

# Daddy-O!

Robert Chandler aka "RC"

Interview Written by: Meredith Flynn



## Background:

R.C. has been performing professionally since 1965. This all began when R.C. was exposed to the Delta Blues, Western Swing and Old-Time Country by his Grandfather at the age of 8. By age 11, he had started a semi-pro career as a percussionist with local concert bands and symphony orchestras. At the age of 14, he was performing in jazz clubs in Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island. At 15 he performed with Arthur Fiedler & The Boston Pops, The New England Conservatory Orchestra at Tanglewood and recorded on percussion with jazz trumpeter Bobby Hutcherson.

He began his career in Blues as a drummer with the Rhode Island band "*Natural Facts*"; switching to bass then to guitar. R.C. has also performed with locals Young Neal and The Vipers, and James Montgomery. After a divorce, R.C. moved to Chicago and eventually performed with the likes of Buddy Guy, Carey Bell, Big Daddy Hawkins and Roosevelt Sykes. He feels honored to have shared the stage and jammed with B. B. King, Eric Clapton, Muddy Waters, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Robert Cray, and Albert Collins!

R.C. was chosen as producer and guitarist for Harmonicist Lee Fortier's CD "Turn It Up" in 1997 with BLUES ALLEY as the backup band. R.C. was also producer, composer and arranger for BLUES ALLEY's CDs: "Lowdown" and "Rather Be Alone". and Daddy-O! CDs: "Starlite Drive-In", "Hardcore Fifties", "Crazy Little Mama" "The Way I Walk" as well as the premier CD of Rockabilly Teen Sensation, Brenna. All of which can be heard on radio stations around the world! CDs & individual songs are available on iTunes, Amazon and Wewecan Records.

All of RCs musical endeavors are to keep alive the greatest era in American Music: the Fifties. Whether he is playing the blues, rock & roll, rockabilly, doo wop or pop, the look, the sound and the atmosphere brings you back to that time. R.C. also teaches guitar, bass, drums, percussion, piano, banjo, mandolin, dobro, lap steel and violin at Onset Village Music. In addition he can play cello and ukulele. He also specializes in voice lessons since he has a 5.5 octave voice range himself.

R.C. states that he appreciates so many types of music that it is hard to pinpoint one center of influence. Music has so much variety and complexity that to say there is one person to be a favorite would be difficult to say. However he admires Brian Setzer for his contribution to the rockabilly and swing genres.

## Performing Activities:

Over the last five years R.C. averages 200 gigs per year. His life is committed to music, when he is not performing a gig he is helping his students grow as musicians, and when he is not teaching he is growing himself as a musician by practicing and learning new techniques.

Each performance is unique and stands on its own. There are no favorites because there is something to take from each performance that is different than all the rest. R.C. says, "Even bad performances are successes." Usually there are three instrumental pieces in the band Daddy-O!, but the essential fourth part in the performance is the audience and what they are experiencing. What would be a band performance if you didn't have an audience to listen and engage in the atmosphere of the music?

## Experiencing Music:

The interaction between the audience and band are very important to making the performance an experience instead of just a show. Making eye contact with each person in the audience and singing the song as if it was for them is a key interaction with the audience.

R.C. has two powerful personal instruments that have unique meaning to him: his voice , and the guitar.

R.C. found his passion for singing in church choir, and elementary school chorus. He was still very young and had the highest pitched, sweetest voice in the choir. He was chosen to sign all of the high parts and he felt honored to sign those parts. He did not care or think about what

others might think of him because he was doing something he loved. His home was always filled with music, from the radio or variety shows that played on TV. He was inspired to learn more about how to sign and when he met professionals he would ask them many questions about their breathing methods, presentations, or anything that would help him succeed. The training of his voice came through many years of practice and experience.

R.C. had suffered brain damage and when he was in the hospital a friend brought him a guitar. He equates the guitar as his “savior”, to get him through the tough experience he was facing. Although he recognizes the guitar as something special to him, he clearly stated that every song is like a story and each instrument is a character contributing to the story in a unique way. Each instrument in a song has a purpose and is equally as important.

## Music as a Career:

R.C. is successfully making a living as a musician. He loves that there is nothing like playing an instrument and connecting with someone for a moment to make them smile. For many of us music is a way to melt into another world where all troubles are forgotten. R.C. wouldn't trade that escape people feel for anything else. He is proud that he is able to make a living and do something that he loves while also touching people's lives.

However there are some disadvantages if you have a career in music. R.C. has noticed over the years that the financial gap between local artists and famous artists has widened. Thirty years ago a local artists were able to make a decent living and provide for their families. Now the attitude toward musicians has changed. Today professional musicians are paid less and treated with less respect. R.C. referred to the musicians that could not make it solely on their gigs as “weekend warriors” because they worked all weekend and then had a second job to support themselves. R.C. also mentioned that many people have a certain mentality that if you are from Boston you have more musical talent, than people who are based out of Cape Cod. He says that people choose the prestigiousness of where the band is located instead of their actual musical abilities.

## Overall Impression:

I interviewed R.C. over the phone and I was not expecting to be interviewing someone with so much musical background! I found Daddy-O! on the Main Street Music Store's website. I was very impressed of his accomplishments. It was very generous of him to give his time to talk to me and put his heart and soul into the interview answers. I have never seen his band play before, but by the time I got to know a little about him and his music samples he puts online, I definitely am going to see his band perform. He puts all of the places he is performing on the “Schedule” tab of his website, [www.daddy-o.us/schedule.htm](http://www.daddy-o.us/schedule.htm). I am glad I stumbled upon this amazing musician with so much talent!