



GREATEST HITS LIVE

THE NAME SAYS IT ALL



"Greatest Hits Live" is more than just a cover band: it's an ear candy experience: a re-creation of the classic music that most of us remember from our younger days. And it's performed by six talented and dedicated musicians, drawn together by their common love of music.

At the moment, "Greatest Hits" has four complete shows which are rotated at various venues. There's the Journey program, Styx, Eric Clapton and the greatest Canadian rock bands such as the Guess Who, B.T.O, Rush and April Wine, just to name a few. Each show is packed with accurate, note

by note renditions of the greatest hits of each band, much to the delight of appreciative audiences.

Guitarist, keyboard player and vocalist Pete Palazzolo, owner of the Canadian Conservatory of Music, says "Greatest Hits Live" came about after a talent show at the Cleary Auditorium, now the St. Clair Centre for the Arts, presented by the Conservatory's production company, Polar Bear Music. The facility's manager was so impressed that he and other operational staff approached Pete, suggesting formation of a classic rock tribute band comprised of older, more

experienced musicians who could perform on the Chrysler Theatre stage and at other larger venues.

Pete initially rejected the idea because of his busy schedule, but due to the Cleary's persistence, he caved in and agreed to contact seasoned players who would be good enough to handle the job. Fortunately, two of the band members, Mike Kohuch and Jim Bonaventure had been playing together with Pete for 30-plus years, in fact since they were teenagers, so assembling core of the band was a relatively easy task.

Mike, the band's bass guitarist, an electronics engineer by trade, is Vice President of the Canadian Historical Aircraft Association, and is described as the foundation of all band harmonies, since his voice smoothly blends in with whoever is singing lead. He and Pete, incidentally, also perform regularly as a duo.

Jim, who handles drums and percussion, is a former tool and die worker. He assists with his brother's sound company and helps in setting up the p.a. system for the band's shows.

Chuck Lambrick, featured on guitar and keyboard, also sings. A full time musician, he does frequent solo gigs across the river and occasionally performs with Leamington's Jody Raffoul.

Paul Beresford, while being a full time musician, also owns a Web design company. He adds guitar, keyboard and vocals to the "Greatest Hits" roster.

Joe Trocchi, a grade school music teacher, plays keyboards and sings. On many week-ends he also lends his talent to a local wedding band.

"The concept of Greatest Hits Live," says Pete Palazzolo, "is to re-create the music as accurately as possible."

Intense rehearsals began about 18 months ago, and 10 weeks later, the band had its first performance at the Cleary, with a tribute to Styx and Journey.

This past June, the band raised about \$1,800 for Hospice before a packed house at the Capitol Theater in a rousing show that featured a compilation of the best of all four of their tribute shows. It was, as Mike says, "The greatest hits of our greatest hits."

More recently, "Greatest Hits" presented a second compilation show at the Art and Soul Festival.

Precise orchestration of each tune is a must with "Greatest Hits". The players don't get their notes from sheet music but

repeatedly listen to the original recording individually, then methodically duplicate every note and rhythm pattern with surgical accuracy. As Pete puts it, "The ear is the best way to learn, because your ear is gonna be more accurate than any sheet music can be."

The final product is brought together during three intense weekly rehearsals, each one lasting up to three hours.

Keyboards are programmed to sound exactly like the original. As Pete says, "You can't get the keyboards that were played during the 70s any more. The attention to detail is mind boggling."

Even the guitar players change instruments frequently during a show, because as Mike maintains, "If that's what the artists used in the studio on a particular album, that's what we use. It's not unusual for me to play four or five different basses during a concert."

A DVD of all the band's shows is currently being developed and will be available to the public some time in the New Year, after the next show. All the details and other band information is available at www.greatesthitlive.ca.

Meanwhile, "Greatest Hits" is preparing a fifth tribute which has the entire band excited: the best of the solo Beatles...something no one has done before. Tunes such as "Band on the Run" by Paul McCartney, John Lennon's "Imagine" and "Something" by George Harrison are only three of the many selections you can expect to hear...done exactly like the originals. And it's understood that the encore is likely to be "two killer Beatles songs"!

Rehearsals are underway, with the premiere performance planned for February, likely at the Capitol. As is the case with all "Greatest Hits Live" shows, a portion of the gate will be donated to charity. Again, Hospice will be the recipient.

The possibility of assembling an orchestra/rock show has also been kicked around but it's not likely to happen for a year or two.

As Pete Palazzolo aptly puts it: "We're really fortunate. All of us have been working musicians since we were 16 and this town's given us a lot, so it's time for us to give back."

If you've experienced a "Greatest Hits" concert, you know they do their utmost to give back.....in spades.

VIDEOS ONLY OF SOLO LIFE