

NOW WE'RE TOLKIN'



By Helen Marketti

British Invasion Tour!

An interview with singer/songwriter Denny Laine

The British Invasion Tour will be coming to The Kent Stage on March 4. It's a rockin' line up with Denny Laine (Moody Blues, Wings), Peter Asher, Billy J. Kramer, Chad & Jeremy, Mike Pender (The Searchers) and Terry Sylvester (The Hollies).

The British are coming! They first landed on American shores in February of 1964 when The Beatles woke up the youth with a new sound and look. Shortly after, the tidal wave of the British Invasion started coming across the pond. The Moody Blues, The Rolling Stones, The Hollies, The Animals, Peter & Gordon, The Who, The Kinks and the list continues. If you were around for the first wave, you were fortunate. Some of these classic artists are coming back again with a little help from their friends.

Denny Laine is a name that goes hand-in-hand with classic rock and the British Invasion as one of the early members of The Moody Blues with his hit, "Go Now". His music adventures after the group included the Denny Laine String Band, Ginger Baker's Air Force and eventually Wings with Paul McCartney. Denny and Paul co wrote "Mull of Kintyre". Denny sings lead on "Picasso's Last Words" (*Band on the Run*), "Sprits of Ancient Egypt" (*Venus and Mars*) and "I Lie Around". *Venus and Mars* and *Wings at the Speed of Sound* albums have been remastered and released as deluxe sets.

Denny took some time to talk from his home in San Diego about getting started with the upcoming tour, current projects and some nostalgic thoughts of those early days. "The tour officially starts on the 22nd. We did a version of this tour last year. Peter Asher will be joining us on all of the dates this year. We have had a lot of fun in the past. I know everyone and I feel it is going to do well. It's a 60s tour and to be honest I really had never done a 60s tour until last year. I'm enjoying playing the music that I was involved in during those early years."

"The whole 60s era wasn't just about the music," said Denny. "The music was the spearhead. You had the music, fashion and art. The young people wanted to express themselves. It was a Renaissance period. We were all growing up, changing, moving forward independently. Many music labels started during that time. We were all feeding off of each other in those days and that is what I always felt was so great about the 60s."

While some musicians who are Denny's contemporaries step away from the spotlight, Denny does not have any plans to slow down. "I wouldn't know what else to do if I didn't keep myself involved with music. I have had periods where I have been semi retired. I have spent time in the studio, which is good because you can be creative and work on material at your own pace. I tend to write in small bits and work on material a little at a time. I usually can make an album after a 6-month period because by then I have plenty of material. I am still working while being in the studio but I have found it to be a bit boring. I tend to miss the live music and the audience. I really enjoy what I do now because I have many different styles of material. It's nice to get back to what you do best which is playing before an audience."

Denny explains how the British Invasion Tour was put together. "Andrew Sandoval who has worked for Rhino Records which are famous for releasing boxed sets of old songs. He got together with Keith Putney who is an agent and has a production company. Peter Asher works with Keith and I do, too. They came up with the idea of putting this tour together instead of only playing one show."

"Audiences are receptive to our music if they grew up with it. I think they feel it's a part of their lives, which is a good feeling, but at the same time, we are noticing many younger people in the audience. It has now come full circle and the young people are enjoying our music. They may look upon us as the grandfathers of rock and roll but that's OK. People also appreciate when you do new material because it's not all about living in the past. I like to revisit the past to a certain extent but not all the time. If I only did shows that had to do with the past I don't think I would want to keep with it."

Denny has a new album in the works called "Valiant Dreams". "My inspiration comes from many life experiences," he said. "I take those experiences, mix them up and create a fictional



version of the truth. I also have a musical called "Artic Song" which is about the Artic region and problems with the environment. I'm working on that with the university in Fredonia, New York. I enjoy working on new material. I am always looking forward to the future and doing those kinds of shows, too."

Every now and again, Denny ventures back to England. "The last time I was there I bumped into Paul and we went to see the band UB40. He lives around the corner from me in London."

Music is the common thread that holds it all together. "I appreciate all kinds of music. I think you have to do a lot of "live" work to improve at your career. You need to have the feedback and interaction with the audience."

For more information: www.britishinvasiontour.com • www.dennylaine.com

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