



# VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*The Story of Virginia*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 30, 2010

Jennifer Guild, Senior Officer for Public Relations and Marketing  
(804) 342-9665, [jguild@vahistorical.org](mailto:jguild@vahistorical.org)

## Rockabilly Concert at the Virginia Historical Society

**What:** In August, the Virginia Historical Society (VHS) opened a rockabilly music exhibit called *Virginia Rocks! The History of Rockabilly in the Commonwealth*. To celebrate Virginia's long rockabilly roots, the VHS is hosting a **Rockabilly Concert** featuring The Dazzlers, Wrenn Mangum, and Exebelle & The Rusted Cavalcade.

**Who:** When **The Dazzlers** struck their first chords in 1955, the Lynchburg-area teenagers had no idea they were on the cutting edge of a new breed of musicians. The five-man group was hired to back rockabilly king Jerry Lee Lewis in 1957 and a few years later opened for Chuck Berry. In 1961 The Dazzlers split up, but 40 years later, they are now playing on stage together again as the only known Virginia rockabilly band still performing with all the original members from the 1950s.

**Wrenn Mangum** is a singer and entertainer who has been performing in Richmond for more than ten years. His voice, stage presence, and charisma capture the essence of the 1950s era. From humility and humor to romance and rebellion, Wrenn pays tribute to the rockabilly greats Elvis, Buddy Holly, Gene Vincent, and Jerry Lee Lewis.

Taking inspiration from Virginia's folk tradition, local songwriters formed **Exebelle & The Rusted Cavalcade** in 2007. Since then, band members have incorporated thick harmonies, pedal steel guitar, and percussion into their music. According to The All Music Blog, "Fans will find something familiar about Exebelle's rustic racket, which alternates between alt-country rock and weep-into-your-whiskey ballads."

**When:** Friday, October 15, 2010. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Concert starts at 8:00 p.m.

**Where:** Virginia Historical Society, 428 North Boulevard, Richmond 23220

**Cost:** Tickets are \$10 in advance for VHS members and \$15 in advance for nonmembers. Tickets can be purchased at the door for \$15 (members) and \$20 (nonmembers).

Advance tickets can be purchased on the VHS website ([www.vahistorical.org](http://www.vahistorical.org)) or in the Museum Shop.

**Exhibit:** *Virginia Rocks! The History of Rockabilly in the Commonwealth*  
On display at the VHS through December 12, 2010. Museum admission is free.

Rockabilly was one of several musical styles of rock-and-roll, the catch phrase for youth music of the post-World War II era. Rockabilly was an energetic blend of blues and country powered by dramatic solo singers, fast-walking bass runs, strong guitar licks, catchy lyrics, and bold stage movements. Numerous Virginia bands and singers embraced the rockabilly style, but their impact on Virginia's cultural legacy has been largely overlooked by historians and musicologists. This exhibition—organized by the Blue Ridge Institute of Ferrum College—includes Virginia artists who recorded rockabilly records, performed on radio "dance party" television shows, and played in dance halls and school gyms in the 1950s and early 1960s. The exhibit explores the rise of rockabilly as a then-radical departure from established popular music and an early chapter in the phenomenon of youth rebellion, the place of rockabilly in the larger youth culture of the pre-Beatles era, and the demise of the genre as the music industry invested in the softer sound of "teen idols." It includes photographs, rare audio and video recordings, stage costumes, a jukebox, and musical instruments.