

Band Biographies

The CheekTones's Story:

First there was Don, playing single on Sunday nights to an increasingly small crowd at CoJo's in Prescott. Marty Love didn't have enough to do, and said to himself, "Self, I could play to those tiny crowds, too", so then there were two, known cleverly as Don and Marty.

Then about the time D&M hit the big time, aka "moving to Saturdays", Gary Ukura says, "Hey Don, I think I could maybe add some drums and harmonies on your stuff", so then there were three, and now they needed a name. So Don made a list, which included gems like "Don's Early Light", Cheeko de Gallo, and the ever-popular D-Siders. The CheekTones won in a landslide, and quickly prompted the question, "What is the sound of a CheekTone?", which has yet to be answered, not in any reel scents...Ines and his fiddle started showing up at occasional gigs, followed by Jimmy Hayes and his Strat. And through all of this, Don's wife Jane would appear at random intervals to add her distinctive vocals to the mix. And the once-shrinking crowds at CoJo's began to grow. In December '08, the band released their first cd, Razorburn; Jimmy Hayes, Kenny James, and Brian Moss each took a turn on lead guitar, and now Drew Hall showed up with his Les Paul...and The CheekTones story just keeps evolving.

Don Cheek:

A complaint from his brother about pounding the dashboard started Don on his musical journey, sometime during high school. He acquired a drum set to pound on instead, learning to play them by watching other drummers, and was in his first band before he was 18. Vocals played an important part early on, so Don picked up his father's guitar and started learning the band's songs on guitar, using it to work out vocal parts.

Playing high school dances and bars around Phoenix (they once auditioned at a go-go bar, the Showgirl, which is now the Rhythm Room—got the gig, but none of them were old enough to play there!), their music evolved from covers of pop music to longer jams and the country-rock of the 70's. During that time he added bass and piano to his repertoire, and played for several Phoenix-area bands. In 1992 Don found his songwriting voice, and started turning out songs, which range from the alt-country sound of Portales to the driving beat of Beside That Train and the blues-rock of Believe Anything; most of his lyrics have just a taste of humor/satire lurking beneath the surface. After playing solo for a year or two, Don met the musicians that would become The CheekTones, and they've been making music ever since.

Marty Love- Marty Love has been entertaining audiences for over 15 years in and around the southwestern United States and Mexico. Six years ago Marty switched from guitar to bass and has been backing up and writing songs with such bands as Carnuba, The Sunday Civilians, and of course the Cheektones.

While spending the past decade trying to sell his soul to the devil in exchange for letting him remain 23 till the day he dies, Marty also began piecing together his own recording studio out of a batch of loose wiring that he found on the highway. In the past 5 years Marty has helped release 6 albums, all recorded in his studio.

As far as what the future holds for Mr. Love, Marty is currently putting together his first solo project, to be called "Ramblin Man", basically focusing on the songs that Marty has written over the past 15 years of playing and performing. He has also been helping a few other local bands in their recording process both in and out of his studio. For more information on Marty visit www.martylove.com.

Gary Ukura- I was born, raised, and educated in suburban Minneapolis. I've been playing music since I can remember, whenever I could, on whatever was around. I also sang a lot, mostly to records tapes and the radio. At twenty I picked up

the guitar, at thirty I began writing songs. I played drums whenever they were around. Don had some drums so I started playing those. Now I have my own set. I play them with the JNG Band, too, and sing along.

Drew Hall- At the age of 11, Drew Hall's passion for music was ignited when his father, Tom Hall, played "Living On A Prayer" on the jukebox for him at the Palace Diner in Queens, NY. He got his first guitar at 13 and began playing with the passion, dedication and drive that is still seen today in his playing.

At the age of 15 Drew moved with his family to Prescott, Arizona. He traveled cross-country by Greyhound bus with his guitar by his side. One thing remained constant, his love and passion for playing guitar and always working on improving his craft. By the age of 17, Drew was playing in bands; starting out with local favorites Cadillac Ranch, the Lamar sisters and Freddie Cisneros's; the Leisure Kings.

In 1999 Drew co-founded the band Big Daddy D & the Dynamites, where he was a lead and slide guitarist, vocalist and songwriter. Highlights of the band's 13-year run included performing at the Glendale Jazz and Blues Festival, Bisbee Blues and Silver City Blues Fest. Drew's original songs have also featured on Bluesville, XM Radio's premier blues channel. All of this was made possible by the band winning the 2007 AZ Blues Showdown, and being chosen to represent the state of Arizona in the International Blues Challenge. The band played at Alfred's on the famous Beale Street in Memphis, Tennessee, with great feedback from the judges.

Having more to say musically, Drew collaborated with Anton Teschner and formed the Drew Hall and Anton Teschner Acoustic Guitar Duo. In their nine years playing together they have released two well-loved and acclaimed CDs with plans to release their third in the coming year. He keeps a busy schedule of traveling to play music, locally and out of state, as a guest guitarist and vocalist. He can be seen in Arizona playing in the band KASH, a best of the best of local musicians, and in California, playing with the talented and well-known performer, Kirk Wall.

It was in June of 2010 that Drew first sat in with the Cheektones. For the next two years he would fill in as a substitute, loving every minute of it. In September of 2012, Drew officially became a full-time member of the band. He is thrilled to be a full time Cheektone and is looking forward to the release of the new Cheektones CD this year.