

local news

'60s Rock Band Yardbirds Has Hearts Full of Soul

By MICHAEL FORTUNA
Daily Sun Staff Writer

THE VILLAGES

Band members come and go, but the Yardbirds welcomed three guitarists into its ranks that would go on to become legends — Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page.

When Clapton left in 1965, he recommended Page as a replacement. Page wasn't sure about joining at the time, so he recommended Beck.

Page ended up joining the band in 1966 as a bassist, eventually becoming the lead guitarist when Beck left.

"They always brought something different," drummer Jim McCarty said. "There was lots of space for that music for lead guitar, and they took advantage of it. They were encouraged to play a lot of solos."

The blues psychedelic rock 'n' roll band from England, known for such hits as "Heart Full of Soul," "Shapes of Things," "For Your Love" and "Over Under Sideways Down," will make its Villages debut when it performs at 8 p.m. March 9 at Savannah Center.

Joining founding member McCarty on stage are Johnny A on guitar, Kenny Aaronson on bass, Myke Scavone on percussion, vocals and blues harp, and John Idan on guitar and vocals.

"I'm the only Brit," McCarty said. "The others are American. They're experienced guys and they know all the songs backwards. They know every last detail. It's very honorable to the old sound. It's very similar, but in a way, it's better."

McCarty first learned the ways of the drums around age 16 when he was part of a boy's brigade in England. In the drum and bugle corps, he was the lead



Submitted photo

The Yardbirds, known for such hits as "Heart Full of Soul" and "Shapes of Things," will perform in The Villages for the first time on March 9 at Savannah Center. From left are Kenny Aaronson, Johnny A, Jim McCarty, Myke Scavone and John Idan.

snare drummer.

While learning his drum rudiments, he developed an interest in American rock 'n' roll. He was part of a band that played everything from Buddy Holly and the Crickets to the Everly Brothers and Johnny Cash.

"I'd listen to the rock drums and copy them," McCarty said. After leaving school, McCarty worked at the London stock exchange, and he was studying to be an actuary.

At the same time, the Yardbirds started gaining popularity, playing numerous gigs.

"I had to give up the job," McCarty said. "It was too much working in the daytime and going off to do a gig every night. I had to convince my mom that this was a good idea. She wanted a secure (job)."

When it came to naming the band, McCarty said lead vocalist Keith Relf had that distinction.

After a gig with another band, someone had asked Relf the name of the group.

"Keith said, 'Oh, it was the Yardbirds,'" McCarty said. "I had never heard that name before. I never knew we were going to be called that. I think he got it from a Beat (poet) book. A yardbird used to bum rides from trains and live day to day."

During the band's early years, the Yardbirds put a lot of blues into its music. Music from the '50s had made its way to England and became a hit during the early 1960s.

"The Rolling Stones used to play in our neck of the woods," McCarty said. "They covered those songs. We loved the music. It was exciting music to us."

One of the songs McCarty is proud of is "Shapes of Things," which was recorded at the height of the band's popularity.

"We recorded it in Chess Studios in Chicago, which was exciting," McCarty said. "It was Jeff Beck, Paul Samwell-Smith, Keith Relf, Chris Dreja and myself. That probably was the best lineup."

"We wrote the song; we all put

THE YARDBIRDS

When: 8 p.m. March 9

Where: Savannah Center, 1545 Buena Vista Blvd.

Tickets: \$25 for Villages residents and \$30 for the public, and are available at any Villages Box Office location or online at thevillagesentertainment.com.

and Dreja bringing along some new faces.

In 1992, the band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

"That was great," McCarty said. "I always think we got overlooked. I thought we were underrated. We got put up (as nominees) a couple times before we got it. It was great to get in and suddenly you realize you were a part of rock 'n' roll history."

When the Yardbirds aren't out on the road, McCarty writes his own songs and makes his own recordings.

"(The Yardbirds' music) is still relevant," he said. "People still enjoy it. The music still sounds good. For the moment, it's enjoyable enough to carry on."

our ideas (into it). I'm proud we came up with that. I thought it was a great sound, and it was a song about something relevant to the time."

While the band broke up in 1968, the Yardbirds returned to the scene in 2003, with McCarty

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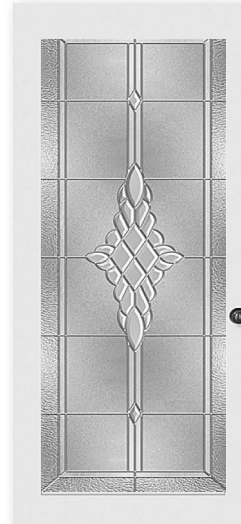
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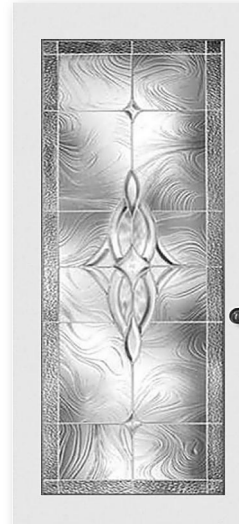
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