

Elwood brings folk out of the Blue Mountains

Elwood Haney's debut solo album has been a long time comin'. The soulful folk singer-songwriter — who performs under the mononym Elwood — has been steadily performing around the Pacific Northwest for nearly a decade. His self-titled album is the culmination of all that toil and is the work of a now more mature and self-confident artist.

Prior to striking out as a solo artist Haney co-fronted the folk rock band Bitterroot along with his cousin Colton. Originally formed in the Grande Ronde Valley in 2009, Bitterroot produced an EP and one album and briefly resided in Portland before parting ways in 2014. Haney relocated to Ukiah, which he began using as a base for touring as a solo artist and composing songs that would ultimately make their way onto Elwood.

Elwood was recorded intermittently over the course of two years with folk musician Bob Webb at his studio Mountain Views in Joseph. It features a lineup of guest musicians that Elwood has had the fortune of meeting over the years: Sam Howard (bassist with A Prairie Home Companion regulars The Wailin' Jennys), David Lipkind (harmonica player with Portland alt-country warhorses I Can Lick Any SOB In The House), fellow singer-songwriters Kory Quinn and Janis Carper as co-writers and vocalists, and Bitterroot drummer Joey Carper. Elwood himself contributes guitar, mandolin, and flute.

The nature of the digital recording process these days allowed for Elwood to be produced in a piecemeal fashion. Elwood



"Elwood" by Elwood Haney

would lay down the basic tracks of vocals and guitar with Webb and guest musicians, when they happened to be in the area, would contribute their parts. Often Elwood wasn't in the studio at the same time as his guests so it would be a complete surprise as to what they had played in his absence.

Part of the drawn-out recording process can be attributed to Elwood's relentless

touring schedule; he performed approximately 150 shows last year alone and had very little time in between tours to devote to his album, let alone tend to his personal life. Consequently the troubadour lifestyle is front and center on Elwood. The high energy opening track "Road Song" is a lament on the toll that touring takes on the psyche and on relationships with those back home. That

sentiment is contrasted by the sombre ballad "It's Just Begun," which explores numinous nature of the irresistible "call of the road." We are indeed creatures of contradictions.

When Elwood isn't waxing philosophically about life on the road his songs tend to revolve around the Northwest. "The Promise," a song co-written with the aforementioned Wallowa Valley-based Janis Carper, is a tribute to his ancestors who migrated from West Virginia to settle in Promise, Ore. (named after "The Promised Land"), in the late 19th century.

The landscape of northeastern Oregon is inextricably tied to Elwood's music. "I was born and raised in Union and spent the majority of my life in the Blue Mountains," says Elwood. "It's definitely shaped the way I see the world and the way my songs are written. It's always been a special place to me so it comes out in my songs."

Elwood is an extremely accessible album that isn't just for folkies. Many of the songs on Elwood feature anthemic choruses full of "woa-oa-oa-oah"s that sound reminiscent of neo folk-pop groups like The Lumineers and Mumford & Sons. The production is crisp and clear but never feels stiff.

Elwood doesn't have a release date yet — Haney is in the midst of procuring funding for the manufacturing of the album — but it should definitely be on the radar for anybody looking for music that is born out of the Blues.

Elwood plays 40 Taps on Saturday, November 4 as part of the Pendleton Animal Welfare Shelter fundraiser.

James Dean Kindle is the East Oregonian's entertainment columnist, the executive director of the Oregon East Symphony and a Pendleton musician. Contact him at jamesdeankindle@gmail.com.

BRIEFLY



Staff photo by Tammy Malgesini

Erik Estrada, from the 1977-83 TV show "CHiPs," has fun with a contestant during "America's Greatest Game Shows" last fall at Wildhorse Resort & Casino.

Live game show features Estrada

MISSION — Visitors to Wildhorse Resort & Casino can win a seat to a live game show and may be chosen as a contestant.

Host Erik Estrada, a Hollywood actor best known for his role as Frank "Ponch" Poncherello from 1977-83 on NBC's "CHiPs," is the host. Audience members will have a chance to win \$100,000 during America's Greatest Game Shows. To get a seat at the live show, people need to earn entries with their Club Wild card, including by swiping the card daily at an eSTATION.

