

Nelson!

By Helen Marketti

Gunnar and Matthew Nelson are the rockin' twin engines who front their band, Nelson. Their family history has spanned three generations of music and entertainment while still maintaining a level of life's normalcy. Their father was legendary rocker Ricky Nelson and their grandparents were Ozzie and Harriet. (The Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet)

With a strong family tree of music hits, a family television series and treating others with genuine respect and kindness has given the Nelsons their tools for success.

Being a front man in a band is not how it originally began however as Gunnar recalls the pathway that lead him to the front of the stage with Matthew. "I started playing drums when I was six years old. I was always using the drum kit from my dad's band. (Stone Canyon Band) I played drums for several years. Then I had the feeling that I wanted to be up front and be closer to the audience. We were on our way back home from doing a gig on Saturday Night Live and while asleep on the plane I had a dream where I saw myself up front with Matthew." From that moment forward Gunnar's determination kept him moving toward his goal even when those around him often reminded him that he had never played a guitar.

"It was at the time when our dad passed away," Gunnar remembers. "While I was trying to

recover emotionally and psychologically I decided to put that energy into learning the guitar. So for one year straight I practiced the guitar for 10 hours a day and that's how I learned to play it."

The story serves as an example of what determination can do. "I believe with the power of focus that all things are possible," Gunnar said. "Being a front man is being connected to the audience and interacting with people. It's not only being in the music business but also being in the "connection" business and that is what our dad did too. What we do is all about connecting with others."

Another way that Gunnar and Matthew provide an opportunity to connect is offering interested individuals a chance to be a "Personal Assistant" for the day. This is really a unique offering that most music artists do not make available to their fans. Gunnar explains, "It all goes back to the connection thing. How many times do you go to a concert and buy a t-shirt or a CD? That's fine but there are always lots of t-shirts and buying a CD is great but anyone can do that too. But how many times do you get a chance to meet the band and hang out with them? That is why we started doing the "Personal Assistant" thing. They're with us from the start of sound check. They help arrange song sheets, bring water and stuff like that. Its a cool experience for them to see behind the scenes stuff and hang out with us for awhile."

Writing music and being involved with several branching out projects are all the necessary ways and means of keeping a successful career going. In the early 90s Nelson had number one hits "(Can't Live Without Your) Love and Affection," and "After the Rain."

"We have a new CD that will be out in the spring," said Gunnar. "Its being put together with our success team so we want to release it when the time is right."

When asked where his inspiration is drawn from Gunnar said, "My most productive time is right before I fall asleep and as soon as I wake up. I'll hear a melody in my head and just go with it. I'm into more 70s and 80s music where as Matthew's writing sensibility is more of what is going on now. Its a combination of our styles colliding together to write material."

Watching a Nelson gig at Alrosa Villa in Columbus, Ohio in early November brought fans to an intense level of a true rock and roll performance. Playing for a packed house for two straight hours with a show full of hits as well as introducing some of their new material left Nelson fans singing, dancing and screaming for more.

Even after the show Gunnar and Matthew stayed to meet and greet with fans, sign autographs and pose for pictures. The line to meet them seemed to multiply with every passing minute. Watching them interact with their fans is truly amazing as each person in line is given their full attention and appreciation. "We love meeting our fans after words," said Gunnar. "That's when the real show begins."

Gunnar and Matthew Nelson are a class act from the opening number until the last fan has left for home. They love what they do and it shows through their music and interactions with others. When asked if there was a special ritual that they do before taking the stage in regards to their



father Gunnar pauses for a few moments then says, "Regardless of how crazy it may be around us at the time we still take a moment for him and for ourselves. We remind ourselves of what we have in our lives and what brought us here. Then we take the stage...ready to rock!"

For more information: www.NelsonRockBand.com

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