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## Valentine's Day Tribute

*Ricky Nelson's Sons Honor Their Family's Legacy*

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**By Kathy Hall**

*khall@chronline.com*

Matthew and Gunnar Nelson grew up playing their father's music in private, but it wasn't until just a few years ago they decided to go public with the songs made famous by pop idol Ricky Nelson.

The identical twins will bring it all to the stage Saturday evening at the Lucky Eagle Casino, Rochester, as they present the tribute show "Ricky Nelson Remembered" at 8 p.m.

"Initially it didn't make much sense," Matthew Nelson said in a telephone interview Monday afternoon. "We wanted to make our own mark."

The twins succeeded, earning much acclaim as the rock band Nelson in the early 1990s. The group's single "(Can't Live Without Your) Love and Affection" was number one, earning them a unique place in entertainment history. According to the "Guinness Book of World Records," the Nelsons are the only family to reach number one record status in three successive generations: Ozzie and Harriet Nelson, known for "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet," had a number one hit in 1934 and Ricky Nelson had three number one hits.

"We didn't really know about it until our sister, Tracy, called us to let us know we were the final 'Jeopardy' question," Matthew laughed. "I'm tremendously proud of it. I got a chance to really know my family and hopefully one day I'll get to pass the torch to another generation."

Saturday's show is dynamic, said Matthew, adding the audience will be pleasantly surprised.

"They can expect an event," he said. "They can expect to be taken to a place for that two hour period of time where they'll remember everything they loved about (Ricky Nelson) and his music."

The twins started playing music when they were 7 years old, according to Matthew. They were 17 when their father, Ricky Nelson, was killed in a plane crash in 1985. The duo are currently putting their band, Nelson, back together and there's a television show in the works as well, but the tribute to their father is taking center stage for them professionally.

"Our focus really now is this show, and we don't know how long



**Courtesy Photo**

Matthew (left) and Gunnar Nelson (right) will perform the songs made famous by their father, Ricky Nelson, center, at a tribute show Saturday night at the Lucky Eagle Casino in Rochester.



**Courtesy Photo**

Twin brothers Gunnar (left) and Matthew Nelson achieved success on their own in the 1990s in the rock band Nelson. The duo began performing their father's music about 6 or 7 years ago.

we're going to be doing this," said Matthew. "Our plan right now is to continue developing it. It's basically gaining momentum."

Matthew said he appreciates that he and his brother were able to achieve success on their own, which enables them to enjoy playing their father's music now.

"We wanted to make our own mark, which we did," he said. "This is a show we do because we love it, not because we have to."

**If You Go:**

What: Ricky Nelson Remembered tribute show with Matthew and Gunnar Nelson

When: 8 p.m. Saturday

Where: Lucky Eagle Casino, Rochester

Cost: \$25, \$30 or \$35 per person

Must be 21

Call: 800-720-1788

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*Kathy Hall: (360) 807-8226*

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