

ROCK

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Shortly after it was formed, Howard Ernst joined the group as lead guitarist, and the band changed its name to The Shattoes. They forged ahead in an era of 45 rpm vinyl records, AM car radios, and only a few live rock and roll performers in the state.

"We just thought it would be a good idea to form a band," Ellison said. "We just sort of fell into it, and began banging out our music, rehearsing in the old Odd Fellows Lodge in Vermillion ... my dad was a member of the Odd Fellows, so that's where we would practice back in 1963. And things just kind of snowballed."

There was plenty of something back then, however, that's become endangered in South Dakota today in comparison: dance halls and ballrooms. And, it seemed, an unending number of events held in them nearly every weekend that demanded a live band.

"Everybody finds out that there is a band here that could be hired for sorority or fraternity parties, or high school proms," he said.

It was a challenge Ellison and The Shattoes couldn't resist.

"Just about every town either had a ballroom or a dance hall or armory or something like that, and on the weekends they would be packed with kids who wanted to dance to live music," said Don Fritz, of the South Dakota Rock & Roll Music Association. "Bands always had places to play, and now you don't necessarily have that opportunity any more. It was just a great era to grow up in."

A RICH HISTORY

The association's goal is to preserve the history of that time in South Dakota when local bands like The Shattoes had a profound cultural influence in the region.

The Shattoes will be one of about half a dozen bands inducted into the hall of fame Saturday. "All of the original Shattoe members are from Vermillion, and they had a lot of success. We decided to induct them because they are certainly very deserving of being inducted," Fritz said. "They are one of the best groups to ever come out of the state. They had a couple records and they had quite a bit of success."

This is the third year the music association has inducted local musical groups into its hall of fame. The organization's board of directors makes the annual selection after considering up to 100 different bands.

"We look at the success they had, and different things about them, and then we arrive at who we are going to induct from that

discussion," Fritz said. "There aren't really any certain criteria that we use."

The association began its hall of fame two years ago, and considered bands from the early 1950s to be the initial inductees. This year, it was time to focus on local bands that were formed in the 1960s.

"We look at how long they played, what parts of the state they were from, how many people attended their dances, and the different places they played," Fritz said.

Every rock and roll band experiences personnel changes over the years, he added, and The Shattoes were no exception. "But in their 14 years, they had less people come and go than a lot of bands that performed for that long of time. I know of some local bands that had over 100 different members," Fritz said, "and Bob Ellison was really the guy that kept that group together."

"He's a very talented guy; a very nice guy," he said. "He's had some very good people in his band, and they had a lot of success."

