

Ritchie Young

The organizer behind the ensemble Loch Lomond talks about the Portland band's winter tour, crazy dreams and, of course, the pope



PHOTO BY HAYLEY YOUNG

BY SUE ZALOKAR
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Ritchie Young was born and raised in a Republican family in Bend. He played a little music in school, but he will tell you he was “horrible.” Though he plays the guitar and sings lead vocals for his band, Loch Lomond, Young admits he identifies more as a producer than a musician.

In many ways, although he is just over the Cascades, he is worlds from where he came from. He splits his time now between touring Europe with the band he started 10 years ago with a friend, Rob Oberdorder (Ages and Ages) – and living in Southeast Portland.

Live performances range from Young by himself to a full band and any combination in-between.

Ten years and many incarnations of the band later, Loch Lomond has returned home to Portland from the 2014 tour and is awaiting the release of its fifth album.

The band is doing a winter tour of the West Coast of the United States with The Vaselines – an alternative rock band from Glasgow, Scotland, who gained notoriety (after they broke up) when Nirvana covered two of their songs on the “Incesticide” album (1992).

Loch Lomond and The Vaselines play the Doug Fir on Sunday, Jan. 25.

Sue Zalokar: *Loch Lomond is a tender 10 year old project. Tell me the origin of the band name.*

Ritchie Young: I wanted to call the band The Mountains but there are tons of “mountains” bands. We ordered some reel-to-reel tape on eBay and it had a sticker on the box that said Loch Lomond.

On the tape itself were old French – or was it German? – nuns singing. We sampled that in our first record.

S.Z.: *Camaraderie – there seems to be quite a lot of that in the band.*

R.Y.: It’s because there is no core, core group. Well, there is a core group, but we pull members in and out over the years, so they don’t feel pressure to tour every tour or do everything that the band is doing.

It seems like a large family reunion – some people can show up and some people can’t. Some people are having babies, some people are doing other things.

S.Z.: *You play violin, but as a mandolin ...*

R.Y.: I don’t play violin. I just fake it. I should just get a mandolin. It’s kind of embarrassing.

S.Z.: *But it’s quirky and it has a distinct sound ..*

R.Y.: Yeah, I’m trying to get that pitz sound out of it ...

S.Z.: *Pitz?*

R.Y.: Pizzicato. I haven’t played the violin for a while, actually. I write using a lot of different instruments, but live I play guitar and sing.

S.Z.: *Did you play music in school?*

R.Y.: I was awful. I’m not a musician. I more like to produce stuff. If someone were to put the most basic piece of sheet music in front of me, I wouldn’t ...

S.Z.: *There are (at least) two kinds of musicians though. There is the classically trained musician who came up playing and reading music and practicing. And then there are people who can intuitively hear patterns and make patterns. Those skills are equally important. So, how did you come to music then, or how did music come to you?*

R.Y.: In high school I got grounded for having a nail gun fight with my friend in wood shop class. And I hit him above the eye and I was grounded for the entire summer. My dad had an acoustic guitar upstairs, and it had a Neil Young book in it.

S.Z.: *Voila! You’ve said you had a weird childhood. What was weird about it?*

R.Y.: I was a weird little kid, yeah.

S.Z.: *You were diagnosed with ADD as a kid.*

R.Y.: I’m almost 40 now and it’s much better now. There is still a lot of energy ... As a child, my family lived right on the woods. So, my friends and I created a kind of fantasy land.

S.Z.: *You seem to live in a surreal, ethereal world, and in listening to your music, you have some remarkable dreams – many of which have become what you’ve called “simple songs that the band fill and color in.” Talk about creative process.*

R.Y.: Every song is totally different in how I go about creating it. The ones that I try to force are always awful. The ones that

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