

PAPER MILL PLAYHOUSE

WORLD PREMIERE
Jan 31–Mar 3



**MY VERY OWN
BRITISH
INVASION**

**A MUSICAL FABLE
OF ROCK N' LOVE**

MY VERY OWN BRITISH INVASION

Book by RICK ELICE

Directed and Choreographed by JERRY MITCHELL

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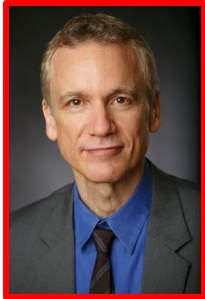
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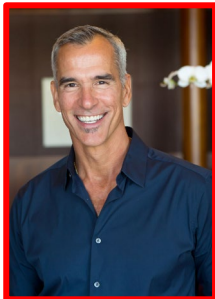
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CREATIVE TEAM



RICK ELICE (Book) On Broadway: *Jersey Boys* (Tony, Grammy, and Olivier Awards for Best Musical), *The Addams Family*, *Peter and the Starcatcher* (winner, five Tony Awards), and this season's *The Cher Show*. His book, *Finding Roger: An Improbably Theatrical Love Story*, is published by Kingswell. Rick is happy to be making his Paper Mill debut after a lifetime of seeing shows here. Thank you to Peter Noone and Jerry Mitchell for inviting me to their party. This one, like all the ones before and after, is for you, Rog.



JERRY MITCHELL (Director, Choreographer) received Broadway's Tony Award for Best Choreography twice—initially for the revival of *La Cage aux Folles* and more recently for *Kinky Boots*, for which he was also nominated as director. In addition to *Kinky Boots*, Jerry is currently represented on Broadway as the director-choreographer of *Pretty Woman*. Other recent productions include the pre-Broadway productions of *Half Time* in Chicago and thereafter at Paper Mill Playhouse and, prior to that, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, which he also directed and coproduced in the West End and for which he was nominated for an Olivier Award for his choreography. In the 35 preceding years, Jerry has been involved with over 50 Broadway, West End, and touring productions, including as choreographer of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*; *The Full Monty* (Tony nomination); *The Rocky Horror Show*; *Hairspray* (Tony nomination, also NBC's live telecast); *Gypsy, Never Gonna Dance* (Tony nomination); *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (Tony nomination); *La Cage aux Folles*; *Legally Blonde* (Tony nomination), which he also directed; *Catch Me If You Can*; and *Kinky Boots*; and as director of *On Your Feet!: The Story of Emilio & Gloria Estefan*.



PETER NOONE (Concept) At the age of 15, Peter Noone achieved international fame as Herman, the lead singer of the legendary '60s British Invasion band Herman's Hermits. They sold over 60 million records and had dozens of top hits, including "I'm into Something Good," "Mrs. Brown, You've Got a Lovely Daughter," "I'm Henry VIII, I Am," "Can't You Hear My Heartbeat," and "There's a Kind of Hush." Today, Peter tours the world performing hundreds of times a year to sold-out audiences with his group Herman's Hermits starring Peter Noone.

"The American Revolution - that's what you call it on your side of the pond. But up in Manchester-England where I come from, the schoolbooks call it 'The Skirmish.' I guess 'History belongs to the winners' - that's what me mum always said. So, we waited a while for Round Two of this particular slug-fest. Patience is what it means to be British. And in 1964, we made our move. Not with soldiers and muskets - this time we did it with *music*."

~Opening line of MY VERY OWN BRITISH INVASION~

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WHAT WAS THE BRITISH INVASION?

When you hear the words "British Invasion", you'd be right to expect to hear a story about a British military attack. In this case, the British invasion described a cultural revolution in the mid-1960s. With British music's domination of American radio and the record industry, a younger generation finally had a soundtrack to match the changing culture.



Most attribute the start of this revolution with The Beatles appearing on The Ed Sullivan Show in February 1964 (*see picture on left*). For weeks prior to their performance, their music was played on the radio and the press kept pushing a message saying, "The British Are Coming!" From the moment they started their first song, "All My Lovin'", the crowd exploded, and a phenomenon was born. 73 million Americans watched that telecast and it became a defining moment not only in music history, but American history.

