

Biography of the monkees



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American rock and pop music have been classic examples of the most popular music genres in the country, since time immemorial. Growing up to a background that has significantly high regard for rock music, I developed an immense admiration and liking for the music. Many artists have extensively explored the music genre, and the Monkees band is arguably among the most notable and successful contributors to the general world of rock music. The band is comprised of highly talented musicians, singers, and songwriters who bring in a unique texture in their work, and their incorporation of rock and pop as well as the immense contribution they made in the geography of music, acting, and overall artistry are the most compelling reasons that motivated my research.

The Monkees are a hitherto famous American rock band that was immensely proactive from 1965 to 1971 and had numerous reunification tours as well as albums in consequent decades. The band was formed and incepted by Bert Schneider and Bob Rafelson in 1965, and progressively strived to make significant strides and contributions in the general artistry. During this time, rock and pop music was popularly growing by leaps and bounds (David, n. p). The band comprised four vastly diversified and talented musicians, who also took up acting roles in their renowned American television series dubbed *The Monkees* . The band's musical acting quartet and artistic works were composed by proficient and celebrated figures in the field, including Peter Tork, Michael Nesmith, Davy Jones, and Micky Dolenz (Deming). As such, the four artists had unique talents and abilities, and their diversity largely inspired the group's success and undeniable legacy. Nesmith, for example, composed and consequently produced many songs from the very

onset, while Peter Tork was more involved in contributing to limited guitar works on the sessions that Nesmith produced.

In the initial months of the four actor-musicians career paths as The Monkees, they were only allowed minimal roles and duties in the recording studio. This was partly due to the amount of time that was required to produce and film the TV series. Nevertheless, Mike Nesmith composed and produced many works, while Peter Tork did guitar works on Nesmith's productions. Eventually, they fought for their independence and the right to collectively produce and supervise all music works and outputs, under the group's official name. Their TV show was officially canceled in the year 1968, although the band pressed on and continued to unwaveringly make and record music through the 1970s. Their resilience and consistency in the field saw a revitalization of renewed interest specifically in their TV show, which came in 1986 (Glenn, n. p). This resulted in a series of rigorous new records and reunion tours. As such, the band has since toured and reunited on numerous occasions with different lineups, thus realizing unprecedented and varying levels of success.

The band's story commenced in the fall of 1965, whereby producers Bert Schneider and Bob Rafelson came up with the initiative or idea of creating a television series that primarily revolved around a rock group. In this respect, the producers pondered about a situation comedy whereby a four-member group or band had somewhat wacky adventures and stories each week and burst into song on occasional instances. In consequence, The NBC TV network was highly impressed by the idea, and this saw the consequent

commencement of The Monkees production process that began in early 1966 (Deming).

Critically looking into the development of the Monkees' music that constituted their first album is highly noteworthy. The band's first and second albums were categorically intended to be soundtracks to the season premiere of their television show, in a bid to maximally cash in on the audience. The debut album was fundamental as it played a critical role in making the band a well-established and accomplished rock and roll band that had managed to get their television show. The group's premier single was named *Last Train to Clarksville*, which was released in August 1966, and this was just a few weeks before the official debut of their television broadcast session. In conjunction or collaboration with the premiere of the TV broadcast show on the 12th of September 1966 that featured on NBC television network, Columbia and NBC had a significantly major hit in the making. *The Monkees*, which was the band's initial long-playing album, was consequently released one month later, and it made history by staying on the Billboards charts for a whopping 78 weeks. The band's first album, in addition to incorporating or featuring their debut hit single, is also highly notable for encompassing member Mike Nesmith's premiere foray into the country-rock genre, *Papa Gene's Blues* (Deming). This particular artistic integration mixed various popular music genres, including rock, country, and Latin flavors, thus creating a distinct musical texture.

Following the huge success of their debut single in September 1966, the Monkees organized their pioneering recording session as a band that was not only self-contained but also fully functioning in January 1967. They recorded <https://assignbuster.com/biography-of-the-monkees/>

an early version of *The Girl I Knew Somewhere*, which was Nesmith's self-composed major hit single, amongst other major works (Swanson). Their TV show also debuted in 1966 on NBC, and it became an instant hit in the ratings, and thus, the show was shrewdly allowed to promote the records. While the notion and projection that television airtime could significantly sell popular music records was not new at the time, nobody had previously made it work exemplarily and with the degrees of success that the Monkees realized, almost instantly. Notably, Monkees-related works and other products prevalently flooded the American market in their hundreds, spanning from lunch boxes to toy guitars, among many others. In late 1966, the Monkees were booked for a few live performances or shows. As such, recordings of their previous performances or concerts are enough proof that even while the four group members were virtually virtuoso artists, they also worked well together when performing on stage. They were a highly entertaining, energetic and rough-and-ready rock music band that had a great capacity to work a crowd. As their popularity insurmountably grew by the day, the Monkees garnered tremendous confidence especially in their prowess as stellar performers. Nevertheless, the band started to considerably chafe under stringent restrictions and limitations that were imposed by Kirshner who possessed full authority and control particularly over what musical works or songs the band would record, and who would do the production works and play the sessions.

The band specifically selected to focus and appeal to the youth market, and they were mainly characterized by many carefully produced single hits as well as an exemplarily manufactured persona. As such, the band was largely

viewed as a distinct and original precursor especially to the contemporary era proliferation and propagation of corporation and studio-created bands. The band also contributed frequently to their particular production and songwriting efforts on their various albums, thus significantly improving their musical skills and proficiency. This informed their ultimate development into a self-directed group, whereby they played their musical instruments and wrote and composed many songs on their own.

It is worth noting that the Monkees band was the pioneer of the music video format, especially considering that Mike Nesmith, a band member, dreamt up the particular prototype that would subsequently become MTV.

Additionally, the band also paved the way for prospective boy bands, which essentially followed in their wake, including the Jonas Brothers, N Sync, among many others (Matthew, 307). The band, therefore, inspired and touched many people, significantly contributing to shaping their career paths in music.

The band's reunions and anniversaries have been exceptionally instrumental in establishing and enhancing their dominance on the rock and pop music genre, although they skipped their 40th anniversary in 2006 mainly because the band members had gone separate ways to pursue their individual careers. Nevertheless, in 2011 during their 45th anniversary, Tork, Jones, and Dolenz collaboratively decided to reunite, whereby they headed out on a major and extensive tour of North America, which lasted throughout the entire summer. Unknowingly, this was their last set of concerts and performances with Davy Jones who passed on in 2012, aged 66 (Hayes and

Leopold). His death was the ideal inspiration for Nesmith to rejoin the band, and they have since made strings of performances to pay tribute to their late band member.

In conclusion, The Monkees American rock and pop band goes down the annals of history as being one of the most popular and legendary groups of all time. The group has, since its inception in the 1960s, established sheer dominance and consistency in the music fraternity and have thus created immense impacts and legacy in artistry, most especially by bringing rock music to television in their popular TV shows. Classic examples of their most noteworthy international hits include *Last Train to Clarksville*, *Pleasant Valley Sunday*, *Daydream Believer*, among others. With Schlesinger's reunion with the band in 2018, it has embarked on composing songs and albums, and just like good old times, rock and pop music fanatics will be treated to more of their exemplary works.

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