



Q & A

Courtesy of Chandler Center for the Arts

Steve Landes (Vocals, Rhythm Guitar, Piano, Harmonica) A life-long, second-generation Beatles fan, Steve performs as John Lennon in RAIN. Steve taught himself guitar at 10 listening to Beatles records and by 13 was fronting a Top 40 cover band in his native Philadelphia. At 17 he joined Beatlemania and further developed his musicianship, touring the world with the show. After 'passing the audition' with the existing RAIN band members in 1998, his career was set. On one of his travels to England, he found himself at Liverpool's Casbah Club, owned by pre-Ringo Beatles drummer Pete Best. Encouraged to get on stage, Steve belted out lead vocals to The Beatles rocker "Slow Down," while Best sat in on drums.

As a backup musician, Steve has performed alongside legendary sixties artists Peter Noone (Herman's Hermits), Joey Molland (Badfinger), Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels, and Tiny Tim. As an actor, he appeared in the films "Wedding Bell Blues," "For Which He Stands" and Tim Burton's "Mars Attacks!" Steve writes and records his own original music.

Where did the idea to start RAIN come from?

RAIN started as a Top 40 and original band in 1975. They were called "Reign" back then, trying to get their own music going. When they'd play clubs, they'd have to do the typical four 'sets' per night, so they'd do a couple sets of their songs, a set of the Top 40 songs of the day, and then, being fans of The Beatles, finished out the night with a set of The Beatles music. And it was a pretty novel idea at the time to try to sound like The Beatles instead of doing their own take on the songs. This was before any 'tribute bands' existed - they were the first. Pretty quickly the original songs fell by the wayside and they became known for their authentic performance of The Beatles' music. They wanted the band name to reflect the fact. Fortunately, there's a Beatles song called Rain (the US B-side to Paperback Writer), so it only involved a spelling change instead of a whole new band name. The band continued to evolve from there, especially when, one by one, the original band members left the band, and the remaining one, Mark Lewis, filled each spot with the cream of the crop cast members from the stage production "Beatlemania". The band was, at that point, the top Beatles sound-alike look-alike band in the world.

What is or has been your favorite part about this production?

I think one of my favorite parts of this particular version of our show has been recreating the Let It Be / Get Back rooftop performance as a part of our 2nd Act. With that special being so

popular lately, on Disney+ and Blu-ray now, it's been fun to replicate a part of The Beatles' career that's been in front of people's eyes so much lately.

What musicians/bands are you listening to?

Well, as you might imagine, I probably listen to The Beatles more than anything. Not just for research for the show, but just 'cause I love them. Their music brings me energy; inspires me. I'm also a fan of the music that inspired them, the oldies stuff from the '50s and early '60s; Elvis, the Everly Brothers, R&B. Hmm, I can't really think of too much current stuff I listen to - Taylor Swift, Adele, I love them.

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?

Ahh you're talking to a total Anglophile here! There was a time in my life when I was traveling to England twice a year, just trying to spend as much time there as possible in between gigs and tours, take it all in. So, the UK is the obvious answer here. I think I'd feel so at home in a little bungalow in Northern Wales, just a train ride away from Liverpool and London.

If you were not a musician, what other profession would you want to have?

If I wasn't a singer or musician, I'm sure I'd still be doing something in the arts, like acting, or even something crafty behind the scenes, like miniature building or set building. I'm such a geek for the Hollywood backlots, I'd love to have anything to do with those.

Is there anything else you would like to tell our patrons?

If I were going to say one more thing about our show, I'd say that it's a very positive, upbeat show, one that leaves people with a good feeling. I think a lot of that has to do with the positive 'peace & love' message of The Beatles' music - 'all you need is love' and 'take a sad song and make it better'. And I think these are messages that we need in this world more than ever. I thank The Beatles for giving us all these positive messages!