

Many may wonder where such a name came from and are surprised to learn that these young men are all in their teens. This group of talented musicians consists of three brothers from Baton Rouge who are making their mark in music history, and have their last name to thank for their band name, Solar Heat. The eldest of the brothers is CJ celebrating his sweet 16 this month and the other two grinning members are 13 year old twins, Cody and Mack.

The boys really didn't start out to be a band; it just happened six years ago and they haven't stopped since. At the age of eight, CJ started taking guitar lessons Zeagler's Music. As most siblings do, they wanted to have what their older brother had and when we would take CJ to his lesson, the then five year olds both asked for something—a drum set. It was purchased, naturally and they began lessons shortly after. Once they began to get into the groove of things, they would practice together and continued to practice for fun and a band was born.

Surprisingly to mom and dad, the young group developed an interest in public performances. "CJ took guitar lessons from Stan Campbell and Stan frequently played at venues where the entire family could attend. We would go as a family and since CJ developed a love for classic rock; Stan would invite him to sit in during gigs," says proud mom Kay.

The first public appearance for the lead brother was at the Whistle Stop Coffee Shop in Denham Springs; and he played Bad Moon Rising by Creedence Clearwater. After that performance, there was no question in CJ's mind that he needed to be able to sing and play guitar; and he needed 15 songs for a full set. The band went from one song to an astonishing 60 within the year.

From that performance they moved on to restaurants and coffee shops around the area, anywhere they could play. "The boys would not book a new gig if they did not have a new full set of songs to play, they wanted to be fresh." They currently have over 400 songs they cover since they started six years ago."

About three years ago, the boys decided to add a bass guitar player and Cody made the change from drums to guitar. Cody continued to study keyboard along with guitar extending his talents to include more of a variety in the songs. Both Cody and CJ take their turn on the lead vocals and according to mom, it is amazing how they have evolved and worked together.

All play and no work; not in this household. They have school like all other teenagers and homework is a nightly routine. "They have great teachers who are very supportive and they practice on a regular basis. After homework they practice some every night. Practice includes working up songs for gigs, learning new songs and writing original songs.

With such a passion for music, you might wonder, what the boys do outside of the band and is there any time for anything else? Cody and Mack are currently in the 8th grade at Our Lady of Mercy School this year and both play basketball. A junior at Catholic High School, CJ stays true to his interest in music. Outside of the band he plays solo acoustic guitar gigs on his own or with his guitar teacher, Stan Campbell. As if one band isn't enough, CJ also performs with Guaranteed Fresh; a band with two of his fellow classmates.

Making their rounds and learning

The band plays a wide variety of music including classic rock, southern rock, country, blues and some popular new alternative rock songs. Sometimes the venues that the boys played helped them develop such a diverse play list. For example, they played at Misery & Jen's in Denham Springs several years ago and developed a large country set. Playing at Billie B's gave them a chance to add a lot of 50s and 60s songs to their set.

The boys had a very big year last year. They played for several charity events including the American Heart Association's Heart Walk at LSU and the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. In addition, they were invited back to perform at Festforall in Baton Rouge and opened for the Blues Jam at Phil Brady's. According to mom, it has been wonderful working with local bands in the area. "They have received so much support from local musicians and have been able to open for the Chris LeBlanc band."

Their list of openers was scaled up last year when they were the opening act for Aly & AJ, a well known tween band and closed the concert series at Blue Bayou water park being the opening gig for Vanessa Hudgens of High School Musical.

In addition to their public appearances, perform at private and birthday parties. "They love what they do and it doesn't matter to them if the party is celebrating a one year old or someone turning fifty." They always make it special by giving the birthday boy or girl a present from the band and sometimes will bring personal party favors such as guitar pics.

Celebrating Success - CD Release Party

The band has found a home at LaCarreta Mexican restaurant in Baton Rouge and they have become regulars playing most Saturdays. A landmark in their growing career will be the release of their first CD this month. The CD will consist of seven original songs along with three cover songs. The originals were written by CJ and Cody and were recorded in Baton Rouge.

To celebrate their first CD Solar Heat is inviting all of their fans to their CD release party. There will be prizes for the most decked out fan in Solar Heat gear. The gear can be found all month at Between Scene in Town Center and they everything from tank tops to jewelry, designed by mom of course. Don't come alone because the fan that brings most friends could walk away with a prize as well.

"They know how important their fans are and they want this to be fun for everyone. It is a family event and it will be a memorable evening for everyone," says Kay.

CD Release party will be held on Sunday, September 28th, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at LaCarreta Mexican restaurant. Bring the kids and enjoy music in a venue many teens dream of. There will be door prizes throughout the night, CD signings and giveaways and of course great music.

For more information, visit www.thesolarheat.com and myspace.com/thesolarheat