

Aiken Standard

Beach musician's book pays homage

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Musician and Aiken native Mike Stewart has been forever immortalized in "The Heeey Baby Days of Beach Music."

Georgia author Greg Haynes and his wife, Nora Marion, joined the Fourth of July festivities in Aiken at Rose Hill on Friday.

Haynes was on hand to sign and discuss his award-winning book "The Heeey Baby Days of Beach Music, the Memories and the Music."

A band promoter in the early years, Haynes wanted to "memorialize a few of the interesting and fun events that happened in the mid to late '60s when the bands of the Southeast were making parties in auditoriums, National Guard armories, fraternity houses and other venues."

The book is a fascinating collection of photos and stories about the early days of beach music when it had a rhythm and blues sound. At 533 larger than legal size pages, the book is a music lover's mecca with early photos of the Rolling Stones, Allman Joys (Allman Brothers) and Aiken's own Mike Stewart, who was a member of The Intruders.

Focusing on the '60s, the book pays homage to the leaders behind the rhythms.

"In the '60s, many of the bands featured were at their zenith, many were 9-piece bands with horn sections," said Haynes, as he pointed to an early photo of Allman Brothers drummer wearing a tie. "The book is focused on the musicians. There were so many bands who grew up playing the rhythm and blues. All the young bands wanted to sound like James Brown and they tried to emulate their R&B idols."

The beach music scene, including the Embers, the Catalinas, Bob Meyer & the Riverias, the Spontanes and 300 other bands in North Carolina alone, play a major role in the book. While Haynes is not calling it a complete anthology, he is pleased to call it a start.

The book, which took more than five years to complete is a compilation from many contributors. Published in 2006, it went on to take the bronze medal in the books in popular culture category in 2007. It has become wildly popular in the local area as it pays tribute to many Augusta musicians who went on to change the face of the industry.

This is a must-see for music lovers. For more information on "The Heeey Baby Days of Beach Music, the Memories and the Music," visit <http://heybabydays.com/author.htm>.

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