

Benyaro returns to Astoria with new tunes

Indie band takes the stage at Voodoo Room, Brew Cup

By JANAE EASLON
FOR COAST WEEKEND

He plays a kick drum, a high hat, a shaker, a guitar and sings — all at the same time.

Frontman Ben Musser from Benyaro brings his indie roots and punk-Americana sound to Astoria 9 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 23, at The Voodoo Room, and 3 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 24, at The Pacific Northwest Brew Cup.

“A lot of calories are burned on stage,” Musser said.

Based in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Musser began Benyaro in 2006. Benyaro has played in Astoria before at venues such as Fort George Brewery.

Musser is joined by Leif Routman, an upright bassist and co-vocalist. This month, they released their new album and fourth studio recording, “One Step Ahead of Your Past,” which includes 13 tracks written by Musser.

“It’s about moving forward and forging ahead. Hopefully this is something everyone can relate to,” Musser said. “For me, it is about embracing my past and building on it.”

Musser wrote the songs during the time he became a husband and father, he said.

Over the band’s existence, Benyaro has moved from a folk sound to rock and blues.

“I am influenced by several musicians and genres, but I don’t try to emulate anyone when songwriting or performing,” Musser said. “I come from a background of doo-wop,



Benyaro's Ben Musser, right, and Leif Routman

African-American soul and classic rock.”

Humor drives Musser’s songwriting. A song of their new album titled “Pimp Wife” is Musser’s favorite to play because it gives people a good laugh if they understand it, he said.

“Some people get confused about the title and get worked up,” Musser said. “But it is actually a song about strong women, and them having the power.”

Benyaro’s music videos can be found on YouTube, with their song “Dogs,” which has racked up 6,900 views.

Their recent music video release for the song “Is It Worth It” premiered on Relix’s website, a prominent music magazine out of New York City.

“The song is about in this day and age with social media,” Musser said. “There are repercussions to speaking out, and this is about speaking out despite backlash of saying something outside the herd.”

Danny Kadar, who has worked with artists such as Iggy Pop, co-produced the album. They recorded in both Musser’s home studio and Echo Mountain

Recording in Asheville, North Carolina. Bands such as Grammy-nominated The Avett Brothers and Celtic punk band Flogging Molly have recorded at Echo Mountain.

Other Oregon tour dates include Portland on Sept. 30, Bend on Oct. 1 and Eugene on Oct. 3. Other musicians touring with Benyaro include Brian Geltner on drums and Jacob Rodriguez on tenor and baritone saxophone.

Benyaro’s music can be found on Apple Music and Spotify, as well as their website. 



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