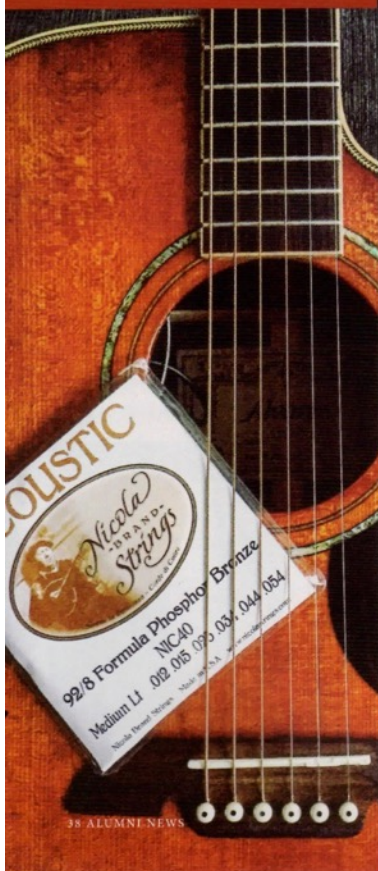


TODAY'S NEWS

Made By Musicians For Musicians

With Strings Attached

Chris Sfarzo '91 drums up business



Chris Sfarzo '91 remembers growing up in a happy home, surrounded by music. The piano and accordion were focal points of every party. There were singers, harpists and violinists, as well as random musicians who wandered in and out with guitars and saxophones.

"Nobody was too shy to join in to create some good music," Chris remembered. "Everything is happier with music; it has brought so much joy to our home."

The Sfarzos have turned their passion for music into a booming business, Nicola Brand Strings.

"Our strings are created for the traditionalist and today's modern musician," Chris noted. "Nicola strings deliver superior tone and feel. They're wrapped with premium metal alloy and are designed for that classic vintage sound. Our endorsed artists include the Doobie Brothers, Carlos Reyes, Marley's Ghost, Rex Carroll, Robert Berry and many more."

The strings are manufactured in Santa Rosa. Chris and his parents, Ron and Maryann, run Nicola Brand Strings by day. By night, they are songwriters and musicians. Maryann is an accomplished singer, voice-over talent and actress. Ron plays the piano, accordion and Hammond B3 organ.



Chris Sfarzo '91 and his father, Ron, at the Guitar String Manufacturers Company in Santa Rosa

Chris is a percussionist who started playing drums at when he was 9. He also played the trumpet and baritone and was the lead drummer of the rock groups Liquid and the Mick Donovan Band.

"We love being creative," Chris said. "Life would be boring without music. We enjoy writing songs that inspire people—songs including *America Our Country*, *America Our Home*, which was written after 9/11 and performed at the San Mateo County Annual Memorial Service; and *In a Child's Eyes*, performed by my parents in 2005 in Washington, D. C. on National Missing Children's Day."

Nicola Brand Strings was named after Chris' Italian grandfather, Nicola Sfarzo. Nicola moved to San Francisco in 1920 with his guitar and mandolin. He played the guitar to support his young family and also worked as a baker. In a freak accident one day, a baker's rack hit his eye and Nicola became blind. Despite his blindness, he continued to play the guitar and mandolin.

Nicola's three boys, Angelo, Ron and Don, inherited their father's talent. Angelo was the owner of Angelo's House of Music in San Francisco's Mission District for more than 30 years. Don, a percussionist, owned Drum World in San Francisco and San Mateo. Ron traveled in the music business as a Wurlitzer, Baldwin, Lowrey and Roland Keyboard sales representative. In 1988, Ron and Don opened San Francisco Keyboard Gallery. After several years in the business, Ron decided to pursue his lifelong dream of becoming a police officer. He was hired by the Menlo Park Police Department in 1990, but he never gave up performing.

Chris has fond memories of running track and bowling for the Serra Bowling Club. In fact, he credits his lifelong love of bowling to Serra Assistant Admissions Director Bruce Anthony, the Bowling Club's moderator. Chris has a 210 bowling average. He also found his calling in the Serra Jazz Band and Concert Band under the direction of Jay Jordan.

An avid music lover, Chris is inspired by many different music genres. "I listen to everything from Van Halen to Frank Sinatra," he said. "I'm so lucky to be part of a musical family, and I'm happy to be doing something today that honors Papa, my grandfather. My hope is to grow Nicola Brand Strings into a household name, loved by many musicians. I don't know what our family would be without music; *life is music—music is life.*"

For more information, visit www.nicolastrings.com.



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