



Photos provided

Brass Transit, a Chicago tribute band from Toronto, performs Friday at Lake Michigan College Mendel Center in Benton Harbor. Pictured (starting counterclockwise from left, first row) are Bob McAlpine, guitar; Paul DeLong, drums; Tony Carlucci, trumpet; Don Breithaupt, keyboards; Phil Poppa, saxophone; Doug Gibson, trombone; Jay Speziale, bass; and Neil Donell, lead vocals.

## BRASS TRANSIT

► From page D1

Peter Cetera, Robert Lamm and Terry Kath – in their decades-long history.

Neil Donell, who is known as “Canada’s most recorded voice,” fit the bill. Donell has spent the past 20 years as a singer for records and jingles in more than 10,000 recording sessions.

“We managed to find probably one of the best singers in the country,” Carlucci says. “Neil can do virtually anything. He has unlimited range. He is a freak of nature. He has a clone-ish type of voice. He can sound like anybody.”

Carlucci says it is important that Brass Transit sounds as if the listener dropped the needle on a ’70s-era Chicago record.

“We do the music as it was recorded and played in the ’70s,” he says. “Very accurate, note for note, inflection for inflection. When you close your eyes, you are going to swear you’re hearing Chicago in 1974.”

Brass Transit’s approach has earned the approval and respect from the musicians of Chicago themselves.

“The drummer happens to be a good acquaintance with our drummer,” Carlucci says. “They have invited us out a few times to see their concerts. We



Neil Donell (left) and Jay Speziale perform during a Brass Transit concert.

have hung out backstage with them. They have seen the videos. They are more than aware of us. They really like what we do. They appreciate the fact that we are doing it with accuracy and that we are doing it very well.”

Brass Transit is currently at work on an album that will feature “Chicago-fied” cover versions of ’70s classics like Skylark’s “Wildflower” and Rare Earth’s “I Just Want to Celebrate.”

“We are taking hits from the ’70s that didn’t have any horns and re-arranging them and re-recording them in Chicago’s style,” Carlucci says. “It’s an interesting concept. So far, it’s sounding great.”

The album will be released this spring, but the

first single, a cover of “Hand Me Down World” by The Guess Who, is available for download on iTunes now.

“The original is great and a classic,” Carlucci says. “But, with today’s modern approach, it could sound better. It is today’s technology applied to the ’70s type of writing. The production values are a lot different. That is basically what you are going to be hearing on the whole album will be hits like that.”

Chicago had so many hit singles – “25 or 6 to 4,” “Saturday in the Park,” “Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is?” and “Colour My World” to name just a few – that Carlucci says Brass Transit has no problem filling a set list for an enjoyable,

high-energy show.

“Most people don’t even know half of their hits,” he says. “Every time we do a show people walk out going, ‘I forgot that Chicago had that many hits.’”

Carlucci says the members of Brass Transit enjoy playing the music of Chicago as much, if not more, as the audience will get pleasure from hearing it.

“It’s like having them on stage, being able to play that music,” he says. “And, not just play that music, but play it for people who actually come out and pretty much know every tune. That is a neat feeling. You will be stunned how accurate it sounds. You really will be transported back to the ’70s.”