd who notice details as small as a guitar pick.

"For a laugh, I had ordered a set of hand-drop guitar picks online, the same kind The Beatles used," Murry said. "At one show, I dropped it on stage, and a guy picked it up and said, 'Wow, this is the pick they used!' I was like, 'Wow, you noticed that?' People are definitely looking at the little things."

Studio Two has made their job a little easier by committing exclusively to The Beatles' early years during which they performed in small clubs around England. By narrowing the focus to one era, the band can dive deeper into the intricacies of those Beatles' shows. Plus, they don't have to worry about recreating the more complex psychedelic effects that accompanied The Beatles' later material.

Many tributes to bands with wide and varied fan bases such as The Beatles or Grateful Dead employ this same tactic, honing in on a certain piece of the musical catalog not only allows the tributes to prioritize quality but

More tribute shows

These bands aren't based in New Hampshire but are coming to the Granite State to play at various tribute-band-friendly venues.

- **AfterFab**, a tribute to the Beatles' solo careers, Saturday, July 1, 7:30 p.m., \$25, Palace Theatre, 80 Hanover St., Manchester, 669-5588, palacetheatre.org
- **Alive! '75**, a tribute to KISS, Saturday, May 6, more details TBA, Jewel Music Venue, 61 Canal St., Manchester, 819-9336, jewelnh.com

- **Badfish: A Tribute to Sublime**, Saturday, July 1, 8 p.m., \$18, Casino Ballroom, 169 Ocean Blvd., Hampton Beach, 929-4100, casinoballroom.com
- **Dark Star Orchestra**, a tribute to Grateful Dead, Sunday, May 21, 7:30 p.m., \$36 to \$39, The Colonial Theatre, 95 Main St., Keene, 352-2033, thecolonial.org

- **Dazed**, a tribute to Led Zeppelin, Saturday, April 29, 9:30 p.m., The Shaskeen Pub and Restaurant, 909 Elm St., Manchester, 625-0246, theshaskeenpub.com
- **Dirty Deeds: The Premiere AC/DC Tribute**, \$10, Saturday, June 10, 8 p.m., Whiskey Barrel Music Hall, 546 N. Main St., Laconia, 527-8210, whiskeybarrelnh.com

- **EagleMania**, a tribute to the Eagles, Saturday, June 24, 7:30 p.m., \$25 and up. The

- tribute, Friday, March 31, 7:30 p.m., \$24 to \$29, The Flying Monkey, 39 S. Main St., Plymouth, 536-2551, flyingmonkeynh.com
- **Live Bullet**, a tribute to Bob Seger & the Silver Bullet Band, Saturday, May 20, 9 p.m., The Chop Shop Pub & Grub, 920 Lafayette Road, Seabrook, 760-7706, chopshoppub.com

- **The Mersey Beatles**, a tribute to The Beatles, Saturday, May 20, 7:30 p.m., \$26 to \$49, The Flying Monkey, 39 S. Main St., Plymouth, 536-2551, flyingmonkeynh.com
- **Nirvanish**, a tribute to Nirvana, Friday, May 19, 8 p.m., \$24, Rochester Opera House, 31 Wakefield St., Rochester, 335-1992, rochesteroperahouse.com

- **One Night of Queen**, a tribute to Queen, Saturday, April 1, 8 p.m., \$30 to \$44, The Colonial Theatre, 95 Main St., Keene, 352-2033, thecolonial.org
- **Patsy Cline Remembered**, featuring vocalist Liz Saunders and Clayton "Skip" Poole, Sunday, May 21, 4 p.m., \$28 to \$38, Concord City Auditorium, 2 Prince St., Concord, (tickets through Capitol Center for the Arts), 225-1111, ccanh.com

- **Skip-Not**, a tribute to Slipknot, Friday, April 28, 7 p.m., \$12, Jewel Music Venue, 61 Canal St., Manchester, 819-9336, jewelnh.com

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