

## **MINI EXHIBIT**

### **Vashon's Plymouth Rocker Mania, 1965–1966–1967**

It was the fall of 1964 when Steve Self was asked by the Vashon High School junior class president about doing a school fundraiser. City high schools were all hosting live bands at their dances, so Steve said he would put together a band for a post-football game soc-hop—and the Sovereigns were formed. The group only played instrumentals, but the teens really got into it. As Self recalls, “It was like the Beatles came to town” because it was the first live music performance Vashon students had ever experienced. That was the launching board for what eventually led to a music mania on Vashon Island and the formation of the Plymouth Rockers. The founding members included: Steve Self, Class of '66 (vocals, saxophone, harmonica, and flute); Ron Frombach, Class of '64 (bass guitar and vocals); Bruce Williams, Class of '66 (lead guitar and vocals); Larry Engel, Class of '66 (lead guitar and vocals); Tony Ortega, Class of '65 (drum and vocals), and Andy Larsen, Class of '67 (organ).

These six guys were inspired by Northwest rock and roll bands. Paul Revere and the Raiders, The Wailers, The Kingsmen, Don and the Good Times, and The Sonics were a few of the bands they admired. Steve Self was the only band member considered to be a trained musician. Bruce Williams was quite a trumpet player and participated in band class. Andy Larsen had a natural musical ear—after hearing a song on the radio, he could lay it down on his organ. Larry Engel was voted “Most Talented” by his peers for his guitar playing and vocal skills. Ron Frombach had taken bass lessons, and Tony Ortega knew how to keep a beat, but both were considered self-taught musicians. All these guys had one thing in common—they loved music.

This exhibit, curated by Jackie Merrill, includes instruments, photographs, record albums, props, costumes, and more. A printed banner labels the exhibit, which will be on display at the Vashon High School main office lobby through the rest of the 2019–2020 school year.

—From an article by Jackie Merrill