

# The Iowa Entertainer Magazine

by Jared Wingert

January, 2005



Fourteen-year-old vocalist/guitarist Richie Lee and the "Fabulous 50's" are performing all over Iowa, with a sound that reminds you right away of milkshakes and '57 Chevy's. This teen hop, Brylcreem music flows soulfully out of this young man, and will have anyone stopped in their tracks that take the time to listen. The ghosts of that fateful night echo in the tone of Richie's voice, reminding us of that third day in February 1959 when a good chunk of the music died. Lest we ever forget, Richie Lee and The Fabulous 50's can take some of us back there, and let the rest of us hear what it was like. I had the great pleasure of speaking with this extremely talented young man who reminds me so much of Buddy Holly.



photo by Mike Wilson

IE: Richie, being a young man in today's world, what attracted you to the likes of Buddy Holly and the whole atmosphere of the 50's?

RL: When I first heard Buddy Holly's music, I was instantly inspired! It's like his music stuck out more than anybody else's on the radio.

IE: Is there a musical person in your family? How did music become a part of your life?

RL: My Mother is musical and my Uncle Bill does Johnny Cash.

IE: Tell our readers all of the things that have happened to you so far in your musical career.

RL: I've played with many Iowa Rock N Roll Hall of Fame bands. I've played 8 ballrooms, been recognized nationally. I've also gone as far as Boston to play a couple of shows with the Drifters. I've been on shows with many famous people, too many to mention, I'm afraid of leaving someone out.

IE: Who are some of the original Buddy Holly people you have connected with because of your tribute?

RL: I've been very fortunate to have Buddy's drummer Carl Bunch play behind me on a show recreating the 1959 tour along with Buddy's original backup vocal on That'll Be The Day. Also The Tolletts and having the great opportunity of singing to the great Peggy Sue. I've played shows with J.P. Richardson Jr., Ernie Valens, (Ritchie Valens cousin), Sherry Holly (Buddy's niece), Larry Welborn, (Buddy's bass player on That'll Be The Day). Also the Crickets, Tommy Alsum, (Buddy's lead guitarist on the 1959 tour, Bobby Vee, who did the show in North Dakota after Buddy died. I also know Jerry Dwyer, the man that owned the plane Buddy, Ritchie, The Big Bopper and the pilot Roger Peterson were killed in.

I have also been in 2 parades with Buddy Holly and the Crickets touring car, (1955 Pontiac) once owned by Jerry Allison (drummer of the Crickets).



IE: How has the band "The Fabulous 50's" help shape you on stage?

RL: Well, I always feel at ease when I'm performing with them because we always know what each other is going to do. My bass player Chris Hauser has a good rhythmic beat on the bass that I like. My drummer Mary Pawletzki has got this great original beat of the 50's. I think having your own band is fun because we are all friends and have fun as a group making music. I think working together like that you can perfect what you do, and that gives me even more confidence.

IE: Where are you headed now? What is the next big move?

RL: I've always wanted to go to Lubbock Texas and play in Buddy's hometown. I also want to do an English tour with my band. I hear people over there really like 50's music. I also want to act my own music out and make a name for myself.

IE: Anything else that you would like to tell our readers?

RL: I want to thank everyone who has been there for me and helping me get where I am today. I also want to thank the many fans that follow and give me confidence where ever I go! Thanks Richie for your time, and a special thanks to Mike Wilson for the photo shoot. Visit [www.richielee.com](http://www.richielee.com) for appearance dates for Richie Lee and the Fabulous 50's and more!