

# ‘ALL THE WAY BACK HOME’

**Eugene-born EDM musician LP Giobbi performs at WOW Hall right before Thanksgiving**

BY SAVANNAH BROWN

**L**eah Chisholm got her first period at MacArthur Court. Before Chisholm was LP Giobbi, a top performer in the underground electronic dance music scene, she was a 15-year-old piano player who — like all young teenagers — had no idea what she wanted to do with the rest of her life, and was waiting for the sweet release of puberty.

On Oct. 12, 2002, Chisholm and her family went to see Bob Dylan perform at the University of Oregon’s MacArthur Court. He opened with “Maggie’s Farm,” a song protesting conformity, and immediately followed it with “Just Like a Woman.”

Not long after, Chisholm ran to the bathroom in excitement, as she had finally gotten her period. “I was a late bloomer,” she says. “I came back and I was celebrating with my family” when it finally happened. A bit later in his setlist, Dylan (coincidentally) played “It’s Alright, Ma (I’m Only Bleeding).”

When the family arrived home, Chisholm’s father wrote a poem about watching his little girl blossom into a woman while being soundtracked to Dylan’s song about the qualities and vulnerabilities of womanhood.

Today, Chisholm is LP Giobbi, DJ and producer, who has performed EDM around the world from Coachella to Spain, and has released official remixes for Jerry Garcia and Taylor Swift.

On Nov. 27, Giobbi — who currently lives in Austin, Texas, but spends most of her time on tour — will be coming home to Eugene to perform at WOW Hall as part of her Way Back Home tour. She’ll be playing new mixes from her two albums *Lighter Places* and *DOTR* (pronounced “Daughter,” for how she would sign letters to her parents as a child), released in October.

Giobbi says the concert is a “high energy musical journey” featuring all of the concert staples that make her unique. She exquisitely incorporates her music history as a classically trained jazz pianist who grew up in a house of Dead Heads into her work and her performances, using live synthesizers and a microphone to layer improvisations over recorded tracks. Her shows combine an ethereal mix of jazz, classical music and classic rock with upbeat dance jams and bubbly basslines — creating an immersive, sweaty and captivating EDM experience.

Her dad’s poem, along with one Giobbi’s friend wrote, is featured as an interlude on *DOTR* titled, “Dad to Daughter; We Say Yes.” Tracked over a fun, space-age beat, Giobbi and her dad’s voices intermingle, reading the respective poems about daughterhood. On the track, her dad recites his poem, saying, “She wiggles and she sizzles/in a hair tossed swirl of delight/She is her own mega watt beacon/tearing up the darkness into light.”

*DOTR* is Giobbi’s creative process into griev-

ing and honoring mother figures she lost in 2023, while understanding her own role as a daughter. “A lot of the lens of who I am as a person is seen through being a daughter,” she says. “The process of making this album is sort of finding my inner child again.”

The album has more long-form songs with lyrics, as well as other personal thematic interludes that string the piece together.

One of the muses to whom *DOTR* is dedicated is Giobbi’s piano teacher Carolyn Horn. Giobbi went to her house every Monday for lessons from second grade through high school. At Giobbi’s senior piano recital, the two performed a concerto that is featured on *DOTR* as the interlude “Carolyn Horn.”

“She’s the reason that I’m a musician,” Giobbi says. “Nobody was closer to me than her. The gift of having somebody who’s not your parent hold up this mirror of unwavering belief, I really believed through her eyes that I could do anything.”

Giobbi was in her recording studio when Horn died. Through her tears, she remembered that she recorded her last session with her. It didn’t take her long to find it, and she wrote her first song for the album, “Carolyn,” with it. “I wrote in a major key because she was a major, major woman. I was sobbing the whole time that I wrote it.”

Another of *DOTR*’s subjects is Suse Milleman, Giobbi’s mom’s best friend and the only professional musician she knew growing up. Before Milleman succumbed to Alzheimer’s, she made a short voice recording of a song. After she passed, her wife found the memo and sent it to Giobbi to see if she could think of any way to bring life to her song.

Giobbi mixed a track, and put it on *DOTR*. “The interlude ‘Suse Milleman’ was her last musical idea,” Giobbi says. “I kept it pretty raw because I thought it was actually just really cool and beautiful within itself.”

With the album focusing on losing the women who built her and getting back in touch with herself, Giobbi says, “I wanted the theme of this album to be about coming home.” It’s only appropriate that she will soon be coming back to her hometown.

She was originally scheduled to perform at McDonald Theatre but recently changed her venue to WOW Hall so the show could be “in the round,” an EDM term for when the DJ is in the center of the room, creating a more immersive musical experience. Skyeler Williams, WOW Hall’s talent booker, writes in an email to *EW*, “She is very proud of her production on this tour, and as amazing as McDonald Theatre is, there was no way for her to produce the set she had imagined without being in the center of the room. WOW Hall allows her to do that.”

When she comes to Eugene this time, it’s so she can be with her family on Thanksgiving. In fact, she revolved her whole tour around this Eugene show. “Thanksgiving is the most important holiday in my family,” she says. “The Wednesday night before Thanksgiving, all the men get together and make pies, while the women sit around and drink wine. It’s my favorite day ever.”

Giobbi, who spent her summer nights playing capture the flag in the cul-de-sac where she grew up, says, “I cannot believe how much I love Eugene with all my heart. Whenever I go home and I hike Spencer Butte, with the fresh air, and the trees, and the whole town surrounded by mountains, I’m just in awe of how stunningly beautiful this place is. I feel so grateful to have grown up there.”

