

By JAMI KUNZER – jkunzer@shawmedia.com

## Nelson pays tribute to famous dad with show at Raue

Gunnar and Matthew Nelson have had their own following as a rock duo since they scored a No. 1 hit with “(Can’t Live Without Your) Love and Affection,” in the 90s.

But this time around, it’s all about their dad.

The twin Nelson brothers will perform “Ricky Nelson Remembered,” a tribute concert to their late father, on Jan. 13 at the Raue Center for the Arts in Crystal Lake.

They describe the show as “a high energy rock concert meets an A&E documentary.”

Built up over the past 8 years, the tribute includes the music of Ricky Nelson as well as videos and multimedia of his performances both on stage and television, taking the audience through his life and work.

Ricky Nelson died in a New Year’s Eve 1985 plane crash northeast of Dallas at age 45.

After getting his start as an actor and showing his musical talent in his parents’ show, “The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet,” Nelson went on to record 30 top 40 hits between 1957 and 1962. Only Elvis Presley had more hits.

The long-running television show also featured Matthew and Gunnar’s grandparents as well as their uncle David. The twin boys appeared with their father on occasion.

The family is in the Guinness Book of World Records as the only family to have three generations produce No. 1 hits, beginning with Ozzie Nelson’s “And Then Some” in 1934.

Ricky Nelson reached teen idol stardom, with songs such as “Poor Little Fool,” “Hello Mary Lou,” and “Travelin’ Man.”

The Nelson brothers went on to record their own hits, including the No. 1 song, “(Can’t Live Without Your) Love and Affection,” and “After the Rain” in the early 90s. They still tour with their band, Nelson, which released its latest album, “Perfect Storm,” last year.

“It’s unapologetic 80s,” Gunnar said. “It’s making a resurgence now... Classic rock is becoming oldies, and 80s rock is becoming classic.”

The tribute concert could include some of those rock songs, Gunnar said, but is mainly meant to honor Ricky Nelson.

“Matthew and I read the audience,” he said. “If we go out there and it’s very clearly of an age demographic that grew up with my father, we stick to his music.”

Gunnar said he used to say the tribute concerts draws anyone from ages 8 to 80. But past concerts drew an 8-day-old infant as well as someone who had just turned 104, he said.

Through the years, Ricky Nelson reinvented himself as an artist, eventually entering the California rock scene. That story is told at the tribute concert and through his music, with songs such as “Garden Party,” a “song for an entire generation,” Gunnar said.

It represented a time when “an entire generation was being told how to behave, what to be,” he said.

Gunnar and his brother, Matthew, began playing music with their father at the age of six.

“Music was really what we kind of bonded with,” Gunnar said. “We really got animated and passionate and talked about it until the day he died.

“He would have loved what we do with our rock band. I think he would have been touched by what we’re doing with this show... Nothing would make me happier if he were around to make the show.”

**What: “Ricky Nelson Remembered,” featuring the live music of Ricky Nelson’s songs performed by Ricky’s own twin sons, Matthew and Gunnar, and includes never-before-seen footage of the Nelson family.**

**When: 7:30 p.m. Jan. 13**

**Where: Raue Center for the Arts, 26 N. Williams St., Crystal Lake**

**Cost: \$35, \$32, \$29**

[Buy tickets here](#)

### **LISTEN ON SPOTIFY**

Don't remember Nelson's song, "(Can't Live Without Your) Love and Affection"? Click [here](#) to hear a few songs from the band and from their father, Ricky Nelson (requires premium Spotify account).

*Copyright © 2012 Northwest Herald. All rights reserved.*