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This 1966 photo of The Monkees shows, from left, Davy Jones, Peter Tork, Micky Dolenz and Mike Nesmith.

The Monkees

From D1

villains and generally played pranks on the world,” according to a series description in the book “The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows.”

In between seasons one and two, “The Monkees” captured two Emmy Awards. James Frawley won an Emmy for directing the series’ first episode, and “The Monkees” bested “The Andy Griffith Show,” “Get Smart,” “Hogan’s Heroes” and “Bewitched” to win an Emmy for Outstanding Comedy Series. Dolenz said it’s the proudest he has ever been of any kind of award.

“I don’t really chase awards or banners or things,” he said. “I never have. But, being a child of television myself since I was 10, ... that was certainly a big, big moment for me.”

The last original episode, written and directed by Dolenz, aired March 25, 1968. “Head,” a motion picture starring The Monkees, was released eight months later. “Head” is a story unto itself. The film crashed at the box office and befuddled critics, but, co-written by Jack Nicholson, it was indirectly responsible for bringing about the creation of the counter-culture classic “Easy Rider.”

“I know that (‘Head’) is a favorite film of many people that I respect, including Quentin Tarantino,” Dolenz said. “It certainly stands up over the years. It’s a strange movie — very strange. I think it speaks to the time pretty well in its tone and in its delivery.”

Spoiler alert: The film “Head” ends with the Monkees in an aquarium-type space, trapped until the entertainment world needs to make use of them again.

The songs and the struggle

The Monkees never really went



TOM GILBERT, TULSA WORLD ARCHIVE

Micky Dolenz is bringing a 60 Years of The Monkees Tour stop to Tulsa Theater and will perform an intimate show at The Church Studio.

away. Members of the group, though not always a foursome, continued to record, perform and act.

But Monkee-mania made a comeback in 1986 because, 20 years after the TV series debuted, MTV aired a marathon of “The Monkees” episodes and Nickelodeon began airing reruns of the series. That led to a 20th anniversary tour and the recording of three new tracks (by two members) for a compilation album. “That Was Then, This is Now” from the compilation album became the band’s first top 40 hit since 1968.

Speaking of hits, Dolenz volunteered that The Monkees were blessed with material from great songwriters.

“I mean, you probably have heard who wrote those songs?” he said. “I probably don’t have to tell you, but people like Carole King and Neil Diamond and (Tommy) Boyce and (Bobby) Hart, and Neil Sedaka, God love him.”

Continuing, Dolenz mentioned Tulsa’s David Gates, Paul Williams, Barry Mann, Cynthia Weil and Jeff Barry.

“We had a lot of incredible

songwriters,” he said, adding that he will talk about them a lot in the 60 Years of the Monkees Tour stop at Tulsa Theater.

“I talk about songwriters all the time because that’s where it starts,” Dolenz said. “If you have a great song, the way I look at it, it’s kind of hard to screw it up.”

The Monkees got additional help on early recordings. Session musicians (among them: Glen Campbell) were enlisted to play on songs with The Monkees (usually Dolenz or Jones) providing vocals. The Monkees, however, waged a successful battle to play instruments themselves and have control over material that would be selected for albums.

“That’s a very long story,” Dolenz said. “I talk about it in my show. When we were cast, Mike Nesmith, especially, was a singer-songwriter. I kind of ‘got it’ that it was a TV show and that I was playing the part of this singing drummer. But Mike, I think, maybe had been promised that he would write and do maybe more of his own material, and it didn’t turn out that way initially, but he kind of led the palace revolt. I’m glad he did, because we finally got

Monkee history in Tulsa

“The Monkees” debuted in September 1966.

The made-for-TV music group became instantly famous, and in the first eight months of 1967 the Monkees played two concerts at the Assembly Center in downtown Tulsa.

While in town for the first show (Jan. 2, 1967), members of the group — Peter Tork, Michael Nesmith, Davy Jones and Micky Dolenz — took part in a news conference for correspondents from area high school newspapers. The question-and-answer session was, like the TV show, zany. When Tork was asked how he would describe The Monkees, he responded “Mike has long dark hair, Davy is short and Micky has brown hair.”

A Ronald E. Butler concert review for the Tulsa World said so many flash bulbs were popping at the show that experiencing the concert was like watching the performance through an old-time flickering projector. And he wrote about an unexpected dose of seriousness: An overhead screen flashed slides of The Monkees clowning, but sprinkled in were photographs taken in Montgomery, Alabama, and at the Civil Rights March.

The Monkees followed the sold-out concert by returning for a show that took place Aug. 18, 1967. Dick Carson of Carson Attractions, which handled ticketing, said nearly as many adults were buying tickets as youths; he attributed that to the popularity of the TV show.

About mid-day of the return show, word leaked out that The Monkees had rented the 11th floor of the Mayo Hotel. From the moment of the leak until show time, the Mayo was infiltrated with between 100 and 200 teens.

Wrote Butler: “To the adult world, it must have seemed like the Mayo Hotel was the site of a Camp Fire Girls convention Friday, as mobs of pre and early teens roamed the lobby, soda popped the coffee shop and joy rode the elevators.”

Nesmith came downstairs to get something to eat. Nesmith rode the kitchen elevator and sat in the farthest corner of the coffee shop, with an officer providing a barrier between the Monkee and the kids.

Said Butler’s story: When he left, they rushed in and swiped what he had not eaten.

Monkee-mania was in full bloom.

the rights, the permission, to do all the music ourselves, and out of that came one of the most wonderful albums we’ve ever done called ‘Headquarters.’”

Released in 1967, “Headquarters” was the The Monkees’ third album and helped the group set a record by having four albums reach No. 1 on the Billboard 200 in a calendar year. The following year, the “Head” soundtrack included keyboard work from Tulsa-raised Rock & Roll Hall of Famer Leon Russell.

