

## Musically - Who is Peter Gentile?

Awareness of music is like a 6th sense; varying frequencies of melody and impulse functions of rhythm sensed by the ear and felt by our body bombarding the brain, tickling brain centers and effecting our mood and attitude. My initial awakening to music occurred in Astoria Queens, I was in the second grade. The whole "malt shop thing", as portrayed on "Happy Days", was firmly ignited with the appearance of Bill Halley and the Comets on the music scene. I remember the cliché teens in the malt shop smirking at this kid who routinely ordered a strawberry malt (then only .25 Cents) while humming to rock and roll songs playing on the jukebox. TV was coming of age at this time and my grandfather owned one of the TVs on the block, on Sunday night we kids watched what he liked, or we went to bed. For me, music entertainment as The Lawrence Welk Show was never much of an inspiration but when The Ed Sullivan Show featured Elvis Presley I discovered records, record players and Rock and Roll. From that point I grew up with the rhythm of rock and roll invading my soul and the cadences of melody going around in my head.

At the age of 12 inspired by my piano playing brother, John Gentile, who brought the first of our many Rock Bands into our living room in Flushing NY, I picked up my first guitar. Clearly my mother is a saint to have put up with us and our continuous influx of bands, musicians and friends. As for the NY music scene this was the decade when the "English Invasion" just initiated, signaling the start-of-the-end of Doo-Wop group harmony as the driving pop culture. By the age of 18 I was happy playing Beatles and Rolling Stones songs, and teaching guitar at the UNITED CONSERVATORY of MUSIC located in; Astoria, Woodside, Maspeth and Regio Park (Queens NY). Teaching guitar, while being fun, provided just enough money to complete an Associate Degree and start a career in electronic and systems engineering. Continuing my education at night I acquired advanced degrees which kept me well employed for 46 years with the same company.

My first paying gigs were with THE DOMINANTS, a College Point group put together by piano player Joe Delgado. Joe gave me my first exposure to caring about notes and chords on a music staff and thanks to him I learned to read music charts, a debt I will never be able to repay. My introduction to real guitar playing came from my brother's guitarist, Ron DePerio, who gave me an opportunity to play my first high quality guitar, a green Gretsch Anniversary Model. Ron also led me to Howard Morgen a world class classical/jazz guitarist and instructor of supreme talent. Being a sibling from a family of eight children I could only afford guitar lessons for a short time. Watching Howard play guitar was a eureka experience and awoke a realization of what playing the guitar meant, he has always been an inspiration and I have attained a small fraction of his style, even if just in my mind. I filled in gaps in my formal music training by taking music theory classes at Flushing High School (Mrs. Piedra) which led me to read and write music and understand the basics of musical composition.

Performing in bars at the age of 16 required having fake ID, but in NY you also needed a cabaret license, or the bars would not hire you. I managed to acquire a real NY City cabaret license at the age of 17, (don't ask) and became a member of the local 802 musician's union as strongly suggested by the union representatives monitoring the lounges in those days.

As the years wound out I managed to jointly raise two beautiful/smart daughters and advance my technical career, while performing with Hard Rock groups, Wedding bands, and retro 50/60s Doo-Wop bands, covering diverse venues as; concerts, theaters, wedding halls, outdoor parks, restaurants/bars and private party venues.

Memorable locations I played at; the Waldorf Hotel, the Rainbow Room, NY Pavilion at the NY World's Fair, Westbury Music Fair.

Long term/repeat gigs include; The Queens Lounge, The Driftwood, The Belmont Cafe, The Holiday Inn, The Savanna Club, Lenard's, the Water Mill (all in the NYC tri-state area).

Names of Bands I played in; The KOPY KATS, THE DOMINANTS, THE HERB STREET ORCHESTRA, THE SETONS, MUD, BEFORE FLIGHT, THE RIBITONES, THE BOYS FROM BROOKLYN, THE DEDICATIONS, THE MYSTICS, THE NEWPORTS, OLD SONGS NEW.

While playing with THE DEDICATIONS and the MYSTICS' I have performed at concerts and shows along with other great 50/60s performers, Johnny Maestro and the BROOKLYN BRIDGE, THE CLASSICS, THE SHANGRI-LA's, LOU CHRISTY, THE COASTERS, THE DUBS, THE EARLS and many more. Also, with THE DEDICATIONS and THE NEWPORTS I made multiple live appearances on the WCBS FM radio, Don K. Reed's Doo-Wop Shop.

My favorite musical endeavor continues to be recording studio work, producing and recording original music, music by aspiring song writers, group cover albums and obscure 50/60s cover songs. I play and/or sing on at least 10 CDs released by both Clifton and Crystal Ball recording labels. A few of these recorded and produced in my own recording studio in collaboration with an array of talented singers and musicians. My current project is with The Riffs, Phil Spina, working on three CDs featuring all new oldies from historically related NY and Florida 50/60s groups, a tough market but a fun project.

What I do as a SOLO artist:

I am currently spending a part of the year in NY (summer) and the major part of the year in Palm Beach Gardens FL (fall/winter/spring). I have integrated a selection of songs from my life into a solo performance which includes classic songs and contemporary songs by great writer/performers as Billy Joel, Paul Simon, The Eagles, Roy Orbison, Michael Jackson and many more. The amplification system I use is adequate for a restaurant and medium sized clubs. I can draw on a repertoire of greater than 150 songs covering a broad range of music.

Currently I perform in two formats:

- 1) With an amplified guitar which I play and sing lead vocals for more intimate venues,
- 2) A one-man band format using prerecorded tracks to augment my real time voice and guitar for parties and clubs desiring danceable music.