The show is Sunday, Oct. 29 at 5 p.m. in the Rivers Event Center at the casino, which is located near Interstate 84 at Exit 216, Mission.

Fishtrap showcases Wallowa writers

ENTERPRISE — Three Wallowa County writers will share their works during the upcoming Fishtrap Fireside.

Featured writers include Ester Bentz, Renee Mitchell and Jamie Tippett. Bentz is the pen name and alter ego of Cathy Sterbentz, a perennial, revolving-door resident of Wallowa County. Mitchell expresses herself through poetry, storytelling, grant writing, teaching and creating multimedia experiences. She spent 25 years as a newspaper journalist and is best known as a metro columnist for *The Oregonian*, where she was nominated twice for the Pulitzer Prize. Tippett, who was a columnist for *Agritimes Northwest* for 31 years, is the author of "Four Lines a Day: The Life and Times of an Imnaha Ranch Woman." The event is Friday, Nov. 3 from 7-9 p.m. at 400 E. Grant St., Enterprise. There is no admission charge and light refreshments are available.

The fireside also includes an open mic for audience members to share their stories. The Fishtrap Fireside meets the first Friday of each month from October through April.

For more information, contact Mike Midlo at mike@fishtrap.org, 541-426-3623 or visit www.fishtrap.org.

Festivals

Eastern Oregon Film Festival

•Oct. 19-21
•HQ, 112 Depot St., La Grande

www.eofilmfest.com
\$9.50/screenings at the Granada; and \$10/events at McKenzie Theatre, HQ and after parties. Named one of the top 25 Coolest Film Festivals in the World by MovieMaker magazine. Features nearly three dozen independent film screenings, musical entertainment, filmmaker presentations and author/writer discussions. A free live taping of Oregon Public Broadcasting's "State of Wonder" is Saturday at noon at HQ.

Echo Oktoberfest

•Saturday, Oct. 21; 4 p.m.
•Downtown Echo

www.facebook.com/events/478893169141688

\$15 (if purchased in advance, comes with an extra \$5 in event tokens). Features kids' activities, food (German sausage, coleslaw, potato salad, hot dogs and brats) and beverages, including 16 varieties of beer from Hermiston Brewing Co. Music by Cruise Control. For info, contact Michael Duffy at 541-303-5730, echokiwanis@centurytel.net.

Día de los Muertos

•Saturday, Oct. 21; 4:30 p.m.; Sunday, Oct. 22; 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

•Downtown Walla Walla
www.shakespearewallawalla.org

Free. Recognizing Day of the Dead tradition, event celebrates the Hispanic culture with fun for the whole family. Includes live music and dancing, kids' activities, food vendors, art and history.

Art, Authors & Museums

Elizabeth Woody

•Monday, Oct. 23; 7 p.m.
•John Day United Methodist Church, 126 N.W. Canyon St.
www.oregonpoetlaureate.org/elizabeth-wood

Free. Oregon's poet laureate will share selections from her poetry and stories. Reception follows.

"Get Into the Spirit"

•Saturdays & Sundays; noon-5 p.m.

•Arts Portal Gallery, 508 N. Main St., Milton-Freewater
www.facebook.com/artsportalgallery

Free. Features the works of Julie Cuijak, who creates jewelry designs, abstract acrylic paintings, upcycled wearable art pieces and wreaths made from old books. Runs through Oct. 29.

"Places to Thrive"

•Monday-Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

•Betty Feves Memorial Gallery, BMCC, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton.

Free. Features professional and emerging Pacific Northwest artists. The annual invitational art exhibit is organized by the Oregon State University College of Agricultural Sciences through its Art About Agriculture program. Gallery also open by appointment by calling 541-278-5952. Runs through Oct. 26.

