

Rippy and the Sillyettes serenade Gallup '50s-style

Written by By Dee Velasco Sun Correspondent
Friday, 01 July 2016 06:24



Who would have thought a tough Marine veteran, and former bass player for a death-metal band would be belting out cutesy love songs with none other than his two little girls. Rippy Williams — a Dineh musician and single father of Lily, 11, and Lola, 9 — is passing his talent onto his daughters while entertaining local audiences. The Sun caught up with Rippy and the Sillyettes to find out more about this unique Gallup trio.

Gallup Sun: Rippy and the Sillyettes: How did you come up with this name?

Rippy: There's this band called The Raise from the 1950s, and they had this song called, "Two Silhouettes on the Shade," so we learned that song and my youngest daughter, Lola, started singing her own little chant to it... "We are sisters and our favorite thing is being silly with a can of willies." So they decided to call themselves The Sillyettes.

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Originally, they were supposed to start the band with another girl ... and this girl wasn't able to make it, so my daughters asked if I could sing for them.

At first, I was telling people I don't play with them; I'm just the dad that takes them to the shows. So that is how we ended up with the three of us.

GS: Lily, what instrument do you play?

Lily: I play the Ukulele.

GS: And what about you Lola?

Lola: I play the drums. I've been playing for the last six-and-a-half months.

GS: Rippy what do you play?

Rippy: I play bass and I sing along with Lily.

GS: I noticed off your CD that you guys play a lot of 1950s songs.

Rippy: Yes, a lot of songs from the 1950s, and the reason is because they have the same chord progression. Once you learn those chords there's like a million songs you can play from.

GS: Now Rippy, you used to play in other bands?

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Rippy: When I was in the military, I had a heavy-metal band called, S.M.E.A.C. It's an acronym for: Situation, Mission, Execution, Administration/Logistics, Command/Signal — a five-paragraph order from the Marine Core.

I was in the Marines for four years and always thought this was a cool word, so I decided to name the band that. We would open for bands like Alien Ant Farm, Static X, and System of a Down when I was in Southern California. Then I started a band in 2002 called Sacred Blood here in Gallup. So I went from playing death metal to oldies (laughing).

GS: What made you guys decide to do this more than for fun?

Rippy: There was this coffee house here in town and Lola said we should try putting a song together for open-mic night. So we had played this song, "Hats Off to Larry" by Del Shannon ... So far we have played at 28 places.

GS: Now Lily, you recently wrote a song for Ashlynn Mike, the little girl who was tragically killed in Shiprock — can you tell us why?

Lily: Well, she was the same age as me ... 11, and it made me feel emotional when I heard about it. It made me feel scared, mad, and sad, too ... really sad. The song is called, "Rest In Peace Ashlynn." We played it at the memorial event they had for her in Fruitland.

Rippy: I was so impressed with Lily writing this song and others, and thinking she is just a kid.

GS: Now being a single father with all this, how has that been?

Rippy: It's fun and challenging at times, also an emotional rollercoaster. I'm not a patient person or an emotional person, but this is bringing it all out.

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Normally, I wouldn't be doing this about songs with love — teenage love at that — but these girls are going to be experiencing it later, and I have to tell them about love since they will be hitting their teenage years. Like how love is an amazing feeling, and how they will be feeling that soon.

GS: So where can we catch you guys performing?

Rippy: If you go to Coal Street Pub here in Gallup, we will be playing this coming July 22 and 30, with three-hour sets. The girls like playing in the band, and we have a lot of fun doing it. As Lily always says to me, "Don't you feel all happy and excited all over just playing Dad?"

Rippy and the Sillyettes are currently working on a CD and can be reached at (505) 290-2647 for bookings.

By Dee Velasco

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