



The Press-Sentinel

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The Heeey Baby Days is a tribute to the music of our youth

My Opinion



**DINK
NeSMITH**
Chairman

There's a book waiting to be written inside most people.

The unpublished text that rumbled inside Greg Haynes for five years turned into 553 pages and weighs a whopping 16 pounds.

The first-time author unveils his creation Friday at the Georgia Music

Hall of Fame in Macon.

The son of a Waycross minister, Greg caught the music bug early as he sang from the Baptist Hymnal. His brother, Felix, would follow his father's footsteps into the pulpit.

When Greg heard a Top 40 song he liked, he raced to Kress, bought the 45 rpm record and "played it until the grooves fell off." His music library was stacked with rhythm and blues and soul music that gave birth to Greg's all-time favorite genre—Beach Music.

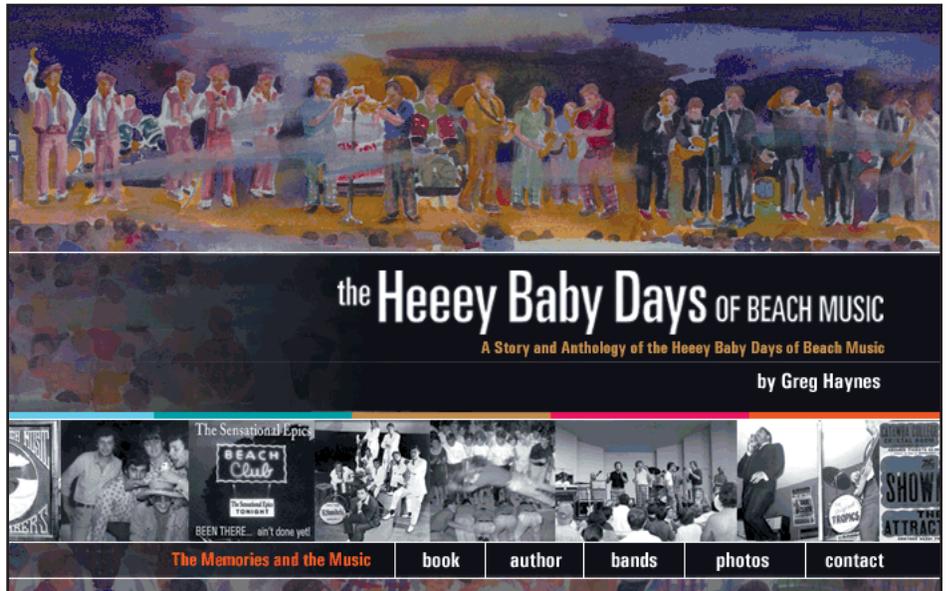
As a teenager, he became hooked on live music and launched a career as a promoter, booking bands for shows across the Southeast. His venues included the Waycross City Auditorium, Albany's Radium Springs Casino, Charlie Williams' Pinecrest Lodge in Athens, the Landrum Center in Statesboro and fraternity houses. By the time Greg arrived at The University of Georgia, he was friends with some of the biggest names in the business—like the Tams, Percy Sledge, The Box Tops and the Swingin' Medallions.

I asked Greg to name his three favorite songs of the 1960s. Without hesitating, he fired back:

- 1) Double Shot of My Baby's Love
- 2) Double Shot of My Baby's Love
- 3) Double Shot of My Baby's Love

Indeed, the Swingin' Medallions was the party band of our college days.

Back around 2000, Greg got the idea for the mammoth coffee-table book, *The Heeey Baby Days of Beach Music*, complete with two CDs of music and a band



Greg Haynes will release his book this week at the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in Macon.

directory.

Plenty of us are pack rats, but Greg was able to pull from scrapbooks and trunks an incredible amount of memorabilia that make the Beach Music era sing from the pages. A mid-sized U-Haul wouldn't hold all the stuff Greg has stored over the past 40 years. He's a one-man museum.

And now, if you've eaten your Wheaties, you can carry Greg's chronicle of the music of our youth to the couch and relive the days when the theme song was "Be Young, Be Foolish, Be Happy," courtesy of The Tams.

But behind this good man is a great woman, his high school sweetheart and wife, Nora. He quickly gives her credit, saying the project wouldn't have happened without her.

Recently, I was in Atlanta and met Nora to receive an advanced copy. The petite lady's smile was as big as her husband's book. She'll admit that Greg has been a tad obsessive-compulsive about *The Heeey Baby Days*, but his only cure was to get the first edition into print.

Wayne County folks especially will enjoy the section on King David and the Slaves. We grew up with David and Moi Harris, Eddie and Butch Peede, Jack and Denny Brinkley, Russell Martin, Randy Replogle, Lee Riggins and Randall Bramblett. Harold Williams and Wayne Scarborough also played with the Slaves.

We swayed and shagged to their music without realizing our friends were really famous.

The Jesup band with its keyboard, guitars, trumpets, saxophones and drums played up and down the East Coast, including Myrtle Beach, the Mecca of Beach Music. They shared the stage with stars like Jerry Butler, Maurice Williams, Jackie Wilson, the Showmen, the Drifters, the Platters and the Tams.

In Greg's book, Chuck Leavell, keyboardist for the Rolling Stones, calls Randall Bramblett "the most gifted and talented southern singer/songwriter/musician of the past several decades."

Today, Greg is a leading industrial real estate broker in Atlanta. But he found a minimum of 4,000 hours to pour into his music project. For a closer glimpse you can find more at www.heybabydays.com.

As I listened to Greg's compilation of favorite songs and thumbed through his masterfully-done book, I found myself humming Bruce Channel's "*Heeey hey baby, I wanna know if you'll be my girl.*" Forty years evaporated and I was back in college, partying to the music in a packed fraternity house basement.

Thanks, Greg, for unleashing *The Heeey Baby Days* from your soul and into our Beach Music-loving hands.

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