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# NOW WE'RE TALKIN

By Helen Marketti

## A chat with Peter Noone of Herman's Hermits ahead of Ohio Concert

Peter Noone was the lead singer for one of the most popular bands during the British Invasion of the 60s. Fifty years later, Peter is still singing the hits that placed Herman's Hermits in classic rock history. Their recognizable hits include *I'm Into Something Good*; *Mrs. Brown, You've Got a Lovely Daughter*; *I'm Henry the VIII*; *Dandy*; *No Milk Today*; *There's a Kind of Hush*, and *Can't You Hear My Heartbeat*.

Peter and Herman's Hermits will be performing at Hoover Auditorium in Lakeside, Ohio, on Saturday, August 18. Calling from his home in California, Peter shares his story of how Herman's Hermits began and how the music keeps going fifty years later. "When I was grow-

ing up, I liked Buddy Holly, Elvis Presley and The Everly Brothers. I had a sister who was two years older than I was and she was the one who connected me to those artists. I think The Everly Brothers and Buddy Holly had very romantic and beautiful songs," he said. "Herman's Hermits kind of followed in that tradition with songs that were upbeat and happy. They were gentlemanly songs.

"Everyone in my family was involved in music. My father played trombone. My uncle played trumpet. My grandfather played the organ in church. It was a family tradition that we would all get together to sing. My sister and I tap danced. We also sang in the church choir. My grandmother was called the 'choir mistress.' I am not sure where the word 'mistress' came from because she was a grandmother (*laughs*). Anyway, my grandmother fired me because I sang too loud. I wanted to be the leader."

Peter continues, "I attended Manchester School of Music in England. I would attend in the evenings. I was bored just taking one class so I joined all of the classes. There was a variety. One day someone stopped at the school because they were looking for a kid to play a Christmas song on the piano for a television show. I was twelve years old at the time and knew how to play the piano. After that, any time they needed a twelve-year-old kid to play a part, I usually got the role because I was also in the union. I saved the money from my acting work so I could put together a little band. My hobby was music. I used my money to finance the band. We got some equipment and then went on the road. That is what eventually became Herman's Hermits.

"I still enjoy singing my songs. I think the band has another good ten years," laughs Peter. "It was great being part of the British Invasion. We all knew each other. We knew The Beatles, The Stones, Gerry and The Pacemakers, Tom Jones, and Petula Clark. We all met on the road or on television in England. We weren't



competitive because all of us were different. Each band had their own sound and their own hits.

"I think people are still interested in our music because it's quite incredibly good. I guess for me to have been part of it, it's hard to be a critic. It was a renaissance period for music. It just all flowed. All of the bands were influenced by our idols and we then created our own music out of those influences. Last year was the most successful year for Herman's Hermits' trademark. We didn't think in those terms in 1963. It started out as a hobby and our hobby turned into a great big business," explains Peter.

A recent project that Peter completed was lending his vocal talent to the band, The Red Button. Peter sings on the track, *Ooh Girl*. "This came about from someone making a suggestion that I should work with this band. I am always open to suggestions. It's a fun little song. It's very successful. When you make music, the payoff is to hear it on the radio, not to get rich. *Ooh Girl* has been played on the radio."

Peter is looking forward to playing in Lakeside in August. "I love the area. It reminds me of a neighborhood I lived in as a kid. I always arrive a day early and walk around the grounds. We have great shows at Hoover Auditorium and great crowds!"

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