



The Neverly Brothers, consisting of drummer Kegham Giragosian (left), guitarist Kevin Giragosian (middle) and bassist Craig Gigstad (right), will perform 1950s and 1960s tunes from the Everly Brothers to early Beatles and the Kinks at Riverfest on Thursday, Aug. 11, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Neverly Brothers to play Riverfest

**By Kevin Wilson
of the Daily Times staff**

History tours can be enlightening and educational, but they usually don't come with a great soundtrack like this one.

The Neverly Brothers, an authentic music interpretation of mid-1950s and 1960s tunes from the Everly Brothers to early Beatles and the Kinks, will perform at Riverfest on Thursday, Aug. 11, from 6 to 8 p.m.

This three-piece band features three-part harmony vocals, along with uniform dress and instrumentation of the early originals, including standup drums with brushes, acoustic bass and hollow box guitar.

Chicago based, this act plays many casinos and performing arts venues in the Midwest along with tours to the West Coast and intermountain area.

Kevin Giragosian, Kegham Giragosian and Craig Gigstad — all veterans of the Chicago live music scene for over 20 years — formed this group in 2003 and have steadily built their brand of history fans can groove to.

"I started the band eight years ago," said front man Kevin Giragosian. "It was originally four pieces, then became a trio five years ago. The whole idea didn't start out exactly as the same concept, as focused as it is now. We were mixing and blending between songs.

"Five years ago, we became more focused and upgraded the show. We made wardrobes more interesting and flashy and fun and authentic. The last five years the show has really evolved into a full-time (gig)."

The Neverly Brothers don't consider themselves an "oldies cover band" or a tribute act. Through enthusiastic live performances, they look to transport the audience back in time to experience the evolution of rock 'n' roll from its 1950s American rockabilly roots to the 1960s British Invasion.

Their song sequence and selection are chronological, accompanied by narrative historical footnotes, to illustrate how the music and energy of the American rock 'n' roll pioneers set the stage for the young bands of the British Invasion.

Their set list features renditions of early hits by Jerry Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Buddy Holly, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Dave Clark Five, the Kinks and many other artists who shaped rock 'n' roll from 1955 through 1965.

"We play songs with more modern production, plus our energy and spirit," Kevin

Giragosian said. "That's the difference between what we do and what oldies cover bands do. That's stale. I'll label a bunch of these bands ... they sound old, they look old, like a lounge band. A lot of bands who fall into the '50s and '60s era into the '50s and '60s era. They are just going through the motions, but not playing with emotion. The fact that we have a concept, how rock evolved from American roots to British Invasion ... if it's a tribute, it would be to an era, the one that changed rock 'n' roll."

As the group's virtual tour director, Kevin Giragosian relishes the chance to help fans connect the dots as

music evolved and musicians borrowed from one another.

"I'm the tour guide, the emcee on the bus," Kevin Giragosian said. "I might start off by saying, 'You just stepped on the retro sonic tour bus. We're going to set it to 1957 and move forward. Now, we move along to the next city. We start at Memphis with Sun Records, who recorded early Elvis, Johnny Cash and Carl Perkins. They were the million dollar quartet, kind of where rock started. Now, we leave Sun Records and head to Lubbock, Texas, where Buddy Holly was making history, to St. Louis. Little Richard was from Macon, Ga.'"

For the early American set, the band wears shark skin suits and western ties for a slick Memphis rockabilly look. In the second set, they switch to British Invasion attire with button-up jackets and boots like the Beatles wore on their famous "Ed Sullivan Show" appearance in 1964. The boots are dead-on reproductions made by a company in Liverpool, England.

Even the microphones they use are vintage.

As the front man, Kevin Giragosian does lead and backing vocals and plays guitar and harmonica. He prides himself on a signature "electrified" acoustic guitar sound he developed for the act which he considers an integral part of their sound.

His brother, Kegham Giragosian, stands at all times behind a minimalist drum kit, consisting of only a bass drum and a snare drum. He swings his arms in windmill circles beating the snare drum with brushes, not sticks.

The Giragosians were part of an original power pop band call the Wombats in the 1990s. Gigstad, who plays the upright

bass fiddle with a mix of slapping grooves and steady pulses, toured and performed with a variety of local acts and national recording artists before joining this group.

"Lead vocals get tossed around between the three of us," Kevin Giragosian said. "The focus goes from one to the other, while the others (do backing vocals). Three voices can make a powerful instrument, almost a fourth instrument."

Performance videos for the group can be seen at <http://www.theneverlybrothers.com>.

"It's our own signature thing, the originality of it," Kevin Giragosian said. "The concept, the look and the way we combine the classic elements with who we are today. We're not trying to be an impersonator. We don't talk like the Beatles. We can be ourselves, which is fun, and be the tour guides through history and we're interpreting it."

