

A family band makes it big

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Managing Editor
Friday, 19 May 2023 04:18



From an early age, Rippy Bryan Williams tried to instill a love of music into his two daughters, Lilly and Lola Williams. But he had no idea that showing the girls music from the '60s, '70s, and '80s would lead to them wanting to start their own band. But that's exactly what happened, and now six years later "Rippy and the Sillyettes" is still going strong.

In an interview with the *Sun*, Rippy said that his daughters' favorite artist growing up was Frankie Valli. And when Lola was eight years old, Rippy took her to see him perform.

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At the meet-and-greet after the show, Valli signed a CD for them, and that's when Lola told him "When I grow up, I want to be like you." Valli responded by saying "When you grow older, don't be like me, be better than me."

After that interaction, Lola went home and told her dad she wanted to start a band with him.

Rippy and Lola started off their musical journey as a duo, performing at local coffee shops like the Gallup Coffee Company.

The first time they performed there, Rippy had just been there to get some work done, but Lola said she wanted to sign them up for the open mic.

Rippy admits that he thought his young daughter would chicken out and that he would have to perform alone, but she hopped right up on that stage. They performed the only song they knew, "Hats Off to Larry" by Del Shannon. Once they were done, people were reportedly shouting for an encore, to which Lola replied, "that's the only song we know!"

They soon learned their next song, "Dream Lover" by Bobby Darin. They took their show on the road, performing locally.

Rippy said that at first Lilly showed no interest in what he and her younger sister were doing. But after a while, she said "Dad, I want to join the band." Rippy bought her a ukulele, and then taught himself how to play the instrument so that he could teach her. And thus "Rippy and the Sillyettes" was born.

Now, the three family members travel all over New Mexico and parts of Arizona to perform. Recently though, they expanded their horizons and traveled to Los Angeles, Calif.

As a part of the Native American Music Fund, an organization that introduces music to Native American children, "Rippy and the Sillyettes" was invited to perform at "Skaville," a Los Angeles

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music festival that was held the weekend of May 5.

During the festival the girls and their dad rubbed elbows with the band members of “No Doubt” and “Saturday Night Live” legend Fred Armisen, who performed right after them.

While her dad and older sister were impressed by meeting ‘90s rock band “No Doubt” — sans Gwen Stefani — Lola tried to keep her cool and didn’t want to embarrass the rockstars.

“They’re normal people like us...I don’t want to make them uncomfortable in any way by saying ‘hey can you sign my drumstick or can I get a picture with you?’ because I don’t know how that makes them feel,” Lola explained.

Rippy said he was amazed by how calm his daughters were during the festival and while meeting celebrities, when he himself was very nervous. Rippy said Lola and Lilly simply were “talking to them just like it’s one of her friends from school.”

Although the band has been playing together for six years now, their future is a bit uncertain. Lily is a junior in high school right now, and Lola is a sophomore. With Lilly’s graduation fast approaching, the band might have to disband.

Lilly plans to become a flight attendant, which would have her traveling all around the world. Rippy said he’s excited to see what his oldest daughter does.

“We’re not going to hold her back,” Rippy said. “We’re not going to say ‘no, you need to stay and play in our band.’”

So for now, he’s just happy getting to play music with his girls.

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“I’m just enjoying every minute of it. I know it’s not going to last forever, and I’m just thankful to have played as long as we have,” Rippy said.

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