

RICH SPINA

A Love Affair WITH MUSIC



formed a band during the 1970s that became locally and nationally recognized. Their hit, *Mama Sez* began a musical journey that lead to tours, recording contracts, record deals and a large fan following.

Love Affair rode the rock and roll wave for nearly ten years. Rich explains, "The secret to the success of *Love Affair* was to have tunnel vision. We kept focused on what we wanted to do. The band worked by a set of checks and balances. Egos didn't play into things. You carried your own weight or you could lose the gig. We didn't care who was doing what."

Rich still keeps in close contact with his former band mates as well as the road crew who traveled with them. In fact, there is a

saw The Beatles on TV, I watched one of Elvis' movies, *Follow That Dream* and then I decided that's it, I'm going to be a singer."

Following his dream has lead Rich to many music experiences where his ambitions and talents were utilized and recognized. One such experience was being in the Cleveland based band, *Love Affair*.

Love Affair band members included Rich Spina, Wes Coolbaugh, Wayne Cukras, Mike Hudak and John

Zdravecky. Knowing each other for years, they

Love Affair reunion being tentatively planned for the spring of 2010.

"We did our first reunion in February of 2003 and it was like giving an addict a drug," said Rich. "With schedules and time, we are hopefully planning to have a reunion in the spring with all of the original members."

Currently, Rich is the keyboardist for Peter Noone and Herman's Hermits. Rich had previously performed with another 60s band, Gary Lewis and The Playboys as keyboardist and musical director from 1988 until his departure at the end of 2004. "Peter had found out that I was no longer with Gary and he called me at the end of 2005 and asked me to play for him," Rich explains. "So I began 2006 on tour with Peter. Eventually I went from being his number one sub to being with him full time. Peter works all of the time. We usually do over 100 dates a year."

The keyboard is actually the last instrument Rich learned to play. "While growing up, I played guitar and the clarinet while my brother played the piano. I find it easier to write songs at the piano instead of holding a guitar."

Keeping his creativity fresh and his voice in shape, Rich manages to squeeze in time to do solo gigs when he is off the road. "I started doing weekly solo gigs the last year that *Love Affair* was together," said Rich. "It gave me inspiration to write and it was a way of testing my own original material that I knew *Love Affair* would have never done. It's a way to do my own style of things and keep up with my range."

By Helen Marketti

While growing up in Cleveland, Rich Spina knew that he would be in the entertainment business. "I grew up listening to my parents' music. There was always music playing in the house. My father is almost 90 and he still listens to music," said Rich. "My parents knew people that had been in the music business. I guess you could say that they prepared me well. I didn't go into this business wearing rose-colored glasses. My parents told me I was picking the toughest business to go into. If you're good at a sport then usually you will get somewhere. Music however is subjective. One person's heaven is another person's hell when it comes to choices in music."

Rich's interests were strongest in music and acting. Eventually the music won him over completely. One of the key turning points for Rich was seeing The Beatles in 1964 on The Ed Sullivan Show. "About four days after I



Love Affair

Rich does solo piano bar gigs at Houlihan's in Westlake. He also performs as a duo with fellow band mate, Billy Sullivan. "Spina and Sullivan" can often be seen at the Mad Cactus in Strongsville.

"I've actually known Billy

Now that we are both with Peter Noone, we decided to go back to doing what we did in our earlier days of being a duo. We do our own originals and covers, too."

In addition to

than one option open and have a presence."

Rich is also getting ready to record again. He hopes to have the new material ready by the summer. He will also be doing some recordings with friend, Billy Hufsey in the near future.

"I do think my biggest satisfaction comes from writing. I have always wanted to know how to do everything. When Barry Mraz was our producer for Love Affair, he took me under his wing because he could see that I was eager to learn about the whole process. This business does tend to shift whether it's

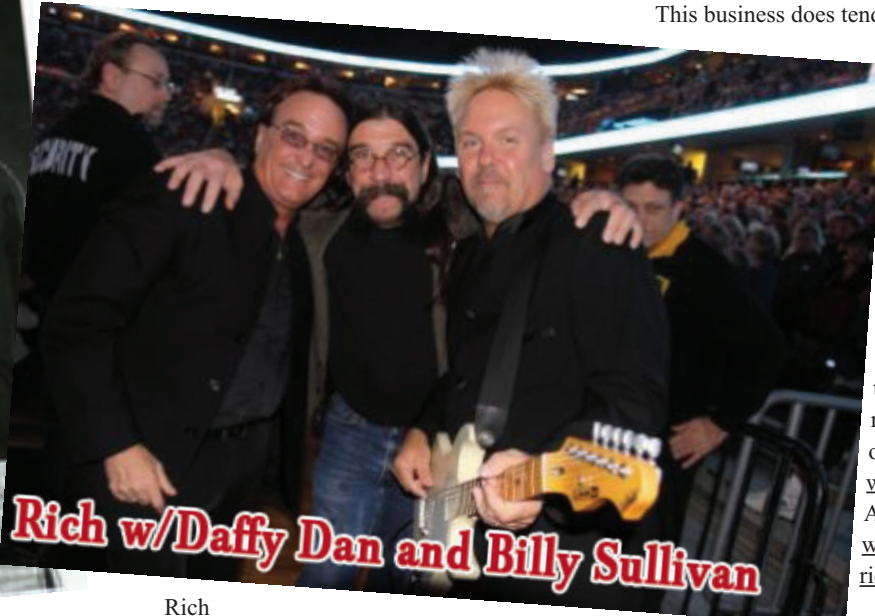
producing, performing as a duo and so on. It's good to know as much as you can. I want to be in this business forever."

To learn more about Rich Spina, upcoming gigs and updates on the Love Affair reunion, please check out:

www.richspina.com
And
www.myspace.com/richspina



Rich being interviewed by Mat the Cat, WMMS



Rich w/Daffy Dan and Billy Sullivan

since Love Affair was together," explains Rich. "I knew his older brother, Billy was doing original material and so was I. We eventually joined forces as a duo and performed several nights a week from the late 80s until around 2002.

performing with Peter Noone and doing gigs in the area when he is off the road, Rich is also thinking about possibly doing some gigs in Las Vegas. "I'm in Las Vegas a lot because my girlfriend lives there so I've been thinking about doing piano bar gigs out there too. It's good to keep more

Rich is multifaceted with so many components of the music industry as a singer, songwriter, musician, solo artist, producer, road dog and so forth. "I can't say that I prefer any one of these things over another. If I haven't done something in awhile then it feels like my favorite thing to do at the time," said Rich.

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