



THE GROUP – FULL BIO

- *The summer of '66 was special. The Beatles and The Stones were on top, but there were also many other great groups delivering amazing music, like The Rascals, The Hollies, The Byrds, The Animals, and of course, there was Motown. Big hits that summer included "Paint It Black," "Lonely Too Long" "We Can Work It Out" and "Kicks." The world was changing, you could feel it. But for a bunch of blue-collar kids from Newark, New Jersey, the world was about to open up in an unexpected and exciting way, through the explosive combination of hopes, dreams, attitude, hard work, and Rock n Roll. It was a long time ago, yet the memories remain vivid and reborn. Like so many things in life, serendipity played a big part. This is the story of four guys from Newark that made their own music, lived the dream, and reunited forty-six years later to keep the music alive. This is the story of "The Group."*



- **“We Gotta Get Out of This Place”**

It all started in the 60's in the Ironbound enclave of Newark, NJ, an industrial blue-collar neighborhood populated mostly by second-generation Italian, Irish, and Polish immigrant families and a new wave of immigrants from Portugal. People worked hard to get ahead. For two brothers David and Brian, life was built around their three-family house on Polk Street where their parents, grandparents, brothers, aunts, uncles all lived under one roof, a chaotic existence. Their cousins Donnie and Dennis also grew up in that house, they attended the local Catholic School, had fun, but we're pretty much like most other kids in the neighborhood: bored, repressed, and looking for a way to be special. They sensed there was a much bigger world out there, and they wanted to grab it and shake it to its foundation.....But how?



- **The Long and Winding Road**

The answer came unexpectedly, in 1963, when their Uncle Mike brought the boys a guitar—an old Gibson L-50 Archtop— that he had uncovered while serving in Korea. He thought it would be a good outlet and a way for them to “stay out of trouble.” They were immediately taken by the idea that they too could actually make music (like Elvis or Ricky Nelson) and they spent many, many hours every day after school practicing guitar with their teacher, Roosevelt Spann, listening to vinyl 45s and albums, and rehearsing songs until their fingers bled. They listened to everything including Elvis, Ricky Nelson, The Stones, BB King, Wes Montgomery, Chuck Berry, The Yardbirds, Johnny Cash, Chet Atkins, The Hollies, and especially The Beatles. They loved the two guitar-bass-drums lined up and marveled at the range of styles and songs it accommodated. Later on, a real electric guitar – a National - came into their lives.

It was like a dream.



- **Payin' Dues to Sing the Blues**

While the other kids were playing basketball and making zip guns, the boys lived an intense subterranean existence in their basement, investing years of time practicing, arguing over guitar riffs, and learning how to play. Donnie discovered his true passion for the electric bass, David decided to play the drums, while Brian stuck to guitar. All of the boys developed their voices. Finally, they thought, there were ready. They saved up and bought their first set of drums, electric guitars and amps (they dreamed of an owning a set of Ludwigs, a Rickenbacker twelve-string and a Fender Precision Bass with Vox Amps, but had to settle for the much cheaper Radio Shack Japanese Specials of the Week: a three piece Japanese drum set, a Kimberly Bass, and a Zim-Gar special four pickup guitar, with Silvertone Amps by Sears, Roebuck.) Then the big step: they decided that they were ready. At age 13, they decided to form a band. This decision would shape their entire lives. It would define them.



- **Metamorphosis**

They listened and listened to all types of music, especially blues, country and especially rock n roll. They were deeply affected by the brilliant blues-rock guitarists coming out of England, especially Eric Clapton of Cream, Jimmy Page and Jeff Beck of The Yardbirds, Alvin Lee of Ten Years After, Pete Townsend of The Who, and of course, Jimi Hendrix.

They practiced really, really hard for thousands of hours and many years. Then magic happened: they started playing together as a band. They sounded good. They practiced a lot: many more hours making music together. Then they got really good. They were tight. They were developing as artists and musicians and developed confidence.

Then magic happened: this was the opportunity they had dreamed about. "The Group" was born.

As the Sixties and Seventies powered on, The Group's musical range and capabilities grew dramatically. The boys were evolving as musicians and taking on more challenging, complex, and exciting material like The Allman Brothers, Humble Pie, The Stones, Led Zeppelin, and many others.



- **Upgrading the Backline and Provoking the Frontline**

Their High school friend Gery Hatrix joined the band on guitar, and later Darrell Nickens and Mark Vidovich on keyboards added additional range. They were deeply affected by the brilliant blues-rock guitarists coming out of England, especially Eric Clapton of Cream, Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin, Peter Frampton and Steve Marriott of Humble Pie, Alvin Lee of Ten Years After, The Who, and of course, Jimi Hendrix.

They also upgraded their gear and traded in the cheap Japanese guitars and amps for professional-grade tools of the trade such as Gibson Guitars, Marshall Amps, a Hammond Organ, and Ludwig Drums. They had arrived. Long hair, cool clothes, bigger gigs, late nights, eighteen-foot U-Haul rental trucks, Roadies, groupies, and other hangers-on were now all regular fixtures. Lots of incredible gigs, great music, and enormous fun ensued. They were special. They were contenders. They moved people through the music that they created together. They were friends and brothers, all from the same walk of life, that rose above the crowd. Above all, they were cool. You can't buy cool.



- **The Song Remains the Same**

Scroll forward about forty years. Lots of history has taken place, events, marriages, kids, travels, jobs, happiness, sorrows, good times, and bad times. But a few important things remain the same: The Group's life-long passion for rock n roll, friendship, and the magic of making great music together. David, Brian, Don and Gery have a special bond that they had forged with their music.

*The music that originally brought them together is still as potent and unifying as ever...A new chapter has begun, it has come full circle...It is something really special, a gift, a deep happiness that comes from within, joining together to make great music and great friends, united in common roots and a common love for rock n' roll.....**What could be better?***

LONG LIVE ROCK n ROLL!

LONG LIVE "THE GROUP!"

"THE GROUP"

BOOKINGS: 888-378-8178 (TOLL FREE)

EMAIL: thegroup1954@gmail.com

Website: www.thegroup.me

