

SALT CITY ROCK: THE HISTORY OF ROCK 'N' ROLL IN SYRACUSE

by Michla L. Crook - Thursday, February 19th, 2015

Exhibit opening at the OHA on Friday, February 20

Syracuse is a city full of surprises.

The **Onondaga Historical Association** is a lamp bearer of these illuminating moments and their newest exhibit: *Salt City Rock: The History of Rock n Roll in Syracuse*, opens on Friday, February 20.

The exhibit kicks off with an opening reception and benefit show and runs through August 2015. Jon Zella, Development Associate for the OHA, comments on what will make this exhibit so special:

This exhibit has *“something everyone can connect with. Everyone has a couple of stories of a time they either played in a band or went to a concert at any one of the venues over the years,”* he said. *“Not only can people connect with the art-form itself, but with one another as they share stories.*

“In this particular instance,” Zella continued *“many of the people who were around rock n’ roll, and later punk and metal, saw it progress over 20 or 30 years with different bands and styles making everyone who lived through it a little bit of a historian on the subject.”*



Alex Lifeson and Geddy Lee of Rush playing a double neck guitar. (Photo by Frank White)

Letting the audience be part of the story is important to the OHA with this exhibit.

While mounting the exhibit, the museum wanted to appeal to a broad audience and knew music was the key. Because the popular genre of rock n' roll is relatively current in the context of history, there are many people who are alive that have a direct connection to the significant moments and figures that created its culturally collective story.

One of Zella's favorite things about creating this event has been seeing the community coming together and being so excited to share artifacts and the stories that go with it.

"The coolest part of the exhibit has been people from the community getting excited about it and loaning objects. Just speaking with a number of people about what they brought in and the stories attached to them make them so happy, and in turn, makes it worth doing on our part to bring it together."



Syracuse native Jimmy Van Heusen.

The collection includes memorabilia such as t-shirts and show posters. There some guitars that will sure to have any player worth their salt drooling, including a double neck guitar from the 60's and an original Hofner bass (aka- the McCartney Bass). Surprises are around every corner. Did you know that one of Frank Sinatra's main song writers was Syracuse native Jimmy Van Heusen?

Zella conveyed his hopes for the exhibit: *“OHA provides individuals with an opportunity to see that Syracuse and the county, overall, are on the forefront of innovation, music, culture, and business. They’ll come for the Rock n Roll and stay for history that promotes the place they call home.”*

Salt City Rock: The History of Rock n Roll in Syracuse opens Friday, February 20 with a free viewing between 5-6:30 p.m. and a \$5 entry to a live rock benefit show from 7-9 p.m., plus a cash bar available for beverages. The show combines old and new Syracuse rock acts featuring: The Stonelord Brothers, Phantom Chemistry, Inclusive Or, and special guests The Flashcubes featuring Gary Frenay.

The OHA is located at 321 Montgomery St., Syracuse, NY 13202. For more information, see their [website](#) or the calendar of events at [Visit Syracuse](#).