

ENTERTAINMENT

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Flanked by a couple of their CDs, the returning Monkees are Micky Dolenz, Peter Tork and Davy Jones in black and white.

Monkees tour will stop in Twin Cities

Ya know, they're too busy singing to put anybody down

By Ana Rusness
The Forum

Name four mop-topped musicians who are known for revving up the '60s with their No. 1 hits.

If you guessed Ringo, Paul, George and John, you're right, but you're wrong. Hey, hey, it's the Monkees: including Micky Dolenz, "the wild Monkee"; Mike Nesmith, "the thinking Monkee"; Peter Tork, "the dumb Monkee;" and Davy Jones, "the heart-throb Monkee."

The group first debuted on a TV show on Sept. 12, 1966, and spent the next two years entertaining the country with their surreal situations and zany adventures. As usual in TV land, the idea behind the successful program was not original.

So what if the concept behind "The Monkees" borrowed the style and pace of the Beatles film, "A Hard Day's Night"? American teens loved it.

Now there's big news in Monkee-land: Three of the Monkees — Dolenz, Jones and Tork — are going on a 15-week tour this summer, with a stop in Minneapolis on Saturday. The concert will be staged at 8 p.m. at the State Theatre, and will feature old hits as well as new songs from the foursome's latest release, "Justus."

In a telephone interview, Dolenz said the decision to tour again was based partly on the renewed success of the series (Nickelodeon and VH-1 are currently airing old shows), and the demand that is out there for the Monkees.

Dolenz, now a television producer and director, still exhibits that wacky, off-beat sense of humor that popped up so often on

the television show.

On the phone, he jokes about touring, comparing himself to a bottle of fine wine (he "bruises easily").

Even in interviews, he still seems to have the quality of a good performer — the ability to always leave with the crowd wanting more.

Fans can get more Monkees throughout the summer, and even more Monkee-fun after that.

Nesmith is forging the tour to work on the band's next feature film.

The old TV show is also getting a lot of air-time on cable stations.

As part of its block party summer, cable powerhouse Nickelodeon is running "Monkees" episodes at 7:30 p.m. Monday nights through Labor Day.

VH-1 also included the show in its summer entertainment line-up, featuring two hours of back-to-back episodes every Thursday at 8 p.m.

The fact that the TV show still holds up after 30 years says something about the timelessness of its humor.

"It was never satirical or topical and very rarely political," Dolenz said, "like the Marx brothers or The Three Stooges or Laurel and Hardy."

That same quality could be found in the Monkees' music.

"The music and songs of the Monkees are timeless. They stand up over time and are appreciated," Dolenz says, while attempting to explain why people still listen to the group today.

He also believes that "Everybody likes to go back to their childhood," and because the group's original audience is "at that age,"

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Micky Dolenz
The "wild" Monkee

they're ready for a dose of Monkees-induced nostalgia.

Despite the years that have passed since the four Monkees first toured together, their performances won't be that different this time around.

"The hit songs kind of dictate what we do," Dolenz said.

But there will also be songs from "Justus," which was created entirely by the four Monkees.

Lisa Krohn of the State Theatre estimates that 75 percent of the group's concert on this tour will be old music; 25 percent of it will be new.

The group will be backed by a six-piece band, but Dolenz will be featured behind the drums for most of the evening.

All three will also do solo performances during the concert.

Tickets for the show are \$34.50 and \$41.50. They can still be purchased by calling Ticketmaster at (612) 989-5151.