

The Scarsdale Inquirer

The Del Bocas mark 10 years of rockin' 'n' rollin'

By MARY WALRATH Aug 2, 2019



Band members Dan Bernstein, Adam Accetta, Dan Groner, Erika Radin, Eric Wayne and Dave Cannon.
Courtesy of The Del Bocas

Walking into a bar and seeing a poster announcing a cover band show can elicit one of two reactions: an excited request for a glam rock song of bygone years or a groan of mild dread. Not many bands will proudly announce they are more of a “wild jukebox” than a deep and brooding ensemble with original work, but that is exactly what The Del Bocas are all about. Now in their 10th year together, the Scarsdale-based band has been doing the cover band thing — and doing it well — by keeping a large repertoire of songs people not only love to hear, but might not expect from the typical cover band experience.

“Our rule is to play music that 99% of the audience will know,” said guitarist and keyboard player Dan Bernstein “We like to choose things that are a little left or right of center — unexpected songs that most bands don’t do.”

“I often say we’re a dirty bar cover band,” said vocalist Erika Radin. “It’s everything from the ’70s, ’80s, ’90s to 2000s ... what’s great is when we don’t always do the expected [covers], we often get reactions to the ones we’ve chosen like ‘Oh yeah! I forgot I love this song!’”

Alongside the typical set pieces like “Come Together” and “Sweet Child of Mine,” the band tackles often forgotten hits like “White Wedding” by Billy Idol, “Melt With You” by Modern English, “Core” by Eric Clapton and “I’m Just a Girl” by No Doubt.

“It’s my opinion that people at a party, country club and a bar want to hear things they know,” said rhythm guitarist Dave Cannon. “I think it takes a certain extraordinary level of musicianship and writing to really engage people with original material. And I think that’s hard to come by. So we chose not to go that route because it’s so hard and this is so fun.”

In their 10 years of performing, The Del Bocas no longer are relegated only to bars packed with friends and family, but often play at charity events, country clubs, corporate events and private parties as well. Many of these events are Scarsdale based, as most members of the band live, work and grew up in the area. They’ve played the Scarsdale library, fundraisers for the Scarsdale Teen Center, the Scarsdale Edgemont Family Counseling Service gala, the Scarsdale Concours d’Elegance car show, Chase Park events and currently have a “home base” at Rudy’s bar in Hartsdale.

The down-home feel and dedication of the band extends to its origin, which began in 2009 when Cannon was asked to put together a band for the teen center’s fundraising event. He thought of Dan Bernstein, who he’d met at Scarsdale Middle School when they were in the same grade. He then met lead guitarist Dan Groner at a friend’s house one night and Radin at another and after seeing them both perform, the rest became history. Bassist Eric Wayne and drummer Adam Accetta came on later through mutual friends.

“Three of us grew up in Scarsdale, I grew up in New Rochelle, my mom lives in Scarsdale,” said Groner. “We play gigs around here, we’re playing in Scarchella. My first-ever gig was in the Scarsdale Middle School. We are a very, very local band.”

By day, Radin is a drama teacher at local schools, Cannon is a lawyer at Kaufmann Gildin & Robbins LLP, Bernstein is a financial advisor at Morgan Stanley, Groner is a professor at Fordham University and Accetta and Wayne are a high school math teacher at Greenwich Academy and the Chief Financial Officer for Consumer Reports, respectively. Though they are currently only finding time to play about eight gigs a year as a professional group, their tight grip on quality control and growing their set list has continued to advance them out of local bars and into paid engagements.

“We play infrequently enough that a lot of our natural market comes out when we play because we don’t bombard them,” said Bernstein. “We’re very fortunate that we have hundreds of people show up ... we’ve established a really nice local following, a lot of them being people from Scarsdale and Southern Westchester.”

“We want to keep expanding and part of the fun of the band is bringing in new songs,” said Groner. “It’s a great process, making the work, seeing what works, taking your own spin on a cover that everyone’s heard a hundred times, but we’ve got a new take on it.”

The Del Bocas are playing several Scarsdale-based gigs in the coming weeks, starting with a performance Aug. 8 at 7 p.m. at Saxon Woods Grill on Mamaroneck Road. On Sept. 13, they will play Rudy’s as a precursor to the Scarsdale High School’s 40th reunion. They will also perform at Scarchella in Chase Park on Sept. 14.

Looking ahead, The Del Bocas said they see more growth and years of playing together in their future.

“I couldn’t believe it’s been 10 years. I wouldn’t have guessed that because it doesn’t feel old, it feels very fresh and very vital, and a really important part of my life,” said Radin. “It’s not just a band, it’s a group of friends who play together, too. And that’s kind of rare.”

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