"Stochastic Resonance"

•Monday-Fridays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

•Nightingale Gallery, Eastern Oregon University, La Grande

www.eou.edu/art/nightingale-gallery

Free. John Whitten, a Portland-based artist and art instructor at Oregon State University, explores the philosophical significance of what it means to wander. Runs through Nov. 3.

"Book Work: Recent Excavations"

•Tuesday-Fridays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturdays, noon-4 p.m.

•Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.
www.pendletonarts.org

Free. James Allen creates compositions with pages of discarded books and fragments of images. Also, local artist featured in Lorenzen Board Room Gallery. Runs through Oct. 31.

"Fall Colors"

•Tuesday-Sundays, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

•Peterson's Gallery and Chocolatier, 1925 Main St., Baker City
www.petersonsgallery.net

Free. Features a collection of artwork by regional artists depicting the fall season in Eastern Oregon. Runs through Oct. 31.

"Parts of a Life"

•Thursday, Oct. 12, 5-7 p.m. opening reception

•Monday-Saturdays 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

•Pendleton Art + Frame, 36 S.W. Court Ave., Pendleton

Free. Lorie Baxter will be on hand Oct. 12 to discuss her newest works; refreshments. Runs through Nov. 18.

"Art of Survival - Enduring the Turmoil of Tule Lake"

WHAT TO DO

•Monday-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., opens Nov. 3

•Tamastslit Cultural Institute, near Wildhorse Resort & Casino.

www.tamastslit.org

\$10/adults, \$9/senior citizens, \$6/youths, free/5 and under or \$25/family of four. Exhibit probes the complexity of the Japanese-American confinement site in Newell, California, during World War II. Runs through Jan. 7.

Music

Raucous

•Saturday, Oct. 21; 8 p.m. No cover.

•Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission.

Molly's Revenge

•Tuesday, Oct. 24; 7 p.m.

•Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.
www.pendletonarts.org

\$15. An acoustic Celtic band returns, offering a unique and high-energy performance.

Open Mic at GP

•Thursday, Oct. 26; 7-9 p.m.

•Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton

No cover. All ages are welcome during the last Thursday of each month. Bring your instrument, voice, family and friends.

Live Music Thursday

•Thursday, Oct. 26; 7-9 p.m.

No cover

•40 Taps, 337 S.W. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton

Big Font

•Friday, Oct. 27; 6:30-9:30 p.m. No cover.

•Nookie's/Hermiston Brewing Co., 125 N. First St., Hermiston

Bleeding Tree

•Friday, Oct. 27; Saturday, Oct. 28; 8 p.m. No cover

•Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission

The Rough & Tumble

•Wednesday, Nov. 1; 7-9 p.m.

•Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton

No cover. All ages. Vagabond Americana-folk musicians tour across the country in 16-foot trailer with their 97-pound dog.

Elwood

•Thursday, Nov. 2; 7-9 p.m. No cover

•40 Taps, 337 S.W. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton

Bart Budwig & His Amperband

•Wednesday, Nov. 8; 7-9 p.m.

•Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton

No cover. All ages. Country singer-songwriter also is a recording engineer in Enterprise.

Astro Tan

•Thursday, Nov. 9; 7-9 p.m.

•Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton

No cover. All ages. A three-piece Portland-based psychedelic R&B group.

Open Mic Night

•Thursday, Nov. 9; 7-9 p.m. No cover

•40 Taps, 337 S.W. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton

Jam Night

•Thursday, Nov. 9; 6:30-8 p.m.

•Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.
www.pendletonarts.org

Free. Join other local musicians for an informal evening of jamming the second Thursday of each month. Runs through December.

Night life

Karaoke w/DJ David

•Saturdays; 8 p.m.

•Riverside Sports Bar, 1501 Sixth St., Umatilla

Mac's Trivia Night

•Tuesdays; 7 p.m. No cover

•Mac's Bar & Grill, 1400 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton

21-and-older. Eat. Drink. Think. Teams of 2-8 compete in trivia contest with other teams.

Live host and prizes, including \$50 gift card for winning team.

Digital Karaoke

•Thursdays and Fridays, 8 p.m.

•The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston

Wine tasting

•Fridays, 4-8 p.m.

