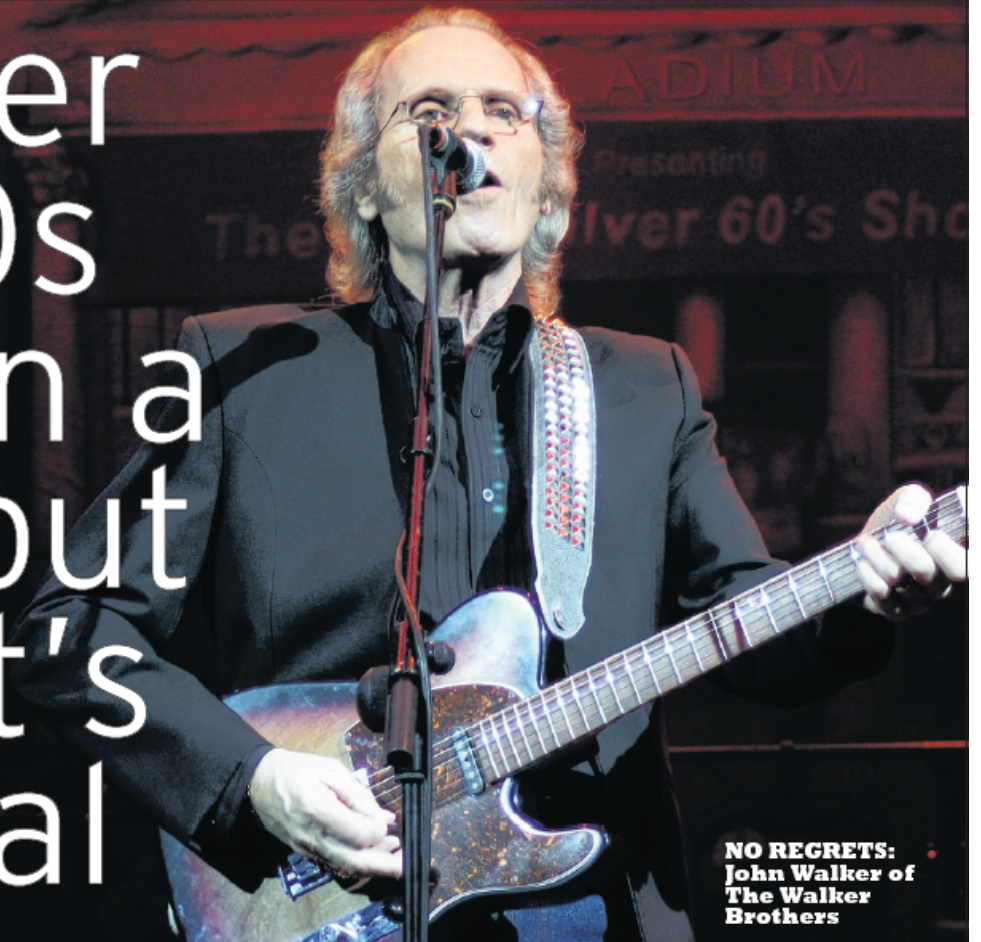


THE Solid Silver 60s Tour rolls into Nottingham next week, featuring The Searchers, The Merseybeats and Wayne Fontana, with John Walker of The Walker Brothers as a special guest. "Back then, England was it," he tells SIMON WILSON

brother
of '60s
still on a
high but
now it's
natural



NO REGRETS:
John Walker of
The Walker
Brothers

EVEN to this day, many believe that John and Scott Walker are real brothers.

"On each day I play, one person asks me if we are and what is my brother doing?" laughs John Walker, who was born John Maus.

"I guess we did look an awful lot alike," he adds.

"I started using the name Walker when I was 17 years old. When Scott (who was born Noel Scott Engel) joined my band, I was working with my sister at the time. We had a dance band. Then Scott and I started working together as The Walker Brothers Trio. When Mercury Records signed us, they thought The Walker Brothers Trio sounded like a jazz group, so they just shortened it."

As The Walker Brothers, he, Scott and Gary Leeds enjoyed a number of hit albums and singles, including *Make It Easy on Yourself*, *The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine (Any more)* and *No Regrets*.

"Monstrous pieces of material," he says. "Very dramatic. And they required big orchestras."

He is reviving those on the *Solid Silver 60s* Tour. His slot is around 35 minutes and he plans to add a couple of classic rock 'n' roll numbers.

Scott, who he speaks to "occasionally", rebuffs the nostalgia circuit and continues to create innovative and largely surreal music.

"That's what he wants to do," says John.

"He's been heading that way since the mid-70s. He obviously likes doing it."

Though born in New York, Scott moved to Los Angeles with the Maus family when he was a child.

And it's still home.

We became like superstars here. I went to see The Beatles at Finsbury Park and I had to have as much security as they did.

That said, the UK has always been where he has enjoyed most success.

"We became like superstars here. I went to see The Beatles at Finsbury Park and I had to have as much security as they did."

He adds: "We were doing a lot in America before we came over and we came over in 1965 because England was it. In the 60s, it was the most happening place there was."

Phil Spector, the iconic 60s producer, last week jailed for murder, he met only once. This was around 1959-60 in a recording studio where Spector was working with the group The Teddy Bears and Scott was next door.

"He needed someone to play an electric guitar part. So he stuck his head in the door and said, 'do you think you could come next door when you're done here and play this part for me?' He was just like another guy making records.

Obviously, years later when he became very successful, Phil Spector seemed to go off the deep

end. There were a lot of people who were victims of success. A lot of them died of excessive behaviour. Maybe it's something in your genes."

He adds: "I'm no stranger to a little excess myself. But there always seemed to come a point in my life where enough was enough and it was like, 'OK, I'm not doing this any more.'

"I guess that's why I'm still around doing what I'm doing."

These days, Walker's only high is a natural one.

"I'm having a great time. And that's 90% of what keeps the whole ball rolling. The adrenalin rush is ridiculous."

The other big difference to the 60s he's noticed is the performance.

"Nowadays if you make a mistake, everybody knows it," he laughs.

"In the mid-60s, nobody heard you anyway. I remember when Scott and I were doing a television show with a huge orchestra in Germany. We were sitting on stools singing *Make It Easy On Yourself* and *My Ship Is Coming In*. When we got back to the dressing room, Scott looked over at me and said, 'you know what, that's the first time I've heard you in two years'.

"Touring now you get a much greater sense of satisfaction because you can actually hear everything that's going on. You know when it's going well and it keeps you on your toes."

The Solid Silver 60s, Royal Concert Hall, Thursday, April 30, 7.30pm, £17.50-£21.50, 0115 989 5555.

Listen to the interview at thisisnottingham.co.uk/entertainment