

'HEY LOOK, IT'S ...'

Making a living as a legend

By CLARK MASON

With the release of the film "The Buddy Holly Story" a few years ago and the subsequent awakening of interest in the '50s rock and roll star, P.F. Lazor of Fremont started getting noticed by strangers.

They would stop Lazor on the street, in the supermarket, at a concert, and say things such as, "Hey look, it's Buddy Holly."

The physical resemblance, along with the horn rims and haircut Lazor had been sporting for four or five years, made him look like a Holly clone. Before long, Lazor — who was somewhat of a musician already and who managed a rock and roll band called Ryde — was talked into buying a replica of Buddy Holly's guitar.

One night at a club where Ryde was playing, a band member who was equally as interested in watching Lazor make a fool of himself egged him into going up on stage and trying a Buddy Holly imitation.

"The crowd loved it. They went nuts over it. I was eventually upstaging them (Ryde) to the point where I had to quit managing them," said Lazor, who will be bringing his act, billed as the Buddy Holly Jr. Show, to Enrico's Tuesday night.

Lazor does three sets of well-known and obscure Holly tunes — "That'll be the Day," "It's So Easy to Fall in Love," "It Doesn't Matter Anymore," "Well Alright," "Not Fade Away" and others that if you didn't know better, you'd swear Linda Ronstadt or the Rolling Stones wrote, but are actually Buddy Holly originals. The hits just keep on coming: "Peggy Sue," "True Love Ways," "Rave On," "Maybe Baby," and more.

Lazor and his band, who played here last week, are good enough musicians and do faithful enough re-creations that Buddy Holly or his family would probably smile upon him.

In fact, Holly's brother, Larry, reached by phone in Lubbock, Tex., told The Press Democrat, "I like to see people do all they can in Buddy's commemoration. This guy's pretty good, but not the best I've heard. But he may have improved by now.

"I think Lazor is a very good musician and singer and I think he has great possibilities," he added.

However, said Holly's brother, Lazor should

not try to copy Buddy to the tee, but adapt the songs to his own style, the way Ronstadt did. Of course that would destroy the illusion.

Holly's widow undoubtedly would want a percentage of Lazor's earnings if she knew about his show, according to Larry, and she has a similar arrangement with another artist from Dallas doing a Holly act.

Lazor said he has written letters to both Holly's widow and parents advising them of his show, but admits the one to Holly's widow probably was overlooked in all the fan mail.

Lazor has been doing the Holly "tribute" for 18 months at such places as the MGM Grand in Reno, Keystone Palo Alto, the Old Waldorf and the Boardinghouse.

A year ago in San Jose, while doing a leap on stage, Lazor broke a leg ligament in half and destroyed some cartilage. He was in a cast for six months and still is regaining his former agility.

The Detroit native uses some of the acrobatic skills he learned while doing a trapeze act on an advertising parasail a few years ago in Miami.

He said he is within a quarter of an inch of Holly's height and within three pounds of his weight. Lazor is 26. Holly was only 22 when he died in a plane crash.

Lazor believes that had Holly lived, he might eventually have become a bigger star than Elvis.

Interestingly, virtually all of the Buddy Holly songwriting rights now belong to former Beatle Paul McCartney, who bought them at a bargain rate in the mid '70s, according to Lazor.

McCartney, a rabid Holly fan, largely was responsible for the Holly revival, which hit Europe before the United States. For that reason, Lazor is eager to take his act to Europe, where he believes there's a larger, ready-made audience.

Lazor is also a published poet with a hard-back to his credit entitled "Unsung Memories." Like Randy Hansen, who does a Jimi Hendrix imitation, Lazor eventually wants to incorporate his own songs into the act.

"If it's inappropriate and people don't dig it, I won't do it," Lazor said.



P.F. Lazor — an imitation Buddy Holly

—Julie Stein