

Seattle's Sons of Guns releases 'Emerald Evergreen'

■ Band with local ties releases album with 13 new tracks

The Seattle-based band Sons of Guns recently released a new record titled "Emerald Evergreen."

According to a press release, "The story of folk/rock quartet Sons of Guns defies most odds and tests of time. While it's trying for a band to endure several years together and maintain a steady output of new material, the gentlemen from the Emerald City (with deep ties to the Grande Ronde Valley) have outlasted many of their contemporaries — if not out of sheer will and stubborn determination — by way of an unbroken friendship that has forged and evolved through a decade and a half of creative camaraderie."

Eastern Oregon University students Gregory Rawlins (Port Orchard, Washington) and Mike Surber (Baker City) met in 2002, immediately bonding over a mutual love for acting, literature and the many shared activities offered by the college.

Both were soon cast in the EOU production of "The Laramie Project," and the two, along with the rest of the actors and crew, held a series of cast party impromptu jams following each night of the play's run.

This newfound medium of expression was the perfect culmination for the budding artists,

incorporating all the elements they had been exploring to that point.

So inspired were they that the next steps seemed obvious — withdraw from school, move to Seattle and form a band.

In the late fall of 2003, bassist EJ "Trojan Horse" Sander approached them at an open mic on Ballard Avenue's Sunset Tavern and announced his enthusiasm for their songs. News also came that a master of dry humor and percussion, Seth "Shifty Jones" Johnson, was en route from Flagstaff, Arizona.

Sons of Guns played their first show two months later at the (now defunct) Dubliner Irish Pub in nearby Fremont.

For a year and a half the four played dozens of venues in the Seattle area to a quickly growing fan base, and even set out on a several-week tour around the Western U.S. in support of their debut EP, "Need Less to Say."

Their expanding popularity and creative output seemed to swell exponentially, and preparations were already being made for their first full-length effort.

Then, overnight, the story of Sons of Guns disintegrated almost as quickly as it took shape.

A chance opportunity for Mike and Greg to join a mobile laundry truck and venture down to New Orleans to perform relief work in



Submitted photo

Sons of Guns, with members who have ties to Eastern Oregon, have released a new album. Their March show in La Grande was canceled in the effort to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

the wake of Hurricane Katrina began as a minor kink in the band's momentum, though it soon developed into a full-blown indefinite hiatus.

For the next several years Sons of Guns, though fractured, trudged on thanks to a host of talented musicians (Roger Barnes, Luke McKern, Wayne Callahan, Jeff Grammer) who stood in for the original members and fanned the

embers just enough to keep the fire from going out completely.

Then, in 2016, the four core members found themselves once again in the same region. Without delay they hatched a plan to reconvene, party and compose. Such notions resulted in a four-day cabin retreat on the shores of the Puget Sound, which yielded an entire album worth of pent-up ideas.

A few months and rehearsals

later, they entered Seattle's Vertigo Studios and recorded "Marguerite" in a whirlwind of a weekend.

Because of the cabin session and subsequent success of their return, it was decided that the solitary and fully-immersive approach to their artistic creation was ideal. Thus, the four chose to repeat the getaway in February 2018.

As before, Johnson, Sander, Surber and Rawlins feverishly wrote and played — the end product being 13 brand-new tracks — captured once again by the band's long-standing producer Brad Kaminski.

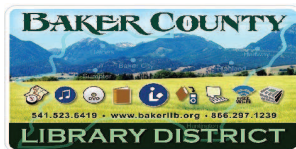
The press release describes the album like this: "Each track on "Emerald Evergreen" seems to accurately reflect the mood and character of each member — growing wiser, more musically deft, and ever grateful for the chance to continue to do what they love the most — creating art together."

"All the classic elements of Sons of Guns are present — sweaty rock 'n' roll, poetic lyrics, ballads of the folk/Americana tradition, and a keen observation of the society, culture and world around them — filtered through the lens of a quartet that, in all rock's aggression and angst, remains unwaveringly encased in celebration and reverence of what it means to be alive."



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