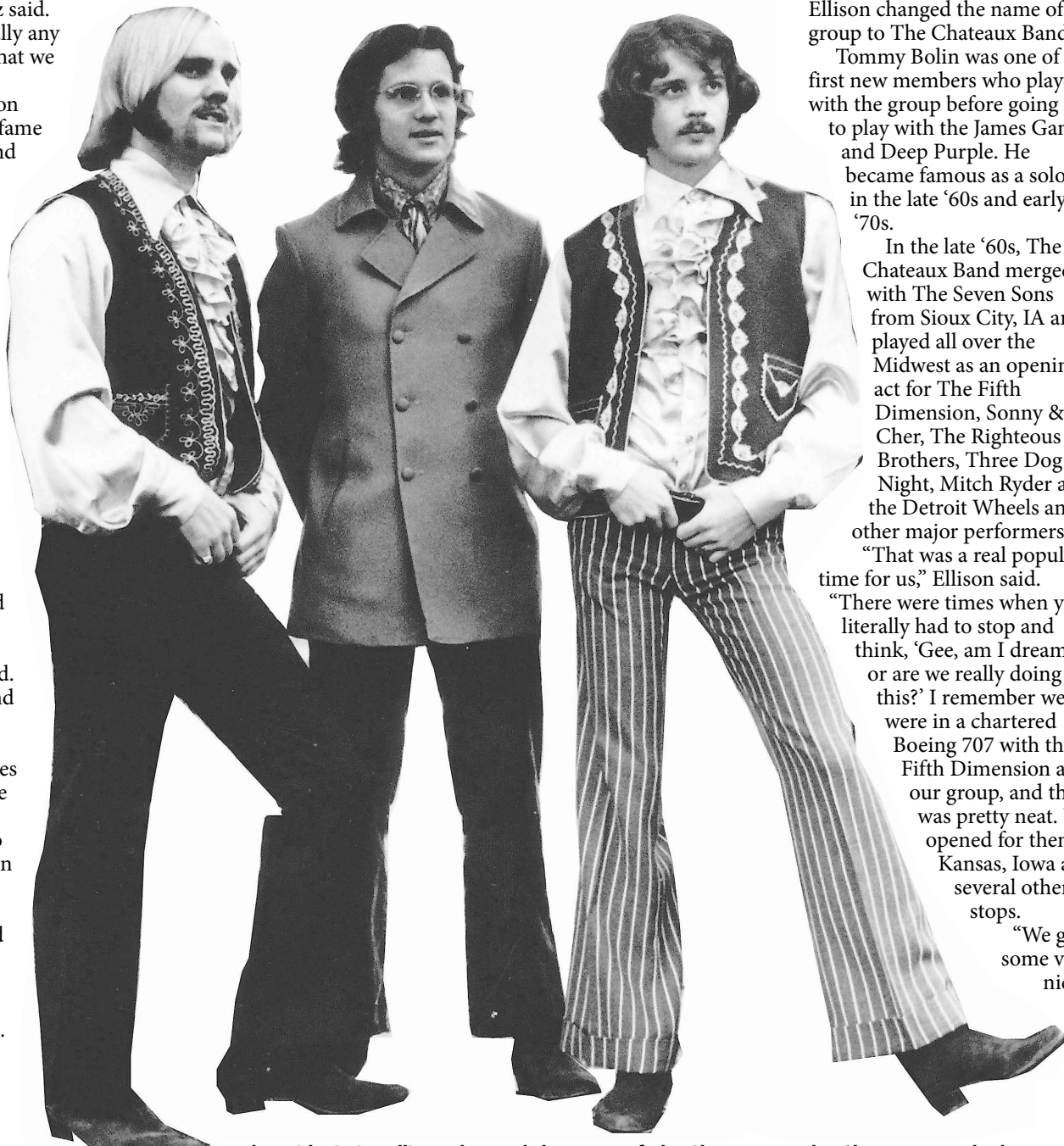
WAVE OF POPULARITY

Ellison describes the 1960s as one fun-filled adventure after the other.

"It was quite an event with a lot of bands starting up at that time," he said. "When you're young, and you start seeing all of the rock groups that were starting to click, and make it - back in those days The Beach Boys and different groups like that were enjoying success, so we patterned ourselves after them to start with. We just thought it would be exciting if we could make it big like they did."

"It's a vision that you have when you are young, but starting up a band was just something I wanted to do," Ellison said in a phone conversation from his Omaha, NE home. "I went to the University of South Dakota for part of that time, and got a bachelor's degree and a master's degree."

The British invasion led by



In the mid-1960s, Ellison changed the name of The Shattoes to The Chateaux Band. The band's look changed along with the times, adopting the clothing and hairstyles of that era. Pictured are Ellison, Doug Test and Gary Knutson. Ellison and Knutson both hailed from Vermillion; Test, from Mitchell, was a classmate of Ellison's at USD. (Photo courtesy of Bob

The Beatles occurred at about the time that The Shattoes were formed. Soon, the local band's interest shifted from the surfer music that was already popular.

"They (The Beatles) served as a second set of roles models for our group," he said. "They came over at the same time we formed, and excited everyone about rock and roll."

The Shattoes found itself riding the crest of the wave of the popularity formed by that new style of rock and roll.

"There was an ebb and a tide with just about every group," Ellison said. "I changed musicians and our music changed over the years."

In the early- to mid-1960s, the band kept busy playing at ballrooms, high school proms, and college dances. The band was introduced to entertaining a ballroom of people for the first time by being the main act at The Arkota Ballroom in Sioux Falls on Dec. 26, 1963.

"We were paid the handsome sum of \$80 that evening," Ellison said.

A few months later, The Shattoes were the opening act for The Beach Boys at the Shore Acres Ballroom in Sioux City,

IA. That served as just one of several opening act appearances that would follow for the Vermillion band.

Ellison and his fellow musicians grew more and more busy. Later in the 1964, The Shattoes signed a recording contract. Its first release, "Surf Fever," recorded in Minneapolis, MN, received airplay on radio stations throughout the Midwest.

At the same time, the band kept up a grueling concert schedule in the region in its early years. In 1965, it was voted "Outstanding Dance Band" by the National Ballroom Operators Association.

"We were always busy," Ellison said. "I played every weekend for 14 years. I never had a weekend off."

CONSTANT CHANGE

There was also never a time, it seems, when Ellison didn't successfully cope with the constant changes in the music industry.

Beginning in the mid-60s, The Shattoes began evolving as one member of the band would leave and be replaced by a different musician. Eventually,

Ellison changed the name of the group to The Chateaux Band.