“I actually got to know him,” Dolenz said. “I hung out with him and Joe Cocker on the Mad Dogs & Englishmen Tour — not professionally; I was just kind of hanging around as a fan. I knew Joe Cocker, and I hung out with them for a couple of weeks or something. Boy, Leon Russell. Talk about talent.”

Time-traveling show

Playing their own instruments gave The Monkees the legitimacy to perform live and tour. Once upon a time, Jimi Hendrix — ever heard of him? — was their opening act.

Best compliment The Monkees ever got from another music artist?

“Boy, I don’t know. I mean, I’ve heard people say things, but you could probably find that easier than me. I know that John Lennon was the first to say The Monkees are like the Marx Brothers. That, to me, is a huge compliment. Frank Zappa was a fan. Michael Stipe of R.E.M. was a big fan. A lot of people said they started to play the drums or started to play the guitar or sing or do something because of the television show.”

Dolenz said a “massive” amount of video clips from the series,

plus other visuals, will be part of the Tulsa Theater show. When it was suggested to him that it must be emotional to perform with-out his fellow Monkees, he said: “Yes. It has been a few years now, but sometimes ... I can hardly turn around and look at the videos and see everybody because it was, and still is, difficult, because they’re still there in a way, all the time.”

The set list for the 60 Years of the Monkees show will be chronological, beginning with the TV show theme song and continuing with material from a succession of albums. Asked if the reason for structuring the show that way was to best tell the story of the band, Dolenz reminded that he, Jones, Tork and Nesmith were not initially a band, at least in the traditional sense.

“Most bands starting out, they knew each other in school, like the Beatles, or they were relatives, like the Beach Boys,” he said.

“That’s how most classic, traditional bands started. Well, The Monkees was not a band. It was a television show — a musical comedy television show about a band, and it was about this band that wanted to be the Beatles and wanted to be famous and wanted to be the Rolling Stones or Herman’s Hermits or whoever.

“The reason I’m mentioning this to you is this is the kind of thing I talk about in the new show, explaining that on the television show, we never made it. We were never famous on the show. It was the struggle for success that I think is what helped endear it to so many kids around the world.”

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Circle Cinema hosts free film screening



‘The Tallest Dwarf’ is part of the Indie Lens Pop-Up series

JIMMIE TRAMEL
Tulsa World

Dahl

A free screening of “The Tallest

Dwarf” will take place 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 31 at Circle Cinema as the newest film in the Indie Lens Pop-Up series.

“The Tallest Dwarf” follows filmmaker Julie Forrest Wyman as she searches for her place in the little people community and unpacks rumors of dwarfism in her own family. Through

intimate stories, creative collaborations and archival history, the film delves into identity and medicine, asking whether society should change people or the structures that limit them.

Indie Lens Pop-Up is hosted by Sydney Alison. A guest at the screening of “The Tallest Dwarf” will be Oklahoma actor Kendra Wall Dahl, who was an

Ewok in “Return of the Jedi.” A meet and greet with her will take place between 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. in the lobby.

As part of the event, Wyman will participate in a question-and-answer session with the audience via Zoom.

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Oklahoma author’s new book a paranormal romantasy

JIMMIE TRAMEL
Tulsa World

New York Times bestselling author and Oklahoma native Rachel Vincent’s newest book, “The Alchemy,” will be released April 7.

“The Alchemy” follows Amber Fallbrook, who awakens “naked, knowing little more than her name” in a prestigious alchemy academy, surrounded by two enigmatic brothers claiming to be childhood friends. As she retrains her mind and body for deadly “Alchemy Trials,” she must unravel the secrets of her own past, the hidden dangers of the school and the mysterious philosopher’s Stone looming over everyone.

Vincent took part in a Q&A

session in advance of the book’s release:

■ What’s your Oklahoma background?

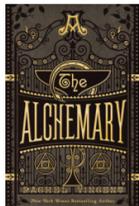
“My Oklahoma background runs deep! I was born in Ada, and three generations of my family have lived here at various times. I’m in Edmond now, but I’ve also lived in Choctaw and Midwest City. My husband is retired Air Force and was stationed at Tinker twice, and I’m an assistant professor at OU.”

■ How has living in Oklahoma influenced your writing and world-building?

“I’m a small-town girl at heart,



Vincent



and I think that comes through, even in the fantasy aspects of my work. My characters have long-term friends they’ve grown up with, which comes with both loyalties and old conflict. I like to write about characters who grew up in the same place, but who had entirely different experiences.”

■ What did you read that inspired you to want to be a writer?

“I spent childhood summers with my grandmother at the Ada library. She went to the library sale every year, and we’d come

home with a wealth of books. She and my dad fed me classics (everything from ‘Anne of Green Gables’ and the Nancy Drew titles to ‘Tess of the d’Urbervilles’), and my mom fed me fantasy and horror. As a writer, I’m a product of all of those influences, as well as everything I’ve read and taught since then.”

■ Writers sort of gravitate to a place that is their sweet spot. How did your genre of choice become your sweet spot?

“I actually write several sub-genres, but most of them are speculative fiction of some sort. Fantasy, mostly. I think that’s because while I love my real life, I’m always mentally seeing the magical and dangerous side of

every ‘what-if.’”

■ How did the idea for the new book come about, and what about this story do you think will be most appealing to readers?

“‘The Alchemy’ is truly cross-genre. Readers will find alchemy magic, romance, puzzles and a bit of an amnesia mystery. It’s a moody dark academia vibe, but the core of Amber, the main character, comes from the question I asked myself over and over as I wrote: Who are we, really, if we can’t remember becoming that person in the first place?”

For more about the author, go to rachelvincent.com.

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