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RAIN: A TRIBUTE TO THE BEATLES (L-R) JOEY CURATOLO, RALPH CASTELL JOE BITHORN, STEVE LANDE: PHOTO RY IOAN MARPII

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RAIN: A TRIBUTE TO THE BEATLES.
-R) JOEY CURATOLO, JOE BITHORN.
RALPH CASTELLI, STEVE LANDES
PHOTO BY JOAN MARCU.

Wish you had seen The Beatles live? Wish you'd been born back then? Wish you hadn't been in kindergarten when they set foot on American soil? Wish you'd gone to just one of their concerts? Wish, wish wish...

Well, wish no more.

Leave it to Southern California to come up with a solution for gratifying every kind of appetite, this one included. It was not instant gratification—we're told it took 20 years to put *Rain*, the concert, together—but when The Beatles hung up their guitars in 1970 and took off in four different directions, leaving thousands of fans wanting more, someone somewhere had to come up with the idea of cloning the Fab Four.

nd so they have. The four guys who impersonate The Beatles in *Rain*, that rapturous concert at The Buell Theatre, come from Southern California, Manhattan, Brooklyn and Philadelphia. Each has a story to tell, but all four—Joey Curatolo (who plays Paul), Joe Bithorn (George Harrison), Steve Landes (John Lennon) and Ralph Castelli (Ringo)—came to Rain, the band, and eventually *Rain*, the show, via *Beatlemania*.

Some of them had become smitten with The Beatles on the night of February 9, 1964, when those four famous boys from Liverpool, England, stepped on the stage of the Ed Sullivan show. The Beatles' revolutionary brand of rock'n'roll made a worldwide impression and their popularity went straight through the roof. They recorded 13 albums in a short eight years, made memorable films and gave concerts everywhere. So it's no wonder that the suddenness of their break-up in 1970 sent shock-

waves through the music world.

Rain, the band, was formed in part out of this devastation, but even more out of a desire simply to keep the music alive. The intention was not just to mimic the Liverpudlians, but also to present some of the songs they had never even performed live. It was a labor of abiding love. For 20 years, the members of Rain focused on every minute detail and worked

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tirelessly to be as faithful as possible to the original Beatles and Beatle sound. They studied the songs, the gestures, the look, the dress and gradually built an impressive repertoire.

In the 1970s, they were joined by keyboardist (and percussionist) Mark Lewis, who eventually took charge of the little group, becoming its managerial and creative mastermind. Over the years, he converted what had been a modest California bar band into a polished professional act, refining its musicianship, playing piano and organ himself, even inserting sounds necessary to re-creating The Beatles background instrumentation so as to ensure that The Beatles'

sound would be fully replicated during the shows.

ain, in fact, is more a concert than a show, with a stationary bandstand prominent center stage and a dazzling array of lighting and other perpetual motion special effects swirling around the musicians. The performers encourage audience participation, sensing correctly that it only adds to the general excitement. Not only do these guys play The Beatles' songs and sound like The Beatles, but they also meticulously match the Fab Four's clothing, hairstyles and facial hair at changing periods of their performing lives.

In this manner the members of *Rain*, the show, preserve the music and the musical legacy while giving audiences the momentary illusion of "being there." It's the same thrill Americans felt on that February night in 1964 and at every live concert thereafter. It's a thrill they'll be enchanted to rediscover now.





Sept 22 - 27 • Buell Theatre

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