

LIVE MUSIC

Beatles fans set to Come Together in Napa

Beatlemania comes to Napa

By Sean McCourt

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Considering just how incredibly influential, revered and universally beloved The Beatles still are by fans all around the world, it is somewhat shocking to consider the fact that the arguably biggest group in rock and roll history only performed live for about six short years.

Only a small percentage of Beatles fans were ever lucky enough to see them live in concert. So it is no small wonder that tribute bands celebrating the music of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr have been around for ages — with some of course being better than others.

Widely considered one of the best is The Fab Four, who bring their high-octane, yet finely tuned version of Beatlemania to the Uptown Theatre in Napa on Saturday night.

While the group has had many members over the course of its existence since forming back in 1997, a core group — including Gavin Pring, who portrays George Harrison — has emerged as a long-term key lineup.

“The White Album’ was the one that hooked me because you’ve got such an eclectic mix of songs. You go from ‘Back in the USSR’ into ‘Dear Prudence,’ from this rockin’ tune right into this nice acoustic song, and then the whole album is



KATE KLAUS PHOTOGRAPHY

Tribute group The Fab Four brings the music of the Beatles to life, live on stage.

like that — you just didn’t know what to expect,” said Pring over the phone with a Liverpool accent.

But that’s not part of the act.

The 46-year-old guitar player really is a lad from Liverpool, and not only does he sound like Harrison while singing, but he also bears an uncanny natural resemblance to him, adding to the believability of the Fab Four on stage. On top of learning the music of the Beatles virtually note for note, Pring and the band wear period-accurate costumes, play au-

thentic instruments, and have spent countless hours poring over vintage footage to capture the mannerisms of the musicians.

Says Pring: “One move I like that George did is he looked at someone in the audience, and then looks away but then looks back real quick, like, ‘Oh, is that me mum?’ Some come naturally, and other parts you really have to study.”

Some of the idiosyncrasies that Pring noticed while studying Harrison he found not to necessarily be based on personality quirks — some were

just his physical reactions to what was happening at the time that the Beatles were performing live, and what their musical equipment was capable of.

“George always looked back (at his amplifier) — he’s got his head turned to the right a lot. I think it’s because he couldn’t hear himself over all the screaming,” laughed Pring. “Or sometimes if he felt out of tune he’d pull his guitar up to hear with his left ear. Some of the mannerisms are just generated from the position he was in.”

In addition to bringing

The Beatles to life on stage for live concerts, The Fab Four have also been tapped to help recreate their presence for other media. The group provided motion capture imagery for the animation of the band in the 2009 video game “The Beatles: Rock Band,” and Pring did the same for the Cirque du Soleil “Love” show.

While not many musicians probably get a chance to bump into the artists that they pay tribute to, particularly if that act is The Beatles, Pring had just such an encounter one time

back in England. A tribute concert was held in Liverpool for Harrison after he passed away, and while Pring was backstage with his then band The Blue Meanies, Sir Paul McCartney himself appeared and noticed the striking resemblance that Pring bore to his late bandmate.

“He looked right at me and said, ‘You look a little bit like George actually,’” Pring laughed. “So I said ‘You look a little bit like Paul!’”

If You Go: Saturday, April 9 8 p.m. Uptown Theatre, Napa \$50-\$60.