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V now WE'RE TALKIN

By Helen Marketti

Family reflects on '21 Rock Hall inductee, Randy Rhoads

Randy Rhoads, often referred to as a “Guitar God,” was a member of the band Quiet Riot and later toured with Ozzy Osbourne. His guitar work on the songs “Mr. Crowley” and “Crazy Train” with Osbourne made them unforgettable rock anthems. Tragically, Randy passed away in a plane crash at the age of 25 in 1982.

On October 30, 2021, Randy Rhoads will be posthumously inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame with the Musical Excellence Award. The inductions this year will be held in Cleveland, Ohio. His brother Kelle and sister Kathy will be accepting the award on Randy’s behalf. Their mother, Delores Rhoads, started the Musonia School of Music in 1948 in the Los Angeles area.

Kelle and Kathy recently gave a heartfelt interview, discussing their brother and his lasting legacy. The interview follows in a Q and A format.

Please share a little about your home life while growing up:

Kathy: We definitely grew up in a music household. Our mom would ask us what instrument we wanted to play. It was a given that we had to choose an instrument.

Kelle: I had told my mom that I wanted to play the bass drum and she said I had to play the entire drum set. I thought all I had to do was just play the bass drum because that seemed easy enough. (laughs) But then I did learn how to play the entire drum set.

Kathy: Kelle was a phenomenal drummer.

Kelle: Many people didn’t want me to become a singer. They wanted me to stick with drums and Randy felt that way, too.

Kathy: Randy and I both played acoustic guitar. He quickly moved on to electric. Randy was around 15 years old when his guitar teacher told my mom that he couldn’t teach Randy anymore because he had learned everything and surpassed the instructor. At first my mom thought it was a joke!

Kelle: Yes, the instructor told our mom that Randy had actually been teaching HIM the past month and he could no longer keep up with Randy!

Did the three of you ever have a band of your own?

Kelle: Randy and I had our own band for a while called Violet Fox. We put on shows for our friends.



Kathy: Prior to that we played together in a band with others at Musonia School of Music. It was dance band music. We did that every Friday after our lessons. When we became teenagers, we wanted to do more of rock music so that’s when they started Violet Fox. I did play now and then with them, mostly the cowbell (laughs).

Your mom started the Musonia School of Music. Where did the name of the school originate?

Kathy: From what I understand, Musonia came from a combination of the word “music” of course and then pairing it with the word “sonic”. She made the name up herself!

Kelle: Our mom started the school in 1948. She was 28 years old. The school is still going strong. I still teach there. All of us taught there. We usually start accepting students at age six and older.

Please share insights into Randy’s personality:

Kelle: Randy was a great person. He was extraordinary. He was generous to a fault. He was the life of the party. The party started when Randy arrived.

Kathy: Randy was very humble and kind. He was actually shy and quiet but when he stepped onto the stage, he was a beast. He had such a persona that was absolutely mesmerizing onstage. He wasn’t a perfect angel. He had a bit of a devious side and liked to play practical jokes on his friends when he was younger. Overall, he was a gentle soul and a sweetheart.



Did Randy have any hobbies?

Kelle: He loved trains! He collected miniature trains. He would buy the scenery for the trains to be displayed. That’s how he would relax and unwind.

Kathy: When Randy was on the road, he would buy miniature trains. They were the size of a walnut! He would also buy the display villages that went with the trains. He would meticulously put everything together and build the sets. That was his release from the road and touring.

In many photos of Randy, there is a black and white polka dot look to his guitar or his clothes. What is the back story?

Kelle: Randy was a big fan of Mick Ronson [guitar player for David Bowie]. Mick had some polka dotted knee pads that Randy liked. He said he was going to copy that look and do it even better. So that’s when the look came about with the polka dotted guitar and clothes. Randy invented that look himself.

What other projects are in the works?

Kathy: Right now, I am working with the staff at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame regarding a display of Randy’s personal items. My husband and I own a winery in Burbank and in the past, we have done two runs of Randy Rhoads Wine and the money raised is put into the Randy Rhoads Trust to perpetuate his name. We are talking about doing something to mark the 40th year of his passing and for the Rock Hall Inductions. Fans of Randy’s can follow my Instagram page (@dargmama) where I share never before seen photos and tell family stories. It’s how I keep Randy’s memory alive.

Kelle: I give tours at the Musonia School of Music and still teach there. As for myself, I am working on another CD release of my classical pianist work. We are so happy that Randy is being recognized. It’s been long overdue.

- www.musoniaschoolofmusic.com
- www.Dargenziwinery.com
- www.helenrosemarketti.com