

# Vintage AGE

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# The Heeey Baby Days of Beach Music

There are people who, when exposed to a work of art, appreciate the work and its creator, then simply move on. But there are others whose appreciation runs so deeply, they feel compelled to introduce friends and acquaintances to the work.

Music promoter-turned-author Greg Haynes has to be glad that a trio of prominent Albanians are art lovers of the latter kind.

After coming to the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in Macon Oct. 6 for a celebration of the release of Haynes' definitive coffee table book, *The Heeey Baby Days of Beach Music: Stories and Remembrances of a Southern Music Genre*, and the opening of an exhibit dedicated to the '60s regional music craze, Albany writer Ed Lightsey, attorney Spencer Lee and realtor Russell Martin decided they needed to "share" Haynes and his book with fellow music lovers in Southwest Georgia.

So Lee hosted a reception/book signing for Haynes at Lee's backyard gallery, "Less Than High Museum of Art," Nov. 2. And, as the 150 or so guests who came by to meet the author and purchase copies of his 553-page (two music CDs included!) treasure of a book will attest, everyone's glad the three Albany amigos insisted on sharing.

"This is incredible, overwhelming," Haynes says some two-and-a-half hours into the non-stop book-signing/reliving-of-glory-days session. "I have such a passion for Beach Music and for that time when it was popular (most of the '60s). What I'm finding out at events like this is that there are a lot more people from the Baby Boom era who share that passion."

Martin, who played in the mid-60s with Coastal Georgia Beach Music favorites King David & the Slaves and who carries on the musical tradition of the era today with the band Relapse, can be counted among Haynes' like-minded souls. In fact, the successful realtor was one of dozens of musicians the author interviewed while gathering material for *The Heeey Baby Days*.

"I got excited when Greg first called and told me about the book," Martin says. "He interviewed me a few times and sent me pages of the book to look over. The more I saw, the more excited I got. When I saw the finished product, I knew he'd gotten it ... I knew I had something that I could show people and say 'this is what I've been talking about.'"

"Greg did such a magnificent job with this project; he didn't just capture the essence of Beach Music, he covered it."

Haynes, as it turns out, was the perfect person to chronicle the Beach Music era. He started promoting local shows in the Waycross, Ga., area with a football-playing buddy as a way to "make a little weekend money and the perfect chance to check out girls." He continued to introduce fraternity brothers at the University of Georgia to his brand of music while attending college in Athens before social changes all but brought the Beach



*The Swingin' Medallions*

Music era to a screeching halt.

"True Beach Music was, basically, white bands doing their version of R&B music that was popular at the time," Haynes says. "It was jovial, fun music that summed up the feelings of young people in the Southeast through most of the '60s."

"But as Vietnam and other social changes started taking place in America, a very distinct line of demarcation was drawn. Kids at concerts went from fun-loving partiers to these serious, glazed-over-looking crowds. The changes of the '60s started to show on the faces of kids in the early '70s. I knew the Beach Music era was over."

So Haynes put his promotion career behind him. He packed up his Swingin' Medallions, Tams, Box Tops, Candymen, Mystics, Jesters and Epics records, concentrated on his education and moved on to adult life. Six or seven years ago, after having settled into a successful career as an industrial real estate agent in Atlanta, Haynes got a wild hair to revisit the days of his musical past.

"I decided to write down some of the stories from back in the days when I was promoting Beach Music shows," he says. "Now, I'm not a writer by any means; the last time I'd written anything was when I was editor of my high school newspaper. I didn't know a dangling participle from a swimming fish."

"I figured I'd write down a few stories, put together a comic-sized paperback book and give out about 10 copies to my friends and my dad. I never dreamed it would turn into what it did."

Haynes wrote down a few of his stories, and along the way got the bright idea to embellish the stories by trying to catch up with some of the musicians who were central to them. He discovered a group of willing participants, many of whom were still playing music, eager to talk about their past.

"The more I talked with the musicians, the more I found out about what that era was like for them," Haynes says. "I thought I had a very good base of knowledge going into the project, but I soon discovered mine was so minute compared to the body of information that was out there."

"By accident, I discovered the best way to get this information was to let the musicians tell their own stories. I was e-mailing a member of one group back and forth, and all of a sudden out of the blue he sent me a story about how his band got its equipment and about this frat party they'd played at Georgia Tech. The story showed



*Strange Bedfellows*

...because some things get better with age!

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the human side of the people involved in making the music, and it dawned on me that this was the way to go with the book.”

The anecdotes, old photographs, copies of souvenir posters and the definitive 46 tracks on the discs that come with *The Heeey Baby Days* offer insider views to an era that Martin describes as “Baby Boomers’ ‘Gone With the Wind.’ ”

“I used to try to tell people about Beach Music, and they’d say something like ‘Oh, you mean the Beach Boys,’ ” Martin says. “But this was a very specific regional music at a very specific time. Dancing the Shag, playing at The Beach Club in Myrtle Beach, traveling around the Southeast to play the music at fraternity parties

... “That time was like the Baby Boomers’ ‘Gone With the Wind.’ We had this romantic view of life that was captured in Beach Music, and even though we knew the world was changing around us, just like in the pre-Civil War South in ‘Gone With the Wind,’ we held onto it as long as we could.”

