

Micky Dolenz Spends A Hot Autumn Night On LI

By Iris Wiener

info@longislandernews.com

After selling more than 65 million records worldwide as the star of *The Monkees* television show, Micky Dolenz has continued to make his mark in other areas of the entertainment business, through his varied career as an actor, director, producer, and performer. He's even taken on musical theatre as a star in the Broadway production of *Aida*. "It's funny because the actual length of time I spent on *The Monkees* was very brief. I was on the road with *Aida* and in the Broadway show for nearly two years," Dolenz calculated when considering the fame he's earned from his role as drummer/singer in the popular group. "One day I actually figured out that I worked on *Aida* longer than I worked on *The Monkees*," he laughed during a recent chat with the **Half Hollow Hills Newspaper**.

The Monkees achieved their greatest success as recording artists. Their first four albums (*The Monkees*; *More of the Monkees*; *Headquarters*, and *Pisces, Aquarius, Capricorn & Jones, Ltd.*) reached number one on the charts and they had three consecutive number one hit singles: "Clarksville," "I'm a Believer," and "Daydream Believer." The group's first five albums also went gold. But outside of his work with the group he dons many hats, most recently including that of an author. His self-penned children's book debuts in England next year. However, despite a colorful mix of interests, Dolenz most enjoys getting back to the music that boosted his career in the mid-60s. On October 29 at North Fork Theatre at Westbury, the Monkee will be revisiting all of the group's biggest hits in *Hot Autumn Night!* alongside some of his oldest friends.

What can we expect from your performance in *Hot Autumn Night!* at North Fork Theatre at Westbury?

I do all of The Monkees hits as they originally were. Then I do a few songs from my childhood, and songs that influenced me that my mother and father sang. Anyone that's a Monkees fan won't be disappointed, but I do go back to my childhood, a trip through time, and do songs that have an impact on me. For example, I do one of the audition pieces that I did for *The Monkees* television show. I tell the story about when I did that, and then I move on to tell the story about England and going to the recording sessions with Sergeant Pepper, and then I do that song. So it's a little bit of a trip through that time of my life and career.

Is it exciting for you to take the stage with Herman's Hermits' Peter Noone, Dean Torrence of Jan & Dean, and Rare Earth, all people who have shared the airwaves with you at some point in your career?

Yes, I've known Peter for years and years obviously, so we're good friends. And I've known Dean, Jan used to come out to the road with us after the accident. At this point now, we're all kind of friends. We talk about things, discuss things, and talk about stuff like family

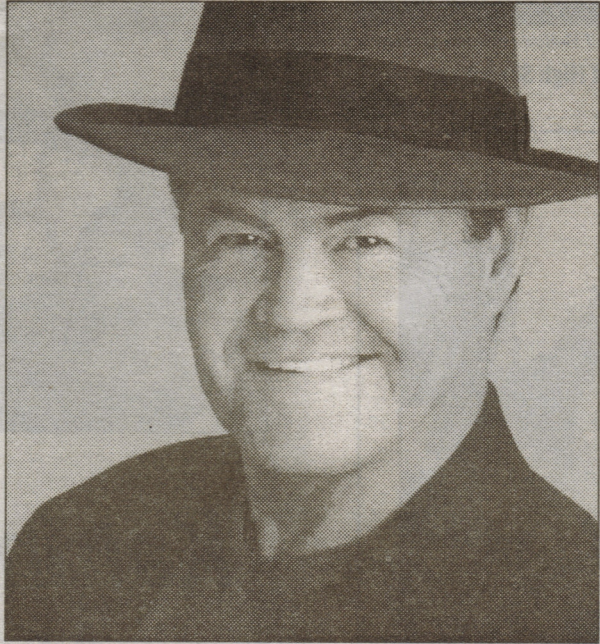


Photo Courtesy dis COMPANY

Mickey Dolenz, of *The Monkees* television show, is scheduled to perform at the North Fork Theatre at Westbury on October 29.

then, that if they had been black, they would have never got any criticism. There have been lots of groups like The Temptations, The Jackson 5, the list goes on and on, of black vocal groups that stood up there and sung and danced. They weren't bands, they were vocal groups. Like them, the Backstreet Boys got up there and sang and danced and they did it very well. I think whoever gave them the misnomer of being a "boy band" was not only unfair, but also inaccurate. So that has nothing to do with a band like The Beatles or The Stones, or even The Monkees. It's a totally different form of entertainment. So it certainly didn't have an impact on me or anything that I was doing personally.

Which of The Monkees' songs have been the most meaningful for you?

Well, I did really like "Pleasant Valley Sunday" and "I'm a Believer." The great thing about "Pleasant Valley Sunday" was that it was a great all around rock tune, great lyrics and melody. There were a lot of obscure albums that most people probably haven't heard of. I wrote a song called "Randy Scouse Git," which was a hit in England. That was important to me because it was sort of a little diary of the time that I spent with The Beatles when I was over there - I was a *huge* Beatles fan. And then I met a girl who was going to be my first wife. So the song was a little bit about her.

A multitude of older acts have been relived on the Broadway stage recently, including Abba in *Mamma Mia!*, Elvis in *All Shook Up*, John Lennon in *Lennon*, The Beach Boys in *Good Vibrations*, and Frankie Val-

things, discuss things, and talk about Stan like family and kids, rather than anything really professional. But I was a fan of Jan & Dean when I was young.

What is the best aspect of being one of the legendary Monkees?

Well, there's lots of them I suppose. I've been able to do a lot with my life in a lot of different areas. Despite such a short run, I acknowledge the fact that the show and group have left such an indelible stain on the American cultural landscape.

Were you one of the many people enraged by the irritating "boy band" craze a few years back?

First of all, I take exception to the term "boy band." I'm not even sure what that means. The thing is that those bands, such as the Backstreet Boys, they weren't bands. I don't know who named them boy bands. They were vocal groups. I made the observation even back

The Beach Boys in *Good Vibrations*, and Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons in *Jersey Boys*. Have you ever contemplated working on a project that would bring The Monkees into the musical theatre venue?

A number of people have asked me that. I've discussed it with a number of people, but there's really nothing I can tell you. Let me put it this way, there's no definite plan to do that, but I have definitely thought about it, and you never know. A lot of them don't work. So you never know. But I do love working in New York, which is part of why I am looking forward to coming back to Long Island. I've played at North Fork Theatre at Westbury a number of times, and I love it.

Tickets to Hot Autumn Night! are available at the North Fork Theatre at Westbury box office, charge by phone at 631-888-9000, or online at www.northforktheatre.com. For information, call 516-334-0800.