

now WE'RE TALKIN

By Helen Marketti



The Outsiders on television

Rick Biagiola/The Outsiders

Rick Biagiola was the drummer for The Outsiders during their hey-day in the 1960s. Many will remember the Cleveland area group with lead singer Sonny Geraci. Their well-recognized hit "Time Won't Let Me" was written by the band's guitarist Tom King and his brother-in-law Chet Kelley. During the time frame of 1966-1968, The Outsiders peaked in popularity. Rick was witness to some fond memories and lasting life experiences. He is still active in the music world with a new version of The Outsiders. More information including show dates may be found on their website: www.theoutsidersusalive.com. Rick has the rights to the band's name and proudly carries the memories and the fun while reminiscing with long time fans and meeting new ones.

"I always loved watching 'American Bandstand,'" remembers Rick. "I also loved watching 'The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet' because of Ricky Nelson. Ricky played guitar and sang in many of the episodes. He was my go-to guy in those days. I loved his guitar playing and his singing."

Rick's chosen instrument is the drums. "I have always enjoyed playing the drums. It started with my mom letting me play with the pots and pans in the kitchen. But I really took an interest by age ten. I always admired the drumming of Cozy Cole who was a jazz musician. He plays so beautifully on a piece called Topsy, which

is entirely instrumental with a drum solo in the middle. And of course, I always thought Ringo Starr was a good drummer. I would say my drumming style is similar to the late Jeff Porcaro who played drums for TOTO."

He continues, "By age 14, I was taking drum lessons and two older guys who were taking guitar lessons asked me if I wanted to be in a band. As I got older and played more gigs, I



The Outsiders with Don Webster on The Upbeat Show in Cleveland. (1967)

(L to R): Walter Nims, Rick Biagiola, Upbeat Show host Don Webster, Sonny Geraci, Richard D'Amato and Tom King.

met Tom King who was in a band called The Starfires. Ronnie Harkai was the drummer but he left to join the Army. Capitol Records signed The Starfires but thought the band name sounded too much like a Doo-wop group from the 1950s so it was changed to The Outsiders.

"I joined the band in late 1965. I was a senior in high school. As a band member of The Outsiders, we were able to participate in Dick Clark's Caravan of Stars tours. We were traveling with stars like Gene Pitney, The McCoys, Chad and Jeremy and many more. It was such a great experience. It was truly an honor. You have to remember, I was only 17 years old when this all began but I knew enough to keep my mouth shut, watch the pros in action and learn from them. When I first got the call for the band to go on the road, I wasn't sure I had wanted to because I was only three months away from graduating high school. It was actually my mom who said, 'How many calls like that do you think you're going to get in your lifetime?' As usual, she was right. I am glad I took the opportunity."

Over the years, Rick has continued to remain in the music industry. He has played in many bands with different styles and genres. After some years had passed and with the encouragement from his wife Lois, Rick decided to form a new version of The Outsiders and



The current line up of The Outsiders.
(L to R: Rik Storm, Rick Biagiola, Jimmy Aschenbener, Rob Mitchell)

put his plan into motion in 2018. He reached out to several individuals and found the right musicians to carry on with the music of The Outsiders while paying tribute to past members who are no longer with us and keeping the 1960s vibe alive. It's an era that holds special memories and was an abundant time for music.

"One of the best things about the 60s was that the music was so varied," remembers Rick. "There was plenty of room for everyone and their music. It definitely was a special time for The Outsiders and other great bands from that generation."

www.theoutsidersusalive.com
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