

Ringo McLennonSon

Help! He needed somebody. No not just anybody. Therefore, in the fall of 2006 when Tommy Anderson decided to stage a musical tribute to Beatle George Harrison to commemorate the fifth anniversary of his passing, Anderson sought out the finest musicians in the valley to join him. Getting started was not very difficult as Tommy pulled from his own band The Tommy Trio, to form the foundation of the group. As members of the trio, Jim "Jimbo" Gibbons and Paul "Pablo" Richards signed on immediately. To make things interesting, the trio added on valley legend, Slim Golba on "space bass" and his brother Steve Golba, as a keyboard player. He rounded out the group with two background singers, Sherry Golba and Sandy Foglesong, who he refers to as "Tommy's Angels". The group, who had never played together before, got together and practiced, rehearsed and played the gig to an appreciative crowd at The Loft in Tempe on the anniversary of Harrison's death. Gina Lombardi, Loft owner, liked what she heard and invited the group back for another and yet another gig. The band remained nameless.

The band was then featured in December of 2006 at Big Love for Citrus commemorating the life and subsequent passing of Citrus Golba, beloved daughter of Slim Golba, who lived with Cystic Fibrosis, calling themselves All Things Must Pass. They began adding more songs to their repertoire, including additional songs by the Fab Four. With the addition of the new Beatles songs, a band was born taking on the unique name of Ringo McLennonSon. Taking themselves and the name lightly, the local music makers celebrated but also decided to have fun with, each of band members of the legendary band from Ringo to John Lennon, McCartney to Harrison, and the name seemed to fit. It gave the band their identity as the valley's only all Beatles tribute band and while the name stuck, most of the local fans simply refer to them as "The Ringo Band" or "Ringo."

Jimbo Gibbons, the "Ringo" of McLennonSon, has been playing Beatles music since he was a kid in South Phoenix. Son of local celeb Sandy Gibbons, Jimbo has played with many local favorites such as Dr. Bombay but has a special fondness for playing with Ringo. "If I'm not playing my own music, I would rather play Beatles music. Their

music is the best ever." However, do not expect Gibbons or any other member of Ringo McLennonSon to dress like, act like, wear Beatle wigs or otherwise imitate the 60's mop top band. "It gets in the way of the music when cover bands try to look and imitate them. Those bands forget about the magic of the music and it just doesn't work." Gibbons relates that when he recently met May Pang, John Lennon's lover and author of *Instamatic Karma*, a photo biography of John Lennon, she was relieved and excited that the band chose to dedicate themselves to the music of the Beatles and not the "corny" caricatures of the Beatles that many tribute bands adopt.

In keeping with their desire not to be a parody of the Beatles, you will not hear I Wanna Hold Your Hand on Ringo's set list. While the band plays many crowd favorites such as Twist and Shout, Here Comes the Sun, and of course Revolution, Ringo McLennonSon particularly delights in renditions of more obscure Beatles and subsequent individual band members songs such as Hey Bulldog, For You Blue and Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey. When McLennonSon played Prescott's Coyote Joe's to a mostly college crowd, the band joined the students when they burst into a spontaneous rendition of Give Peace a Chance. Ringo McLennonSon has established a fan base that includes college students like those at Coyote Joe's to aging "hippies". As Arizona's premier Beatles band, Ringo has rapidly become an all age favorite bringing together Beatles fans of all ages, bridging the original Beatles generation who grew up with the mop top legends with the young fans of today. They are always surprised and excited when their young fans begin shouting requests from the audience. Ringo McLennonSon was chosen to play the Tempe Marina's fall concert series, along with spring concerts for the City of Goodyear and Casa Grande where it was not uncommon to watch toddlers dancing and swaying to music while seniors held hands captured in time to the memories of their past. Beatles fan and one of the editors of online Beatles website DayTrippin.com, Marshall Terrill, affirmed that the band "does the Beatles (music) justice without imitating them to perfection, maintaining their own spin" to their music. Terrill views this as an advantage

for the local group. Until he heard Ringo McLennonSon play at Tempe's Earth Day Celebration, he had never heard a band attempt to play some of the songs live that "Ringo" plays, not even the Beatles themselves!

Members of Ringo McLennonSon chalk up their success to the shared culmination of talent, nostalgia, and passion for the musical genius of the Beatles. All of the original band members remain with Ringo with the exception of Slim Golba who left the band to work full time on his own original band, Slim Golba and the Overtones. He couldn't be replaced so the band decided not to bother. In the past year, the band has played over sixty gigs, practiced and rehearsed every week, and learned to perform over four hours worth of material, including a Beatlesque original "Love Me", by Tommy Anderson. From Goodyear to Casa Grande, Ringo McLennonSon is always happy to make friends with new Beatles fans. Ringo is currently preparing for a show on Phoenix Channel 12 Midday Arizona and to make some trips up to northern Arizona this summer to beat the heat in Jerome's Spirit Room. It is always something new for Ringo McLennonSon. The only thing that does not seem to change is their love of Beatles music and one another; that remains constant. Drummer Jimbo Gibbons summarizes the whole experience with "I don't know where this band is going exactly or where it might go, but until we know, it's just a lot of fun going there." Ringo McLennonSon is all about having fun, making music, and making friends.

Ringo McLennonSon will then be on hiatus while Tommy Anderson tours solo throughout the Midwest until August when Ringo is scheduled to appear in Jerome's Spirit Room August 17, 2008.

Watch for drummer Jimbo Gibbons this summer as he performs percussion with Slim Golba and The Overtones throughout the Valley of the Sun at the Goathead Saloon, The Sets, The Loft, and Hollywood Alley. ■

