



By Helen Marketti



Ann working at a Wish You Were Here gig (Photo: Joe Kleon)

“Music has always played an important role in my life but I never gave a thought of actually working in the genre. There is so much incredible music to be had in Cleveland. It is such a blessing. It is a big pond with many fish. There are so many musicians with huge talent.”

Ann Thompson has a passion in her heart for music, especially the music that begins and continues in Cleveland. “I was around 19 when I went to my first concert to see YES at Richfield Coliseum. The guy I was dating at the time was into concerts so he introduced me to some great music. Watching YES was fascinating because they were on a rotating stage. They were maneuvering through wires and over cables

while still making incredible music.”

Ann has always loved progressive rock and enjoyed listening to the music of Pink Floyd, Rush and Led Zeppelin. Her love of music began a creative outlet for others to have a place of expression and information. After The Gig (www.afterthegig.com) is a web site Ann created so other Cleveland musicians would have a place to gather, meet, share information about music, gigs, instruments and so on. It will be four years in May that the web site has been providing rockers and their fans the chance to connect. In one week, the web site had 25,000 hits! “Whenever people are going out they like to check the web site to see who is playing and

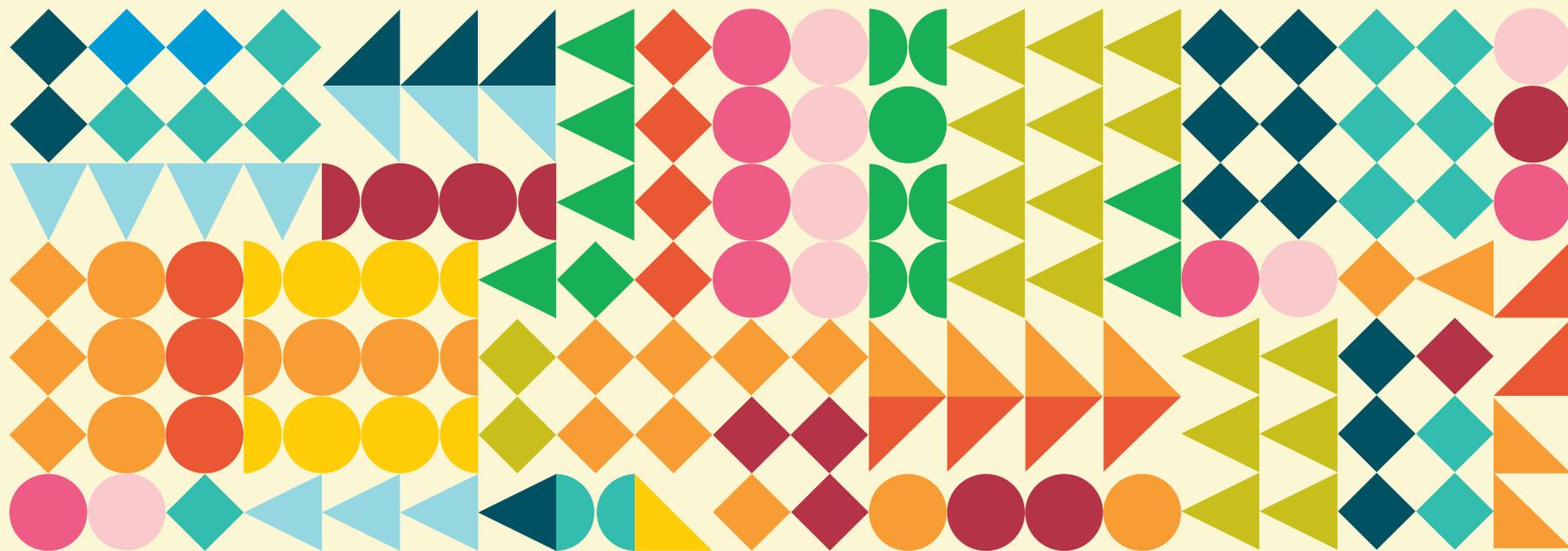
where,” said Ann.

Having the idea to create the web site happened by chance when Ann saw a need for it and gladly took on the project. “My cousin, Cy Sulak is one of the greatest guitar players in Cleveland. I would go to places where he would play and watch him with other musicians take part in Jam Nights,” explains Ann. “I started going to other gigs when musicians asked me and always brought my camera. Then I posted photos on

line which brought about the name, After The Gig.”

Ann also keeps life moving at a fast pace by having a completely supportive husband, two sons, ages 12 and 18, serving as Chairperson on the PTA Counsel for Strongsville City Schools AND being the Merchandise Director for Pink Floyd tribute band, *Wish You Were Here*. What shall we begin with next?

