

Message in the music of 1969 still relevant

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BY EMILY MCFARLAN Staff Writer

In 1969, Hayden Felipez was singing into a hairbrush along to her five older siblings' record collections.

"I was 8 years old, and I was listening to Led Zeppelin, The Beatles," said Felipez, now 46. "I was playing the piano and dreaming of being a rock star."

She still is.

The Elgin native now fronts 1969, a tribute band playing the music of the era. The five-member, Chicago-area band will perform an all-ages show Saturday at Clearwater Theater, 96 W. Main St., West Dundee.

IF YOU GO

- **What:** 1969, a tribute band playing music of that era
- **When:** Doors open at 7 p.m. Saturday
- **Where:** Clearwater Theater, 96 W. Main St., West Dundee
- **How much:** Tickets are \$7 and available online at www.clearwatertheater.com or by calling (847) 836-8820.
- **On the Net:** www.music1969.com

"You get a good taste of it -- all the genres that were relevant at the time. That's what was interesting about the era -- there were so many genres of music you could hear in the same venue," said Felipez, who now lives in Antioch.

"We try to bring that feeling again, when all those kinds of music can live together harmoniously."

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, rock, pop, metal, soul and folk topped the music charts, and the band 1969 performs it all, from the bluesy vocals of Janis Joplin to the psychedelic rock of The Doors.

Felipez joined keyboardist Phil Balsano, lead guitarist Kevin Paul and drummer Scott Peterson, who had been playing together several months and were auditioning female lead singers in May 2007. The lineup also includes bassist Jaimie Kopy and guitarist and vocalist Brian Kovacs. The band has played with several male vocalists throughout the Chicago area.

Felipez said her favorite songs to perform include Jefferson Airplane's *Somebody to Love* and *These Boots Are Made For Walkin'* by Nancy Sinatra -- or "Nancy Sinatra meets Led Zeppelin," as she describes the band's treatment of the song.

Other songs, Felipez said, can't be improved upon and need to be recreated exactly as they were recorded. That includes anything by Janis Joplin, the artist who inspired her as a young girl and continues to palpably inspire her performances today.

"You can only hope to share the stage with the song and do it some justice," Felipez said.

The crowd at the band's concerts is as diverse as the music 1969 plays.

"Interestingly, it's a huge mix. There's not one specific kind of people. We've had everything from teenagers and college age to baby boomers and beyond," Felipez said. "That's the music bringing people together. That's one of the beautiful things about this music and this project. We get to bring people together."

She credited the music's honesty and substance for its longevity.

Felipez also pointed out many similarities between the events of 1969 and today that make the messages in the music relevant: The country is involved in an unpopular war; politicians are addressing issues of race and gender; young people feel empowered to make a difference.

"Everything is going around again -- the political atmosphere and everything," Felipez said. "Sadly, we've not evolved much from that time. The similarities are rather frightening. I think that's why the music is so relevant again."

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