They would go on to dominate the music charts, even at one point having the top 12 spots on the Top 100, an unprecedented achievement that likely will never be replicated.

British musicians were inspired by American rock n roll, jazz and blues music of the 1950s and by the early 1960s were creating a British rock n roll style of their own. In Northern England, mostly in Liverpool and Manchester, this new sound was developing in the bars and clubs by young bands with big dreams. The Beatles got their start as regulars at a Liverpool bar called The Cavern. Some of the other bands to get their start in the pubs on Northern England include The Searchers, Gerry and the Peacemakers, The Fourmost and the Dakotas. Peter Noone, who was the lead singer of a band from Manchester called Herman's Hermits (*see picture above*), created the concept for My Very Own British Invasion.



By 1964, London also became a hotbed for this music, introducing the world to bands like The Rolling Stones, The Who, The Kinks, The Yardbirds, The Dave Clark Five, Petula Clark, and many more. In our show, the action takes place around The Bag O'Nails (*see picture on left*), which was an actual bar in the heart of Soho in London. It was famous for giving many artists their starts, including The Animals and the Jimi Hendrix Experience.

Another band pivotal in the British Invasion were The Rolling Stones (*see picture on right*), who arrived in the United States a bit later than The Beatles but had an enormous impact. Their single "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction", written while the band was in Florida and recorded in Los Angeles, launched them to nationwide popularity. This was followed by huge hits like "Paint It Black", "Get Off Of My Cloud", and "Brown Sugar."



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By the late 1960s, while The Beatles and The Rolling Stones stayed on the top of the charts, more American musicians had caught up to their popularity. As music distribution and technology continued to get more advanced and cheaper, international music has become a pivotal segment of American music. England continues to be a hotbed for new music that gets exported internationally. Megastars like Ed Sheeran and Adele show us that while British music invaded the airwaves in the mid-1960s, England will continue to bring great music to our shores for generations to come.

FAMOUS SONGS OF THE BRITISH INVASION

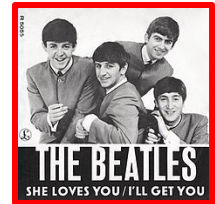
"(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" by The Rolling Stones (1965)



Keith Richards created the famous guitar riff and the title in the middle of the night in a hotel in Florida. Over the next month, Mick Jagger wrote the lyrics and the song was released as a single in the United States. The song immediately climbed the charts, staying at #1 for a month. Rolling Stone Magazine named it the 2nd Greatest Song of All Time.

"She Loves You" & "I Want to Hold Your Hand" by The Beatles (1963)

While The Beatles have countless #1 singles, "She Loves You" has the distinction as their bestselling single in the United States and the United Kingdom. The song was written after a concert in Newcastle, England and was released as a B-side, staying on the charts for 34 consecutive weeks.



"I Want to Hold Your Hand" is the song that is commonly credited as the single that launched the British Invasion of the United States. John Lennon and Paul McCartney wrote it in McCartney's girlfriend's house, which at the time was the place they wrote many of their first singles. It entered the charts in mid-January and by February 1st went to #1, their first of many #1 records.

"You Really Got Me" by The Kinks (1964)

Lead singer Ray Davies wrote the song initially to be a slower blues style ballad. They recorded an alternate version with what would become the famous guitar riff and it was clear that the up-tempo version was going to be a smash hit. Upon its release, it appeared on the UK charts and a month later started to climb the American charts. The song launched The Kinks' popularity in the United States.



In 1999, the song was placed in the Grammy Hall of Fame. The Kinks have their own stage musical called Sunny Afternoon, which played on London's West End in 2014.

"There is a house in New Orleans, they call The Rising Sun. And it's been the ruin of many a poor boy, and God I know I'm one. Oh, mother tell your children, Not to do what I have done. Spend your lives in sin and misery, In The House of the Rising Sun."

