

Scott G. Gast

Margaretta High School

Class of 2002

Thomas Phillips once said that “Music is the speech of angels and the language of the soul.” William Merrill claimed that “There is nothing in the world so much like prayer as music.” And, Aaron Alcott opined that “Music expresses feelings and thoughts in ways that words cannot.” I am sure Scott Gast would have agreed with all of these observations. Scott was a musician and his music helped lifted some people’s spirits, gave others the inspiration to follow their dreams and still others the strength to weather life’s ups and downs.

Scott loved music. It was in his soul and performing became his life’s purpose. It was apparent from an early age when he started to listen to melodies, harmonies, rhythms and lyrics and experimenting with tones and sounds. At age thirteen he formed his first group – Shoebox - a worship band and began playing in area churches as part of their Sunday services. That same year he started the Coco-Beans, a band that played a mix of pop and rock.

Scott was also academically gifted. He did well in school – Math, Science, Social Studies, English – it didn’t matter. He earned top grades in all his studies. He graduated from Margaretta High School in 2002 receiving numerous academic awards including an Honors Diploma. The world was beckoning and Scott was ready to pursue his dreams.

Scott’s journey took him to Firelands College and Bowling Green State University where he majored in Business. To compliment his studies, and earn money for his schooling, he took a job with Citizens Bank. To say he was busy would be an understatement. Consistently carrying an eighteen semester hour course load, Scott would wake up in the morning, attend classes and then work at the bank. On Friday and Saturday nights he would play with the Coco-Beans at any one of dozens of clubs across northern Ohio. On Sunday mornings he would rise early to attend church services or perform with Shoebox at an area church or youth gathering.

For most that type of schedule would grind one down, but not Scott. He embraced learning ... music ... and helping others.

Customers at Citizens Bank liked Scott’s friendly and caring demeanor. His peers were fond of his zest for life and his willingness to make time for them. His co-workers appreciated his cheerfulness and his readiness to pitch in and help. And, bank executives prized his competence, work ethic and his ability to always do the right thing. Awards came and additional duties and responsibilities followed. Soon Fifth/Third Bank approached him, offering him a position as a personal banker. It was a step-up in the industry and played into Scott’s strong suit – listening to others, identifying their needs and solving their problems. Just like at Citizens Bank, he worked hard and went above and beyond what was expected of him.

Scott would graduate from Bowling Green State University earning a business degree and honors. After all those years of study, and the cost of a college degree, Scott uttered the words that no parent wants to hear – “I am going to quit my job and play in a rock ‘n roll band.” But his parents understood and supported him as they always had.

For the next two years Scott performed across Ohio and beyond, playing four to six nights a week with the Coco-Beans and every Sunday with Shoebox. Faith was important to him. So were people. Everywhere he performed Scott took time to talk with people. Sometimes it consisted of offering words of encouragement ... at other times a pat on the back for a success ... and still other times an embrace when the friction of life had worn them down. It did not matter if the person was young or old, fortunate or less fortunate, able or less able – Scott energized them with his positive attitude, upbeat outlook and zest for life. Once a fan remarked that anyone who ever talked with Scott always came away with a sense that everything in life would turn out okay.

Scott returned to banking, joining the Cleveland branches of Key Bank and then Charter One. He became an assistant bank manager with the latter. But his music career was far from over. He still played every weekend with the Coco-Beans and Shoebox. He even found the time to put together a Rolling Stones tribute band - Start Me Up - and went on a tour that took him to Latin America, sometimes playing before crowds exceeding one-hundred thousand (100,000) people.

On November 2, 2014 Scott would lose his life to injuries he sustained in an automobile accident while driving home. He was thirty (30) years old. His passing and the contributions he made to the people of Ohio were acknowledged by Governor John Kasich, Lieutenant Governor Mary Taylor, members of the United States House of Representatives and Senate, the Erie County Commissioners and the Sandusky City Council.

Though gone, Scott’s memory and example lives on in the lives of others – family, friends, community members and fans. Within a year after his death the municipalities of Sandusky, Huron and Castalia erected plaques to honor his memory and to acknowledge his efforts in making our world a better place. Owners at more than twenty (20) venues across the State where Scott had played were so moved by his untimely death that they created permanent memorials to him, attaching a guitar to a wall along with his picture. The Sandusky Register, Catholic Chronicle, Put-in-Bay Gazette, Lifestyles Magazine, Northcoast Voice and the Lorain Journal published articles detailing his life and accomplishments.

Many people donated money in Scott’s name after his passing in an expression of sympathy. It was used to restore a stain glass window at Holy Angels Church in Sandusky ... purchase music instruments for St. Peter’s Elementary School in Huron ... and fund projects for ... Back to the Wild ... the Erie County Food Bank ... Grace Lutheran Church and ... Margareta Local Schools. Scott would have approved of all of these efforts. He would have also approved of the donation of his baby grand piano to the Firelands Symphony Orchestra’s School for the Arts.

Scott was a unique individual. His academic achievements, and his music and his professional accomplishments attest to that. But those don't reveal the strength that resided in his soul. He was kind, compassionate, enthusiastic, and possessed the innate ability to lift people's spirits. Those were his superpowers.

Ladies and gentlemen please join me in honoring Scott G. Gast. Accepting on his behalf, his father – George Gast.

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