



Who would have thought that this group of business professionals turned rock band, together for just 4 years, would progress quickly from club gigs and outdoor festivals to opening for Grammy award-winning acts?

It's a unique and unusual blend that combines a trial attorney, real estate agent, automobile sales manager, college professor, government biologist and a music store manager. The result is a rock cover band with unusual versatility and musical diversity.

Gainesville Florida-based rock cover band **V Six** is the result of that diverse mixture. Performing together for the past four years, the band has established itself in an untraditional musical niche. In addition to the nightclub circuit and bar "gigs", the group also loves to perform at outdoor festival events and venues with a diverse audience. This allows the band to showcase its true versatility, performing oldies by the Beatles, Eagles, Pat Benatar and other artists to contemporary hits by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, U2, Martina McBride, Jimmy Eat World or Sheryl Crow.

"That's what makes it fun for us" comments lead singer Vanessa Riefkohl. "We don't limit our music to one genre or time period. We are as comfortable with current radio hits as we are with classic rock." The collection of north central Florida business professionals also thinks that their target audience is not solely the late night club-goer. "We love to play for a high-energy nightclub audience, but we also know that a lot of folks may not want to go to a club where the music doesn't start 'til late", Riefkohl points out. "That's why we also love to do festivals and special events." Vanessa is the "V" behind **V Six**, which, far from an obscure automotive reference, is rather an acknowledgement that it is her clear and powerful voice is at the forefront of this six-member cover band.

Riefkohl is a local real estate professional by day, and was introduced to the group like the others when they all came together as part of a local music store promotion. The program introduced musicians who had previously played in bands and others who had never performed at all and provided coaching and practice sessions culminating in a concert performance. After the program's conclusion, **V Six** recognized the love for music and sense of camaraderie was strong, and the band members committed to carry on and take the relationship to the next level, agreeing to a rigorous weekly practice schedule and honing their skills to allow the band to offer its services as true performance group.

Over the following years, **V Six** performed at nightclubs, festivals and other outdoor events in Gainesville, Ocala, Inverness and Daytona Beach, including shows at the

famous Daytona Beach oceanfront bandshell. Chosen each year to perform at the popular *Let's Go Downtown* concert series at the Gainesville downtown plaza amphitheater, the band frequently works with municipalities that promote large outdoor events. Once again in 2005, the group performed at Gainesville's largest outdoor concert event, *Fanfares & Fireworks*, at the University of Florida bandshell with a crowd of more than 15,000. In preparation for that and other outdoor shows, the group performs regularly in North Central Florida at area clubs including more than 20 shows each year. Already this year the band performed as the opening act for Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons as part of the Silver Springs Concert Series and also opened for B.J. Thomas as part of a huge 4th of July show in Daytona Beach.

"Who would have ever thought we'd actually *like* each other?" quips drummer Ron Cook, who also serves as unofficial publicist and webmaster for the group. Cook continues "Each of us brings to the band our own musical tastes and influences. The result is a pretty interesting blend that we can tailor to the style of each event." In his day job, Cook is an Orlando-based investor and entrepreneur and is a frequent lecturer at Full Sail University. Like the other band members, Cook says that he most enjoys playing in front of diverse festival crowds. "I love watching the crowd reactions. Couples dancing to rock n' roll. Younger people stopping in their tracks when we crank up a Chili Peppers tune. That's what we try to do - something for everybody." Cook started playing drums when he was only 12, and played in several bands growing up. Several years ago he decided to pick up the sticks once again and is glad he did. Cook is quick to note that coordinating practice and performance schedules for six working business people is like "herding cats", but the effort is worth it. He sums it up this way: "What a great bunch of guys to run into! I'm loving every minute of it."

Richard Simmons is the group's newest member, joining the band two years ago. Simmons lets his Fender Telecaster guitar do the talking as he hammers out classic Hendrix or Grand Funk Railroad. Like the others in the group, Richard enjoys the opportunity to play a wide variety of musical styles. "I grew up with classic rock – Molly Hatchett, the Doobie Brothers and Creedence Clearwater Revival", Simmons acknowledges, "But I also really like some of the fresh new sounds that are out there today." Simmons auto sales manager job consumes most of his daylight hours, but when it's time to jam, he's adept at getting the musical most out of any song, smoothing and polishing his trademark guitar licks to the delight of the crowd. Blending a hectic work and band rehearsal schedule is no easy task, and Simmons also makes good use of additional practice time at home to further perfect his complex guitar leads. "We each get to play our personal favorites, and support the others in playing theirs. That's what makes us a good team."

Successful local trial attorney David Cornell, known by his band mates as "Evil Dave", is the powerful guitar force that establishes the group's driving rhythms. His Fender Stratocaster wails passionately as he nails an intricate guitar lead or joins with Simmons in a complex, intertwining arrangement of a classic rock hit. Equally comfortable on electric or acoustic guitar, Evil Dave is quick to point out the obvious: "We are very clear about what we are - a local cover band that loves to play music. We're not the professional music stars you see on TV, and we're sure a long way from the truly great performers who we so admire, but I think they won't mind if we flatter them with our

feeble attempt to replicate their greatest hits.” When asked about the most important thing about playing in a band, Evil Dave grins slyly. His words of advice? “Wear comfortable shoes.”

Multi-instrumentalist Joe Dorsey may well possess the most combined musical experience of the *V Six* members. Taught to play guitar by his father when just a young boy, Dorsey’s love of music introduced him to a variety of other musical instruments. With *V Six*, he is equally comfortable at the keyboards or on bass, as well as stepping out front to sing lead and harmony vocals. Joe is quick to point out “One of the things I enjoy about the band is that, with our mix of male and female vocals and the availability of six voices, we have the ability to cover a wide variety of songs by a wide range of popular artists.” Joe also has a unique insight into playing together as a band, and has played in others during his career. “The first thing I can tell you is that you always remember you’re doing it for the love of the music, so don’t quit your day job!”

That summarizes the view that *V Six* members have of their musical mission. They do it because they *enjoy* it. Dorsey sums it up succinctly: “None of us are here thinking that we will ever be more than a hard working, fun loving cover band that just enjoys playing in front of an enthusiastic crowd. That’s what we love to do. There’s just no feeling like it.” A music store manager by day, Dorsey teams with the other members to direct the group musically and organize rehearsals to make them smooth and productive learning experiences. Working closely together, the band incorporates members’ suggestions for new material for the band’s ever-growing repertoire, always careful to maintain a versatile and varied mix of old favorites and contemporary hits.

Rosalind (a.k.a. “Roz”), the spunky and versatile bass player and acoustic guitarist is also one of the group’s vocal contributors, singing harmony on many songs and teaming with Vanessa and the rest of the group in support of fun-filled classics like *Love Shack* by the B-52’s. The consummate “hippy chick” of the group, Roz is a wetlands biologist for the federal government (aka: “bio-crat) and injects her unique energy and presence into every song. Roz sees it this way: “Naturally a big part of performing is working hard to perfect our instrumentation and vocals. A good cover band is true to the spirit of the original hit song, but we also add our own style and imprint here or there. The other big issue for us is to just go out there and let the audience see that we’re having a good time. Believe me – we are!” Like some others in the group, Roz played with other groups in Gainesville earlier in her career and shares a love for many different styles of music.

So what’s next for this group of local businesspeople turned performers? In addition to continuing their rigorous weekly rehearsal schedule, *V Six* will perform at various clubs and festival events throughout Central Florida, so check the show schedule often for details.

For further information, visit the band’s website at www.vsixband.com , e-mail at contact@vsixband.com, or call 352-225-1370.