**~The House of the Rising Sun by The Animals sun in
MY VERY OWN BRITISH INVASION~**

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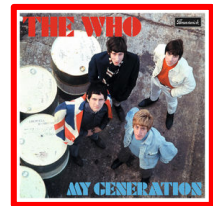


"The House of the Rising Sun" & "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood" by The Animals (1964)

The origin of "The House of the Rising Sun" is actually unknown, although many folk artists had done their own arrangement of this song. The Animals took the song, changed some of the lyrics, and started performing it on tour and immediately found their fans were drawn to it. Upon its release, it went to the top of the UK charts in July 1964 and topped the US charts two months later. This song introduced The Animals to American listeners, who later became enamored by their cover of "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood."

My Generation by The Who (1965)

Written by Pete Townshend, the song became an anthem for teenagers who wanted to rebel against the status quo. It was the most popular single on their debut and launched The Who's international popularity. Rolling Stone named it the 11th greatest song of all time.



Glad All Over by The Dave Clark Five (1963)

The Dave Clark Five were the second band to make an impact in the United States. They performed on the Ed Sullivan show less than one month after The Beatles first performance and in the end performed 18 times on the show. The song became an instant international sensation, having the distinction as the song that knocked "I Want to Hold Your Hand" off the top spot of the charts.

The song is famous today as the anthem for Crystal Palace Football Club in England, which has played the song as the players walk out for decades.



**The cast of
MY VERY OWN
BRITISH INVASION
in rehearsal.**

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IMPORTANT MOMENTS OF THE 1960S

1960

Democrat John F. Kennedy wins the U.S. Presidential Election after defeating Republican Richard Nixon. Kennedy was the youngest person to have been elected into the highest office at the time.



1961



Construction on the Berlin Wall begins in an effort to separate East and West Berlin. The wall would stand for 28 years.

President Kennedy creates the Peace Corps

The Bay of Pigs invasion is an unsuccessful US backed operation to overthrow Fidel Castro in Cuba.

1962

The Cuban Missile Crisis has the world on the edge of another World War as the United States and USSR come close to launching nuclear attacks.

1963

United States President John F. Kennedy is assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald.

U.S. Civil Rights Leader Martin Luther King Jr. gives his famous "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.



1964

United States President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law.

New York's World's Fair opens in Queens, attracting 50 million visitors and becoming one of the biggest fairs in the world.

1965

Martin Luther King, Jr. leads a peaceful civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery in Alabama.

The Vietnam War escalates and opposition to it begins to mount as anti-Vietnam protests become more common.



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1966

The United States performs bombing raids on areas of North Vietnam.

Medicare, the government program for citizens 65 and over is signed into law.



1967

The Green Bay Packers win the first Super Bowl



Thurgood Marshall is appointed to the Supreme Court and becomes the first African-American

The Summer of Love becomes a symbol of the height of hippie cultural, centered in San Francisco.

1968

Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated in April by James Earl Ray.

Richard Nixon is elected President



1969



Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin become the first men to arrive on the Moon during NASA's Apollo 11 mission.

Woodstock Music Festival in upstate New York attracts over 200 thousand people.

PETER NOONE, HERMAN'S HERMITS, "I grew up thinking that all American music was good and all English music was crap. I was a Yankophile. All the TV shows I liked were American—you know, [the sitcom] *Sergeant Bilko* and so on. You have to imagine that these poor English guys were living in miserable, provincial, rainy, dreary cities, and saw posters with James Dean standing in the boots and the jeans and the T-shirt, with the cigarettes rolled up in the sleeve. I mean, if you look at Keith Richards, he *still* dresses like James Dean in that movie."

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MY VERY OWN BRITISH INVASION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

After you see the show and read this study guide, use these prompts to start a discussion with your students and peers.

- 1) What was it about the American social, political, and musical situations in the early sixties that made the country so ready for invasion by the British bands?
- 2) Were the Beatles and the Rolling Stones so great that they could have taken over the U.S. charts any time, or was it mostly a case of good timing that they became so popular so quickly?
- 3) Do you think the British Invasion during the 1960s was the only one? Are there other instances of British artists infiltrating American airwaves? Name some examples of British bands or artists that became popular in America after the 60s.
- 4) MY VERY OWN BRITISH INVASION is a jukebox musical or a musical that features hit songs of a popular music group or genre. What other jukebox musicals do you know?
- 5) The music of the 1960s defined a generation and changed music history. Talk to your parents, grandparents, or family members about what they remember about music in the 60s.

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A SINGER'S BEST FRIEND