

Sunday Scene

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SECTION D

The last surviving member of The Monkees, Micky Dolenz will perform an intimate show at The Church Studio before a 60 Years of The Monkees Tour stop at Tulsa Theater.

TOM GILBERT, TULSA WORLD ARCHIVE



Memories of The Monkees

Ahead of two concerts set in Tulsa, Micky Dolenz looks back over six decades

JIMMIE TRAMEL | Tulsa World

Mention “The Monkees” and it will likely generate a smile. “I’ve noticed that myself over the years,” Micky Dolenz said. “The show was a lot of fun.” “The Monkees,” a television comedy about four youths who wanted to make it big as a band, debuted Sept. 12, 1966, and aired for two seasons on NBC.

Fantasy become reality when the four actors (Dolenz, Davy Jones, Peter Tork and Michael Nesmith) cast as The Monkees evolved into a real band, screaming fans and all. “Mike always said when we performed live for the first time, it was like Pinocchio becoming a real little boy,” Dolenz said. “Isn’t that a great line?”

Two seasons is just a blip in TV history, but “The Monkees” achieved permanence in large part because their music hit a sweet spot with listeners. The group’s first four albums earned multi-platinum status. Hit singles include “I’m A Believer,” “Last Train to Clarksville,” “Daydream Believer,” “A Little Bit Me, A Little Bit You,” “(I’m Not Your) Steppin’ Stone” and “Pleasant Valley Sunday.”

Dolenz, the last surviving

member of the group, is keeping the legacy alive by way of performances. He’s got Monkee business times two in Tulsa.

Previously announced: Dolenz will perform Thursday, May 7 at Tulsa Theater while on his 60 Years of the Monkees Tour.

Recently announced: Dolenz will perform a more intimate show Tuesday, May 5 at The Church Studio as part of the venue’s Legacy Concert Series. Dolenz will be joined by a surprise guest from rock history for a concert and recording session, according to event information.

The Church Studio show will be limited to 100 guests. For tickets, go to thechurchstudio.com and click on “events.” For tickets to the Tulsa Theater show, go to tulsatheater.com.

‘Insane’ boys needed

A phone interview with Dolenz was arranged in advance of the trip. The contact who set up the interview shared a photo of a print advertisement that was placed in trade publications in 1965. The ad announced auditions for a project that would become “The Monkees.”

Said the ad: “Madness! Folk & roll musicians-singers. Running parts for four insane boys, 17-21. Want spirited Ben Frank’s-types. Have courage to work. Must come down for interview.” (Ben Frank’s was a West Hollywood 24-hour restaurant that attracted Sunset Strip musicians.)

Dolenz, asked if the advertisement was the first time he got an inkling about “The Monkees,” said he never saw the ad.

“I’d already had a television series when I was a kid called ‘Circus Boy’ when I was 10,” Dolenz said. “And so, having had my own series, I didn’t see the ad, and I would not have gone to what they would call a cattle call. I had an agent, so the agent called me up.

I was going to school. I was in college, studying to be an architect, and I figured if I couldn’t make it as an architect, I could always fall back on show business.”

Published reports indicate 437 young boys auditioned for “The Monkees.” Songwriter and actor Paul Williams has said he was among those who didn’t make the cut. Harry Nilsson and Stephen Stills reportedly auditioned. Why was Dolenz chosen? He said you would have to ask the producers.

“But having produced and directed films and television shows now — many, in fact — in England and here, I would say that they were looking for four individual characters, different kinds of characters, that people can identify with,” Dolenz said.

“And the characters were loosely based on our personalities, with me being the wacky drummer. I’m maybe a bit wacky at times, but not as much as they say on the television show. Davy was, of course, the cute heartthrob. Peter was kind of the goofy one. And Mike was the kind of sensible

one in the room.”

Jones said in a 1996 documentary about the group that being cast alongside Dolenz, Tork and Nesmith was like finding three brothers he never had.

“That’s a lovely way to put it,” Dolenz said. “We certainly became like brothers. When people ask me, ‘Well, did you guys get along all the time?’ My answer is simple: ‘Do you have any siblings?’ Usually people say ‘yes,’ and they laugh because need I say more? It was like siblings.”

Coming to a ‘Head’

The idea for the TV series sprang from the multimedia success of The Beatles, who had starred in the 1964 musical comedy film “A Hard Day’s Night.”

“The Monkees” depicted, in fast-paced and unconventional fashion, the wacky adventures of a different musical foursome. The Monkees “got into all sorts of bizarre scrapes as they rescued maidens, ran afoul of dastardly

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RAY HOWARD, ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

This file photo shows The Monkees (Peter Tork, from left, Mike Nesmith, Davy Jones and Micky Dolenz) at a 1967 news conference at the Warwick Hotel in New York.

‘Today’ co-host, author coming to Tulsa

Sheinelle Jones promotes her new book with help from Ree Drummond



Jones



Drummond

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Magic City Books is bringing award-winning journalist and “Today” co-host Sheinelle Jones back to Tulsa for an event celebrating her new book, “Through Mom’s Eyes.”

Ree Drummond, the Pioneer Woman, will join Jones in conversation about the book. Jones is a former evening news anchor and reporter with KOKI Fox 23 in Tulsa.

The ticketed event will take place 7:30 p.m. Friday, April 17 at All Souls Unitarian Church, 2952

S. Peoria Ave. Tickets include one copy of “Through Mom’s Eyes” (\$29 value) and one general admission seat at the event.

When Jones launched “Through Mom’s Eyes,” a recurring “Today” show segment in which celebrities’ mothers were interviewed about raising successful kids, she had an ulterior motive — she wanted to bring all their wisdom to bear on raising her own three children.

So Jones asked Lin-Manuel

Miranda’s mom about staying present with kids while balancing a demanding career, talked with Lady Gaga’s mom about how to recognize bullying and got tips from Steph Curry’s mom on making sure a future NBA star does his chores.

Jones has since interviewed dozens of remarkable women and gathered a candid, warm and insightful collection of valuable lessons about life, love and parenthood, according to a news release about the book event.

In the book “Through Mom’s Eyes,” Jones shares more “life-changing secrets” with the world. Combining insights from celebrity mothers with her own journey through modern parenting, she reveals how to make it through the hard parts of motherhood and still tap into joy with empathy, generosity and solidarity.



JIMMIE TRAMEL, TULSA WORLD

Sheinelle Jones of “Today” takes a selfie with spectators who came to Guthrie Green to watch a segment of the NBC morning show when it was filmed in downtown Tulsa in October. Jones is returning to Tulsa for a book event in April.