“I’ve been married for 22 years. My



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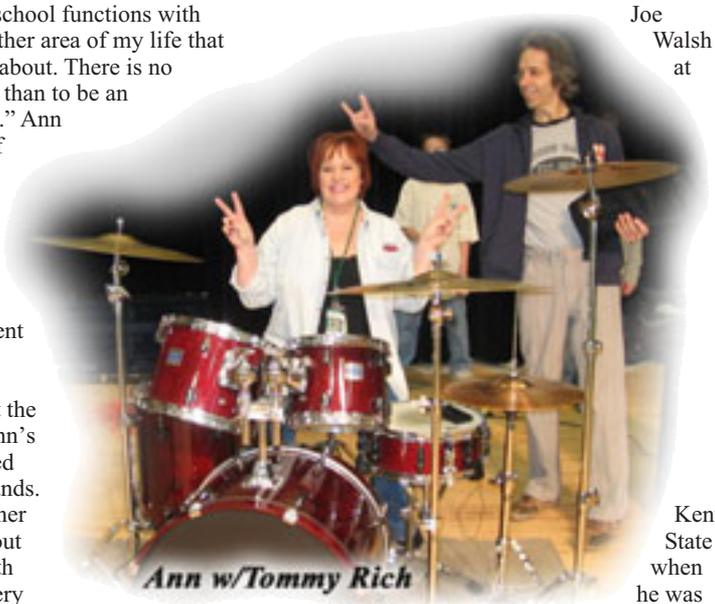


family comes first. My husband, John was in the Navy for 20 years. After he retired we moved back to Ohio," said Ann. "I've been involved with many school functions with my sons. This is another area of my life that I am very passionate about. There is no greater responsibility than to be an advocate for children." Ann spends a great deal of time and devotion at her youngest son's school. She has been the former president of the PTA and honored with the Ohio PTA Achievement Award.

Word eventually circulated throughout the school system that Ann's moonlighting involved working with rock bands. Her son's music teacher asked Ann to talk about rock music to the sixth grade class. "I was very flattered that she asked me but I told her that talking about music was like asking someone to dance about architecture," said Ann. "It really doesn't make any sense to talk about music, let's bring in some musicians. I asked three musicians to participate, Billy Sullivan (guitar and vocals), Tommy Rich (drums) and Ed Stephens (bass and backing vocals). Tommy is also the Music Director at the School of Rock."

Ann continues, "The kids were involved with the whole process. I assigned jobs such as roadies, stage managers and PR people. They all learned what it was like to put on a rock concert. The students were able to ask the guys questions between sets. When it was over, the students helped to tear down the equipment and load the truck." Ann even received approval from the

superintendent who told her that the concert was incredible, that he recognized Billy Sullivan and reminisced about having seen



Ann w/Tommy Rich

Joe Walsh at

Kent State when he was in college. "Now I will be doing the concert again this year, plus I'm in charge of all the assemblies," laughs Ann. Her energy and creativity to involve the students was the ideal way for them to learn how the world of rock and roll operates and what is involved.

Through maintaining After The Gig, Ann has met many people and has also been offered employment. She is now the Merchandise Director for Wish You Were Here. "Eroc Sosinski is



George Yunis, Ann Thompson & Dwayne Dickman

the bass player and head of *Wish You Were Here*. He was looking for someone he could trust to handle things with the merchandise. He said that since he already knew me, he knew I could handle it and though he wasn't

sure if it would be a good fit for me to try it out for awhile and see how it goes," remembers Ann. "I started in January of 2009 at the House of Blues. It's been a year now. I was thrilled with how



Ann w/Wish You Were Here crew

things went and so was he. It's my job to make sure there is enough merchandise stocked at each gig for Wish You Were Here. We sell bumper stickers, posters, tour books, t-shirts and more. I also get to interact with the fans a lot. There is nothing better than watching the band do their thing." It's not uncommon for Ann to leave the house at 11:00 am to start the day for a Wish You Were gig and return at 3:00 or 4:00 am the next morning. Concert days are filled with travel, set up, tear down and everything in between to keep things running smoothly. "My family is very

supportive with what I do. My husband doesn't even blink an eye with the crazy hours," laughs Ann.

Ann shares her thoughts about all that she does, "There is a

definite circular motion that music provides for

people. The audience feeds off the band and the band feeds off the audience. It doesn't happen all the time but when you're there to see it, it's something special. Wish You Were Here will celebrate its 15th year in 2010. I ask myself, "How cool is this?" By doing this I get to meet these incredible people. It's all about the music."

To learn more about After The Gig, please visit: www.afterthegig.com For more information about Wish You Were Here: www.floydtribute.com

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