

THE DAY THE MUSIC STARTED UP AGAIN

Des Moines, May 8, 2006 -- There is a terrific rock 'n' roll music story building in Iowa right now. Richie Lee Luckenbill, a sophomore at Des Moines North High School, is developing a real following across the state performing as "Richie Lee & the Fabulous '50s." Growing up listening to the 1950s and early '60s rock 'n' roll that his parents loved, the kid worked up a contest-winning impersonation of Buddy Holly by the time he was seven years old.



Richie Lee, a sophomore at Des Moines North High School, is creating a statewide sensation with his live '50s rock 'n' roll show, which has him starring as sort of a second coming of Buddy Holly.

Three years ago, with his parents help, he organized the band in which he is backed by two good adult players, Steve Breese on bass and Mike Lozano on drums. So far, they avoid school night performances. Remember, the star still has to be in class at North High every weekday. But weekend gigs have taken them to Decorah, Spirit Lake, Davenport, Waterloo, Winterset, Clear Lake and all over Des Moines. They are scheduled May 20 from 8 p.m. to midnight at the historic Lake Robbins Ballroom near Woodward. I

saw and heard Richie Lee in two different types of performances on the same evening last week. First, he was playing bass guitar along with a lot of other good young musicians in the North High Jazz Band, performing alongside the school's show choir for the All-Class Reunion being held in the North gym. An hour later, after the awards program, it was "Richie Lee & the Fabulous '50s" taking over with all the hits of Holly and other early rockers. They are good, for sure, and they seem to be as fun as they are good. Richie made a grand entrance, singing "Duke of Earl" while wearing a white cape, tophat and carrying a walking stick. Then he took off the extras and got right into the show while wearing a white tuxedo jacket, white shirt with bowtie, black tux trousers, black shoes with with pink insets on the uppers, and playing a classic Fender guitar. His North High band instructor Christian Baughman told me that administrators and faculty members are enjoying Richie's early success as much as the students are. "He's a sophomore now, so we're starting to think that two years from now, the music and theater departments should go together and put on 'The Buddy Holly Story,'" Baughman said. With guess who in the starring role! – *CHO*