



World-famous Beatles cover group

By Kathleen Loughran
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The Beatles will take the stage once again.

No, not the members of the original band, but some of their most famous impersonators.

The Cast of Beatlemania will play at 7 tonight on Old Main Lawn as part of the First Thursday Series of concerts held by the Downtown State College Improvement District.

All concerts are free and open to the public, and Beatlemania's performance is the fourth concert in the series.

The Cast of Beatlemania grew out of an initial production of Beatles' tunes on Broadway, said Carlo Cantamessa, who impersonates John Lennon in the group.

"The Cast is basically an offshoot of the Broadway show and probably one of the first tribute bands of the show," Cantamessa said. "We're like the grandfather. It's a long but very successful and fun history."

He said Beatlemania was the first show on Broadway to create a tour while the show was simultaneously continuing on Broadway.

"Beatlemania was on Broadway, and they were trying to put on a show that would tour around, so I joined them," Cantamessa said.

"We lovingly call it the road shows... we went out and brought it to the masses, so that was kind of neat."

Though Cantamessa never performed with Beatlemania on Broadway, one of the members of The Cast of Beatlemania actually has.

Lenie Colacino impersonates Paul McCartney for the group and has since his 1978 appearance on Broadway.

"I answered an ad like so many young musicians do, and I guess I was pretty good because they hired me on the spot," Colacino said.

About 10 years later, Cantamessa joined Beatlemania, and once The Cast formed, he and Colacino have run the group ever since.

The other members of the band include Jim Filgate as George Harrison, John Delgado as Ringo Starr and Mark Templeton, who is responsible for the band's orchestrations and keyboards.

Cantamessa said he decided to audition for Lennon because Lennon was his favorite member of The Beatles.

"I tried out for him because when I watched The Beatles on Ed Sullivan in 1964, I thought John was the coolest... I thought I would love to do that one day," Cantamessa said. "And my vocal range and sound is very similar to John

Lennon, and so I got the job. I got lucky. I say all the time, I'm the luckiest guy in the world. I didn't have to write the music, but I get to perform it."

Colacino also said he enjoys performing as a member of The Cast of Beatlemania.

"It still allows me to play and sing the music that I grew up on," he said. "It's amazing that I've performed for so long and haven't gotten tired of it. It's great to love your work."

Cantamessa said his favorite aspect of being able to perform in the group is that he is able to frequently recreate The Beatles' music.

"Every night you just get that chill because you get so close to recreating the music as we remember it," he said. "You just get that jazzing feeling like

If you go

What: The Cast of Beatlemania

Where: Old Main Lawn

When: 7 tonight

Details: Show is free to the public.

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