

# The Yardbirds!

The Yardbirds swept America during the 1960s British Invasion and are still rockin' to a whole new generation!

By Helen Marketti

The Yardbirds have seen a revolving door of musicians for over 40 years and while the line-ups may have changed, one thing that has remained constant is their love of music, performing for fans and writing new material. With classic hits such as *For Your Love*, *Shapes of Things*, *I'm a Man* and *Heart Full of Soul*; Rock and Roll Hall of Famer, Jim McCarty, original drummer and still active member of The Yardbirds shares his thoughts about being part of an era that still captivates music fans.

"Originally, I played drums in the Boys Brigade which is like a military organization in England for young men. I was in the marching band at the time," recalls Jim. "Then one day, one of my friends asked me to his house to play drums. We were playing songs by The Shadows. I was about 15 and decided then that I wanted to be a rock drummer. I always liked the sound of drums, the rhythm of them. I like all music but it was the drums that really took me away."

Jim remembers what it was like to be part of the British Invasion during the 60s. "It was a very exciting time for us to be a part of it. Most of us had a hard life in the early days in England. When we would see places on TV that were in America, it made us excited to be able to come over and see it

all for ourselves. Everything was so huge in America. It was an expansive experience for us."

The Yardbirds experienced three guitar legends at various times with the likes of Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page. Jim recalls, "Eric was attending one of the local art schools when he joined us. We started playing regularly at The Crawdaddy, which had been a venue of The Rolling Stones. The club owner later became our manager and asked us to have the "job" of playing at The Crawdaddy after he heard us rehearsing. So that was exciting. After Eric left, Jeff Beck joined us next. We had tried to get Jimmy Page right then because we knew him as a session player. He was too busy at the time so he recommended Jeff and of course, that worked out great! But with our tour schedule, it was too much for him after awhile. Jeff was a nervous type, a wound up kind of guy so he couldn't keep going at that pace. We were on the road a lot which was tough on all of us but Jeff didn't like it so he left. Then Jimmy came in for a while. Paul Samwell-Smith then left to be a record producer."



Early photo with Eric Clapton



Mid-60s with Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page

Jim continues, "Chris Dreja and I have basically been with The Yardbirds the entire time since back at square one. The band broke up in 1968 then got back together during the 90s and have been going strong since. Keith Relf, our original front man, passed away in 1976. Paul Samwell-Smith wasn't interested in rejoining so we got other musicians to be part of it. The guys

we have now are young guys but we all click together very well."

The Yardbirds will be performing at Tangier in Akron on May 23rd.

Seeing a classic act with original members mixed in with a new generation of musicians makes for a rockin' show. Jim shares his thoughts about the music of The Yardbirds, "The Yardbirds sound was quite original. We used build ups which is known as the "rave on" in our music then we came down again. Jeff Beck was quite futuristic at the time. It all comes together for us, even now and doesn't seem to date itself. It's fantastic!"

For more information on The Yardbirds: [www.theyardbirds.com](http://www.theyardbirds.com)

Ticket Information for May 23rd: [www.thetangier.com](http://www.thetangier.com)

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