

Biolans Up Close

Tim Bedley's Real-Life 'School of Rock'

To help his elementary school students learn their three Rs—reading, writing and arithmetic—Biola graduate Tim Bedley ('87) recently decided to add a couple more Rs to the mix: Rock and roll. The result is Rockin' the Standards, a rock band whose tunes aim to help children learn California's academic standards. The trio, which features Bedley as drummer and lyricist, put out their first album—a collection of math songs—in March.

Highlights include original tunes such as "Mean Mode Median" and repurposed melodies such as "The Quadrilateral Dance," sung to the tune of "Father Abraham." (A sample lyric: "Quadrilateral has many shapes / Many shapes has quadrilateral / A square is one of them / Congruent sides / And four right angles too.") Bedley, who teaches at Wildomar Elementary School in Wildomar, Calif., shared his story with *Biola Magazine*.

Rockin' the Standards is a brand new concept in rock bands. We play real rock music but our lyrics are state academic standards. Our songs help students remember easily forgotten elementary school concepts.

I began writing songs to help my students back in 2002. I discovered the power of music to help kids instantly recall skip counting patterns, i.e. 4, 8, 12, 16, etc. I figured that if it worked for this, I needed to write songs for everything the chil-



dren were forgetting. I'm not there yet, but maybe eventually I'll have a song for every standard.

My students love singing. You would think it would be too "babyish" for 11-year-olds. Since the songs have such good beats, the kids beg to sing, dance and learn to Rockin' the Standards. And of course, my kids rarely forget any of the concepts in the songs. Their scores on the song concepts are always exceptional.

My favorite song has to be "The Quadrilateral Dance." I love how Ben Jacobs, my musical partner, recorded that song. It is very thick musically and lyrically. The guitar line is extremely catchy, and it just feels good.

I write all the lyrics for the band. I'm the only teacher in the group so I feel it's vital that the songs' lyrics are academically accurate and that the vocabulary is accessible to the kids.

Most of the songs are old standard children's songs with the lyrics changed. Our newer stuff is completely original. On these songs I write some poetic lyrics to address a relevant standard. I try the lyrics out with the kids as a chant, get some feedback from them, do some

revisions, and then get the lyrics to Ben so he can add music and record the song.

The reaction from parents and teachers has been overwhelmingly positive. They love the music. It's pretty obvious to people who have experience working with kids that this sort of thing works.

Our CD went to No. 1 on digstation.com, a Web site that sells song downloads, so that's a pretty good indication of what people are thinking of the music.

I love teaching! I have been at it professionally for 20 years, but I began teaching when I was only 16; I taught private drum lessons.

One of my favorite verses is Philippians 2:3: "Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves." I keep going back to that verse because everything in my flesh just hates that verse.

When I'm not teaching or rocking out, I enjoy spending time with my family, teaching a home Bible study and cheering for the Lakers and Angels.

Tim Bedley At A Glance

Residence: Murrieta, Calif.

Family: Wife: Mary; Four children: Jordan, 17; Mollie, 15; Blake, 13; and Taylor, 5.

Education: Bachelor's degree in marketing, Biola; teaching credential, University of California, Irvine; master's degree in educational technology, Azusa Pacific University.

Favorite bands: Five Iron Frenzy, The Channel Surfers, Switchfoot, Jars of Clay, The Police, Tower of Power, Marc Antoine and Chris Tomlin.

Web site: www.rockinthestandards.com