Many Southwest Georgia Boomers came to Lee’s museum to relive some of those pre-Vietnam memories and to meet the man who so vividly brought them back to life.

“Spencer is a promoter of people,” Lacy Lee, the *Heeey Baby*



*Tip Tops*

such as Albany (Radium Springs and its Casino) and Valdosta; and there are conversations with members of the Tip Tops and the Mark Seven, both from Hawkinsville, Ga.

“There was just so much passion from everyone involved in this project,” Haynes says. “When I started talking to the musicians, things just took on a life of their own, and the momentum took off. I’d talk to one person, and he’d say ‘Oh, you have to talk with so-and-so or so-and-so.’ It became apparent that if I was going to talk about one (band), I was going to have to talk about them all.

“I ended up with enough material to fill another couple of books, and there are other bands I couldn’t get in touch with that should have been included. It turned into this humbling, overwhelming project.”

Copies of *The Heeey Baby Days of Beach Music* are available online on the Web site [www.heybabydays.com](http://www.heybabydays.com).



*The Tams & Jerry Butler*

*Days* book-signing hostess, says of her husband. “His ‘museum’ started out as my garage, but he wanted a place to display the artwork we own and the works of other local artists (among them: Matt Wilkins, Jack Ledbetter, Derrick Taylor, Bryan Haynes and Hank Margeson).

“When Spencer, Ed and Russell went to the function at the Music Hall of Fame in Macon, they wanted to bring part of that back to Albany. They called many of their friends and invited them over, but I think we all – including Greg and his wife – were surprised at the overwhelming response. The people who came wanted to talk to Greg, and after they saw the book, they were eager to buy copies.”

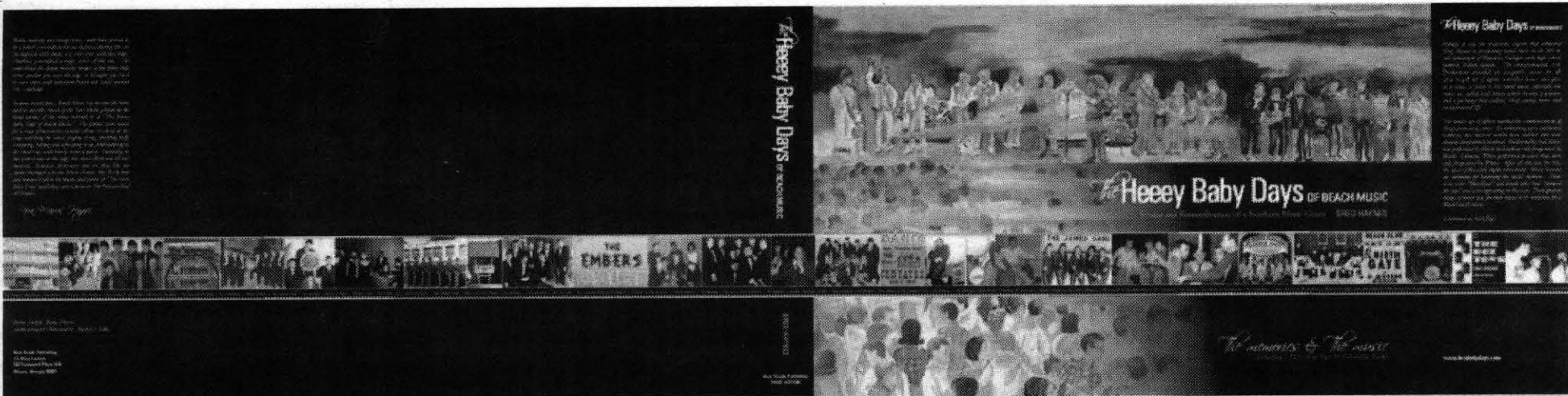
Adds Spencer Lee, “I think there is a genuine appreciation for that music and that era that the folks here are interested in getting back in touch with. Russell, Ed and I saw it as a good mix for people in this area, and it has certainly turned out that way. The [local] response [to the book] has been great.”

Southwest Georgians will find plenty to relate to in *The Heeey Baby Days of Beach Music*. In addition to tons of information about bands from that era, there are chapters that feature both Martin’s Slaves and Relapse and Davis Causey’s Jesters; there are stories about memorable performances at venues in cities



THE SLAVES

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Above: *Heeey Baby Days of Beach Music's* dust jacket

Right: book's interior CD pocket



After a heavy night's drinking, two Irishmen stagger home from their country pub, intending to take a short cut through the graveyard. Being much the worse for wear, they decide to take a rest against a stone, where Paddy reads the inscription.

"Do ya know, Michael, this fella here lived till he was 103!"

"And did he come from hereabouts then?" asks Michael.

"No," says Paddy, reading the stone. "He was Miles, from Dublin."