Tommy Bolin was one of the first new members who played with the group before going on to play with the James Gang and Deep Purple. He became famous as a solo act in the late '60s and early '70s.

In the late '60s, The Chateaux Band merged with The Seven Sons from Sioux City, IA and played all over the Midwest as an opening act for The Fifth Dimension, Sonny & Cher, The Righteous Brothers, Three Dog Night, Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels and other major performers.

"That was a real popular time for us," Ellison said. "There were times when you literally had to stop and think, 'Gee, am I dreaming or are we really doing this?' I remember we were in a chartered Boeing 707 with the Fifth Dimension and our group, and that was pretty neat. We opened for them in Kansas, Iowa and several other stops."

"We got some very nice

compliments from members of The Fifth Dimension, because we stressed vocal work with our group," he said, "so that meant a lot, because members of The Fifth Dimension were some of the best vocalists at that time."

It was both a thrilling and an exhausting time.

"Especially when you are trying to get a degree in college, because you get to a point where you see yourself, and it's going to be a long shot that you're ever going to make it big in the music business," Ellison said. "Then I got real serious about getting my undergraduate degree, and when I was working on my graduate degree, I was playing four nights a week and studying at the same time. It was grueling."

In the early 1970s, he decided to bring The Chateaux Band back together as a three piece power group along with two other members - Gary Knutson on guitar and Doug Test on drums. The band eventually traveled to Memphis, TN and recorded the song "Reference Man" on the Sun Records label.

It received national airplay on stations in Oklahoma City, OK, Little Rock, AK, and most Top

40 stations throughout the Midwest.

With success as recording artists, The Chateaux Band enjoyed numerous sold out concerts and dance engagements.

LETTING GO

Ellison never abandoned his studies for he knew the time may come to eventually step away from his role as a rock and roll bandleader.

"I retired when I was 30," he said. "I always had this vision of Christmas Day in a funky motel, waiting to play the next gig. I didn't see myself fitting that scenario so I pretty much told myself if I make it big by the time I'm 30, great. And if not, I have a great career to fall back on."

Ellison's life has more or less played out just as he had scripted it. During the last few years of his band's existence, several outstanding members joined his group before moving on to play with national acts.

Mark Craney and Mike Miller of Sioux Falls played in the group and eventually left to perform with Santana, Deep Purple, and Geno Vinelli.

The final members of the group joining Ellison in the mid-70s were Rusty Gill and Mike Yondrich from Sioux City, IA. After 14 years of musical performances, with two degrees from USD, including a master's in medieval history, he disbanded his rock and roll group in 1976 and was making plans to travel to Connecticut to work on his doctorate.

"I had my graduation pictures developed at the Gibson's store in Vermillion, which eventually became Pamida, and the manager there, who I knew somewhat, asked me what I was going to do next," he said.

When Ellison told him about his plans to continue his studies, the manager asked him to consider working for Gibson's.

Company officials in Omaha, NE eventually interviewed him. "I went to work a couple weeks later, and I never looked back."

Ellison retired at age 54 after serving as Pamida's vice president of real estate and new store development. He now devotes a few hours each day to his work as a commercial real estate developer in Omaha.

He is thrilled that his musical groups will be honored Saturday by the South Dakota Rock & Roll Music Association.

"It shows some thanks, I guess, for all of the hard work that you've put in, and it's a recognition of being one of the better bands during that era," Ellison said.

He plans to dust off his guitar and perform five songs at Saturday's induction ceremony. "It will be a fun evening. The group that I put together are all either former musicians or sons or brothers of former musicians who are no longer with me," Ellison said.

NAEYC elects USD professor to top board position

Gera Jacobs, professor of early childhood in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the School of Education at The University of South Dakota, was elected president-elect of the Governing Board of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

NAEYC is the nation's largest and most influential organization of early childhood educators. Her four-year term begins June 1 - serving one year as president-elect followed by two years as president and one year as past-president.

In addition to serving as a member of the faculty at USD, Jacobs taught for more than 15 years in preschool through

eighth grade classrooms. She has published articles in a number of nationally peer-reviewed and regional journals and presented at state, regional and national conferences. Jacobs is also the co-author of two nationally recognized books, including one published by Corwin Press that received two national book awards and the other, co-published with Corwin Press and NAEYC, which was distributed by NAEYC to all of the organization's 20,000 comprehensive members. In 2002, she was named the South Dakota Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children is the largest and

most influential organization of early childhood educators and others dedicated to improving the quality of programs for children from birth through age eight. Founded in

1926, the organization now has nearly 90,000 members, and a national network of over 300 local, state, and regional affiliates.

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