*LP Giobbi’s Way Back Home Tour is 8 pm Wednesday, Nov. 27, at WOW Hall, 291 West 8th Avenue. Doors open at 7 pm. The performance was originally to take place at McDonald Theatre but was moved to WOW Hall. The date, time and cost remain the same and all previously purchased tickets will be honored. Tickets start at \$25 at WowHall.org.*

## ‘A FRIENDS’ CONCERT’

**Andrew ElRay Stewart-Cook celebrates 40 years as organist and choirmaster at Central Lutheran Church**

BY DAN BUCKWALTER

**T**he position for organist and choirmaster at Central Lutheran Church opened up in 1984. This time, Andrew El-Ray Stewart-Cook felt comfortable pursuing it.

It had been open before, during his early years in Eugene, but Stewart-Cook (“ElRay” to friends and family) demurred, instead remaining at Bethesda Lutheran in West Eugene. He was in his early 30s by 1984, but before that, he notes, “I knew I needed more experience before I got in this pond.”

“This pond” includes the enormous John Brombaugh-built pipe organ and its 2,800-plus pipes, as well as a large and musically sophisticated congregation that knows its sacred hymn texts. When Stewart-Cook got the job, a friend offered congratulations — sort of. The friend wondered if “they will eat you up and spit you out.”

Stewart-Cook laughs at the memory. In 40 years he has grown the music program from 22 singers in the choir (and with no tenor section to speak of) to 50-plus members with a chamber orchestra and a handbell ensemble as well as growing the children’s choir. He has mentored many musicians, and some of those musicians — all friends — will join Stewart-Cook Nov. 24 to celebrate with *A Friends’ Concert* at Central Lutheran Church.

Modestly, he says, “My job is to make the clergy look good,” and Stewart-Cook is now working with his 10th and 11th pastors at Central (Laurie Jones and Ben Nickodemus). It’s his steady presence inside the church, however, that makes him beloved. As soprano Siri Vik notes, he has been “a shepherd,” all the while adhering to a simple sign in the choir rehearsal room that leads to the choir loft: “Let Music Touch Your Soul.”

“It’s just so hard for me to conceive of the Central choir without ElRay,” says Vik, a Eugene native who was 9 years old when she met Stewart-Cook and was 13 when she performed in her first musical at the church, *Bishop Theodolph*. “He was the anchor that brought me back to the church. He made me feel encouraged and safe.”

“He’s very much a music pastor,” says David Gustafson, a tenor who met Stewart-Cook while a student at the University of Oregon 40 years ago. Gustafson was the new choirmaster’s first hire because the tenor section needed a strong voice. “He’s been the one constant. He gets along with everybody.”

Stewart-Cook was raised in a Mormon family on a potato farm in Rexburg, Idaho. He jokes that at age 4, if his parents couldn’t find him, they learned to look for him on the organ bench in the church, “a tenth of the size of the one here,” he muses.

By age 12 he was the church organist. “I was infatuated with the instrument,” he says. “It’s that deeply embedded in my DNA.”

His love for the organ and sacred music took a further leap when he went to study at the Guildhall School of Music at the University of London. In his mid-20s, Stewart-Cook was near the Royal Ballet and Royal Opera, as well as St. Paul’s Cathedral and The Abbey.

“It was,” he says, “an incredible opportunity.”

Also in London, he met a Scottish woman — D’reen Stewart-Webb. An instant friendship blossomed into love, and the two were married for 37 years before she died of cancer-related illness in 2017. “I definitely married above myself,” Stewart-Cook says. “She was a remarkable woman.”

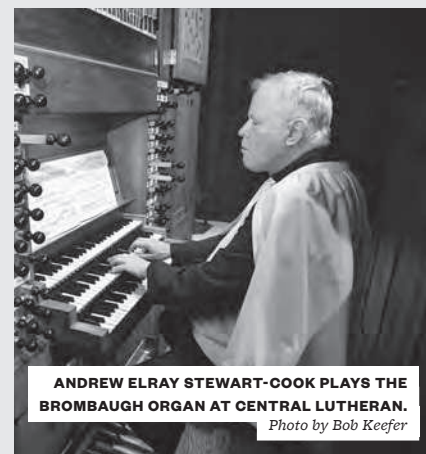
“Before she got cancer, she was a go-getter,” Gustafson recalls. He says that in the final years of her life, Stewart-Cook would often leave rehearsal early to tend to her. “He really did all the care for her,” Gustafson adds.

Stewart-Cook notes that the choir was a refuge during his wife’s illness and after her death. “It kept me afloat.” Further, he adds, he has become “spoiled” by the professionalism of the choir today and has no immediate plans to retire.

Now in his 70s, Stewart-Cook has trimmed his schedule. He works on 10-month contracts, spending 90 minutes a day on the organ bench instead of the three or four hours a day in the early years. Lindsey Henriksen Rodgers is now the associate organist and handles the children’s choir, and Stewart-Cook gets plenty of help with the physical aspect of setting up chairs and tables.

“I think he’s living a pretty large life,” Vik says. “It seems he has the best of both worlds.”

*A Friends’ Concert, marking Andrew ElRay Stewart-Cook’s 40 years as organist and choirmaster at Central Lutheran Church, is 4 pm Sunday, Nov. 24, at Central Lutheran Church, 1857 Potter Street. FREE. Reception to follow.*



ANDREW ELRAY STEWART-COOK PLAYS THE BROMBAUGH ORGAN AT CENTRAL LUTHERAN. Photo by Bob Keefer