

STYLE

Art & Artists

By ERIN HARRINGTON

W SESSION

Breathes Life into Live Music

If music is a universal language, the band X-Session speaks it fluently.

The trio ranks as one of the most coveted live bands on the Island and has rocked a lot of houses over its 10-plus years of music making. Intrinsic to that music is a genuine love of it, and that passion is at the heart of every X-Session performance. Playing covers that span what seems the entire rock and roll universe, the band's three-part harmonies pay homage to music from the Beatles to the Stones, the Eagles to CCR, the Boss to the Doobies, the Grateful Dead to the Drifters...and that's just when they're warming up. Basically every band that's helped define decades of rock and roll is represented in X-Session's repertoire of over 200 classics.

But there's more to these three

guys than the tunes. The magic to their music seems to stem from the connection they create with their audience. All three members of the trio—Jim Del Giudice (a.k.a., Del), Eddie Profet, Jr., and Pat Montefusco—concur. While the musical selection and their mastery of it plays a huge part in appealing to all different people of varying ages and tastes, it's really the human element that breathes life into their shows.

"We like people and enjoy meeting and talking with them," says drummer Jim Del. "Some musicians can be spectacular players but may not be very sociable folks. We are. I think that's first, and the music is actually secondary to that." Bass guitarist Eddie Profet adds, "People come up to us and say 'It looks like you're having fun.' And we are. We

have a blast. We meet people through the shows and we make friends."

Pat Montefusco on guitars recounts a perfect example. "There was a guy from Denver who saw us four years ago out in the Hamptons. He came back to New York on business a year later and actually changed his plane ticket so he could come to hear us play. The kinds of friendships we've made over the years are just magical."

Some of the gigs X-Session has been asked to play since being founded by DelGiudice have been pretty magical, as well. They've entertained Donald Trump in his Manhattan penthouse, been hired by Alec Baldwin to perform at the Carol Baldwin Breast Cancer Benefits at the Grand Hyatt Ballroom and also play for prominent political





Pat Montefusco on guitars and lead and background vocals, Jim Del Giudice on drums, percussion and lead and background vocals, and Edward Profet, Jr. on bass guitar, harmonica and lead and background vocals.

and military figures at the U.S. Army Base at West Point twice a year for the past eight.

Although X-Session has shared performance evenings with acclaimed artists including Kool and the Gang, David Lee Roth, The Marshall Tucker Band, Roberta Flack, Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis Jr., and The Trammps, among the most humbling performances for Giudice, Profet and Montefusco have been singing the National Anthem—acappella—for crowds of thousands at Shea Stadium.

One performance was at a Saturday night Braves game to roughly 33,000 fans. “Hearing all those people cheer was one of the most invigorating, magical moments I’ve ever experienced,” Del says. Profet puts it this way: “To silence 33,000 people is an amazing feeling. And they include guys in the dugout that you’ve idolized as baseball players. Being on hallowed ground and to be in a place where all the great ballplayers have played either with or against the Mets, and, in some cases, where musical acts like the Beatles, the Stones and Billy Joel have played—heck, we may have been in the same dressing room as them—it’s

very humbling.”

In the meantime, you can catch them this summer at several Long Island hot spots. They’ll make their return as the seasonal house band at Claudio’s Restaurant and Clam Bar in Greenport playing primarily outdoor gigs on weekend afternoons. They’ve also been snatched up for a lot of weekend night performances at Hudson & McCoy in Freeport. X-Session also plays a fair amount of private parties and occasional gigs at Smith Street Park in Uniondale, Matty T’s in Commack, and various Napper Tandy’s.

The musicians seem to thrive on the variety of it all. Transitioning from a crowd of thousands to an intimate venue is seamless, as it all comes back to that connection they spark with their audiences. “Ask anybody who performs,” Profet explains. “Whether it be an actor, actress, comedian...it doesn’t matter. But ask them what the connection with the audience is like, and it’s the same. It’s really the quality, not the quantity. You don’t have to play to a huge crowd. Sometimes a smaller crowd is like playing in your living room. It’s that connection, whether there are two people there

or 200.”

All three musicians have racked up years of performing experience before fate put them together as X-Session. It’s proved a good union, as they’ve developed unbreakable bonds of friendship playing together over the years.

Profet captures the sentiment for all when he recalls the moment he knew he wanted to be part of the magic that music can deliver. It dates back to his high school days and a pub he passed by walking home from school on a warm afternoon. “The door was open and the end of Hey Jude was playing. Everyone in that place was singing the ‘na-na-na-na-na-na’ part. I thought it was so cool that this one song could capture all those people and bring them together. It was great.”

It still is for X-Session. Maintaining full-time careers and playing to packed houses every weekend can be exhausting. But come Friday, the adrenaline, they agree, gets pumpin’ and another party starts. Del smiles, saying, “I don’t think we’ll ever grow out of this.”

That news ought to make a lot of fans smile, as well.