

Former 'Beatlemania' Star Leads Tribute to The Fab Four

"RAIN: A Tribute to The Beatles" brings two shows to The Villages Friday at The Sharon in Spanish Springs.

By TAYLOR STRICKLAND  
Daily Sun Senior Writer

From "Beatlemania" to one of the most renowned tribute bands in the nation, Steve Landes has turned his love

for The Beatles into a lifelong career.

Landes performs as John Lennon in RAIN, one of the oldest Beatles tribute bands running. Coupled with vibrant costumes, psychedelic visuals and a painstaking attention to detail, RAIN takes audiences back to the era of Sgt. Pepper and Magical Mystery Tour in a live theatrical event. Described as the next best thing to seeing The Beatles, "RAIN: A Tribute to The Beatles" covers songs from the early years to Abbey Road.

"One of my favorite parts of this particular version of our show has been re-creating the 'Let It Be/Get Back' rooftop performance as a part of our second act," Landes said.

RAIN's tribute show is constantly being updated to



George Horsford | Daily Sun

"RAIN: A Tribute to The Beatles" returns to entertain The Villages at 3 and 7 p.m. Friday at The Sharon.

bring the most culturally relevant moments of The Beatles' history to audiences. Landes said the reason he is so excited to re-create the rooftop performance is because of the recent popularity of the Disney+ and Blue-ray special.

"It's been fun to replicate the part of The Beatles' career that's been in front of people's eyes so much lately," he said.

As the man behind John Lennon, Landes is aware he has big shoes to fill.

Thankfully, the second-generation Beatles fan has dedicated much of his life to studying the group. He taught himself guitar at 10 by listening to Beatles records and by 17, he joined "Beatlemania" and toured the world with the show. In 1998, he joined RAIN.

RAIN started out as a Top 40 cover band, which was originally called "Reign," before tribute bands proliferated. When the band used to play clubs, it would do a set of original songs and a set of Top 40 songs then would end the night with a Beatles set.

"It was a pretty novel idea at the time to try to sound like The Beatles instead of doing their own take on the songs," Landes said.

After seeing how popular The Beatles set was among

fans, the original songs and Top 40 covers quickly fell by the wayside and RAIN became known for its "authentic" Beatles music, as Landes put it. That reputation has persisted.

Landes attributes the success of the show to its "positive, upbeat" feel as well as its authenticity. He said it has a lot to do with the "peace and love" message of The Beatles' music, which is encapsulated in lyrics like "all you need is love" and "take a sad song and make it better."

"I think these are messages that we need in this world more than ever," Landes said.

The tribute show is at 3 and 7 p.m. Friday at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center. Tickets start at \$65. Go to thevillagesentertainment.com to purchase.

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