

Richie Lee



Richie Lee, now just 19 years old from Des Moines, Iowa and the youngest of four boys, was singing almost before he could talk and feeling the beat before he could walk. At the age of 7, he won a Buddy Holly look-a-like/lip sync contest in Des Moines, Iowa sponsored by KJJY Radio. It was then; Richie knew that he wanted to be a performer. He loved performing in front of the audience and enjoyed the feeling he got while doing so.

His interest in Buddy Holly began at the age of 6 after finding a cassette tape of his dad's. When Richie first put the cassette in the tape player and cranked up the volume, he was like wow! Buddy Holly was a big influence, partly because Richie wore glasses since

he was 3 and Buddy was a Rock & Roll star with glasses. This was the start of young Richie's musical career.

He began taking guitar lessons at age 11 after his grandmother Edith, convinced his mom and dad to fulfill his need for music, and then started drums at the age of 12. It was just after four months of lessons that Richie started playing guitar in public, and when at the age of 12, he started playing professionally. At age 13, he cut his first CD "Richie Lee and the Fabulous 50's".

Richie has performed on stage with Winter Dance Party drummer Carl Bunch, toured with Tommy Allsup, Jerry Naylor (lead singer of the Crickets), "That'll Be the Day" famed backup singers the Tolletts, "That'll Be the Day" famed bass player Larry Welborn, Buddy Holly's niece Sherry Holley, Big Bopper Jr. and sang to the legendary "Peggy Sue" Geron. In 2002 he played with Bobby Vee & the Vee's. It was in 2004 that Richie and his band were on the same billing as the Crickets, Buddy Holly's band. When 2005 came along, he then went to Green Bay, Wisconsin and performed a week with Stray Cats' drummer Slim Jim Phantom. By 2006, at the age of 16, Richie had already finished his second CD "Blue Jeans and a Boy's Shirt", which was the main song and written and originally performed by Glen Glenn in 1958, whom he met in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Richie has played with many Iowa Rock & Roll Hall of Fame bands & started his own band in 2003 at the age of 13 called "Richie Lee & the Fabulous 50's". They are constantly touring the mid-west and beyond. He has traveled as far as Massachusetts, Colorado, Texas and Tennessee, just to name a few.

In 2007, Richie got the opportunity to perform in place of Ritchie Valens, when Valens was inducted into the Iowa Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. The family of Valens were present and they all joined in on "La Bamba". Richie was only 17, the same age as Ritchie Valens was when the plane crashed on February 3, 1959. Richie was presented with a gold record by the Valens family in 2009 at the 50th anniversary in Clear Lake, Iowa.

The music of the 1950's is a huge part of Richie's life. Besides Buddy Holly and Ritchie Valens, he also pays tribute to Elvis Presley, Eddie Cochran, Ricky Nelson, Roy Orbison, Chuck Berry, Dion Dimucci, and many others. His father is a lyricist, and collaborates with Richie to write original songs that are not on CD yet, but will be in the near future.

(Received the 'IRRMA Spirit Award' on September 4, 2010)

