

Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons, Carly Simon, Elton John, Blood, Sweat & Tears, Carole King, Cheap Trick, Sting, Paul McCartney, Three Dog Night, Christopher Cross and Alan Parsons were among the most influential pop music artists of the second half of the 20th century. All share a common denominator: At some point during their careers, each had at least one of The Hit Men playing behind them on the road or in the studio.

Take a star-studded journey back through rock and roll history on April 6 at the Cole Auditorium with The Hit Men, legendary performers who sang and played with some of the greatest artists of all time

“The Hit Men perform a Billboard Chart topping show of songs to which you danced, dated, sang along and knew every word,” Director of the Cole Auditorium Joey Bennett said. “The Hit Men are not a tribute band. They are the actual musicians and singers you heard on the original records, listened to on the radio, watched on TV and saw in concert.”

This supergroup consisting of Lee Shapiro, Jimmy Ryan, Jeff Ganz, Russ Velazquez and Steve Murphy will take you behind the scenes with “insider” stories about what it was like on the road and in recording sessions with Frankie, Tommy, Carly, Cat, Jim, Elton and many more.

Lee Shapiro is a producer, arranger, singer and musician who not only arranged some of the Four Seasons biggest hits, but also collaborated with artists ranging from Barry Manilow, Tony Orlando, and Tommy James.

Jimmy Ryan began his career in the 1960s as lead guitarist, singer and a songwriter for The Critters. He was Carly Simon’s music director for 21 years, and his guitar is heard on works by Cat Stevens, Jim Croce, Rod Stewart, Paul McCartney and Elton John and many others.

Jeff Ganz is a bassist and singer who has worked with an eclectic array of artists including Blood Sweat & Tears, Johnny Winter, Cheap Trick, Lou Reed, Dr. John, Vanilla Fudge and jazz greats including Gerry Mulligan, Tito Puente and Larry Coryell.

Russ Velazquez is a singer, composer and arranger whose credits read like a musical Who’s Who. He has collaborated with everyone from Sting, The Ramones, and LL Cool J to Luther Vandross, Korn and Paula Abdul. He has earned four Emmy Award nominations for his songs on Sesame Street and his song “2BA Master” hit the top of the children’s music charts on Radio Disney.

Steve Murphy is a drummer, singer, producer and engineer who has toured with The Alan Parsons Project, Jack Bruce, Eric Burdon and the Animals, Chuck Negron (formerly of Three Dog Night), Felix Cavaliere (The Rascals), Dave Mason, Todd Rundgren, Christopher Cross, Mark Farner (Grand Funk Railroad), The Turtles,

Mickey Dolenz, Gary Puckett, Mitch Ryder and over a dozen more major artists from the '60s, '70s and '80s.

"We can say whatever we want about our legacy with complete legitimacy," Lee Shapiro said. "We have an emotional connection with the audience that tribute bands and soundalike bands can't have. When we share our experiences and tell stories, we aren't reciting a script. We were there. When we tell you how Warren Beatty got thrown out of Carly Simon's dressing room at the Troubador in LA in 1971, we know it's true because Jimmy Ryan was the one who did it!"

Cost for The Hit Men concert is \$35 per ticket. Tickets can be purchased through the Cole Auditorium Box Office located on the campus of Richmond Community College. Box office hours are Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call the box office at (910) 410-1691.