

[Begin Script]

[INTRO MUSIC FADES IN]

HOST:

First, it was The Supremes, then The Beatles, then The Police. Now, another enduring band is breaking up: Chuck E. Cheese's The Pizza Time Players.

[FADE OUT MUSIC]

[NAT SOUND: PIZZA RESTAURANT AMBIENCE]

REPORTER (BARRY GORDEMER):

Chuck E. Cheese – a large rat puppet with a New York accent – along with his fellow animatronic pals, have been singing and shaking their mechanical limbs to cover tunes in about 500 pizza restaurants nationwide since 1977.

[ACTUALITY: TOM LEVERTON]:

"Back then, kids' expectations of technology were much, much lower. A child today has such high expectations for entertainment that the animatronics, even at their absolute best, can't live up to those expectations."

REPORTER:

Tom Leverton, the CEO of the company that runs Chuck E. Cheese, says it's time for a change.

[NAT SOUND: CHILDREN LAUGHING AND PLAYING]

REPORTER:

In case you've never been to one, children flock to Chuck E. Cheese restaurants to fill up on pizza, french fries, and soft drinks, and then burn off all that pent-up energy playing video games and dancing to the Pizza Time Players.

[NAT SOUND: ANIMATRONICS SINGING]

REPORTER:

The animatronic characters are equal parts charming and creepy. In some older Chuck E. Cheese locations, it's hard to hear the music over the creaking and clacking sounds made by the mechanical gizmos inside the puppets. One YouTube video even celebrates the top 10 best Chuck E. Cheese animatronic malfunctions.

[ACTUALITY: TOM LEVERTON]:

"What we need to focus on is creating that magic for the new generation of kids that are coming in for the first time."

REPORTER:

If you're worried you might have missed a farewell performance of Chuck E. and friends, fear not. The mechanical bands will be gradually phased out over a few years, and a Pizza Time Players "reunion" concert may be closer than you think. Leverton says some Chuck E. Cheese fans have "purchased or found a lot of our old animatronics and built the full band in their garage and programmed the animatronics to play with their music."

REPORTER:

So Chuck E. Cheese, we raise a slice of pizza to you. Rock on.

[OUTRO MUSIC FADES IN]

HOST:

That was Barry Gordemer reporting on the retirement of Chuck E. Cheese's Pizza Time Players.

[OUTRO MUSIC FADES OUT]

[End Script]