•Sno Road Winery, 111 W. Main St., Echo.

Open Mic

•First/Third Friday each month, 8 p.m.-midnight

•The Packard Tavern, 118 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton

www.facebook.com/groups/pendletonopenmic

Karaoke w/DJ David

•Fridays; 8 p.m.

•Riverside Sports Bar, 1501 Sixth St., Umatilla

DJ and dancing

•Fridays, 8 p.m.

•The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston

Cimmi's Late Night Martini Lounge

•Fridays; 9 p.m.-midnight

•Virgil's at Cimmiyotti's, 137 S. Main St., Pendleton

No cover. Features martinis, mixology and music.

Theater, stage, film & lectures

"The LEGO

Batman Movie"

•Saturday, Oct. 21; 2:15 p.m.

•SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road, Boardman

www.visitsage.com

\$3/includes popcorn. The museum's regular hours are Monday-Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"The Addams Family"

•Oct. 21, 28; 2:30 p.m.

•Oct. 21, 27-28, 30-31; 7:30 p.m.

•Elgin Opera House, 104 N. Eighth St.
www.elginoperahouse.com

Reserved \$17/\$8. The kooky, upside-down world of the Addams Family offers quirky fun.

America's Greatest Game Shows

•Sunday, Oct. 29; 5 p.m.

•Rivers Event Center, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission.

www.wildhorseresort.com

Win tickets for live show for a chance to win game play/cash prizes, including \$100,000. Features host Erik Estrada.

Hot tickets

•Garth Brooks. Nov. 3-5, Tacoma Dome, Tacoma, Wash. Tickets (\$65+) via www.ticketmaster.com

•Harlem Globetrotters. Nov. 12, Toyota Center, Kennewick. Tickets (\$25-\$300) via www.ticketmaster.com

•Amy Grant & Michael Smith. Nov. 16, Toyota Center, Kennewick. Tickets (\$37-\$127) via www.ticketmaster.com

•Mannheim Steamroller Christmas. Nov. 19, Toyota Center, Kennewick. Tickets (\$39-\$65) via www.ticketmaster.com

•Trans-Siberian Orchestra. Nov. 24, Spokane Arena; Nov. 25, Key Arena, Seattle; Nov. 26, Matthew Knight Arena, Eugene. Tickets (\$35-\$75) via www.ticketmaster.com

Want to get your event listed in our calendar? Send information to community@eastoregonian.com, or c/o Tammy Malgesini, 333 E. Main Street, Hermiston, OR, 97838.

'Thor: Ragnarok' takes the Marvel god to funny heights

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP Film Writer

In the stand-alone films of the Marvel Cinematic Universe Thor always seemed to get the short end of the stick. The Thor films were never as popular as Iron Man, and didn't gain steam like Captain America. They were perhaps a little too serious and a little too dull — none of which was the fault of star Chris Hemsworth, whose performances in the role have been so seamless and charming that he almost doesn't get enough credit.

But "Thor: Ragnarok" has been touted as a different take on the God of Thunder. Marvel Studios and The Walt Disney Co. signed up a voice-y director in New Zealand's Taika Waititi, whose riotous vampire mockumentary "What We Do In The Shadows" displayed a unique comedic sensibility. They took away Thor's



Marvel Studios via AP

hammer, gave him a haircut, added some Led Zeppelin and told the set designer the more neon rainbows the better.

The results are pretty decent, though perhaps not the total departure that had been hyped.

The bones of the story are preposterous as ever. It turns out Thor has a long lost older sister, Hela (Cate Blanchett), who his father Odin (Anthony Hopkins, who appears to have shot for

about two hours) locked away because she was so dangerous. An event happens that releases Hela to the world. She's really strong, like stronger than Thor strong, and really angry and basically punches Thor into another dimension and she heads off to Asgard to take the throne.

I imagine "Thor: Ragnarok" is one that might improve on subsequent viewings, when you have a chance to relax with the

jokes divorced from the pressure of juggling the silly/serious plot. But it's a fairly flawed movie on the whole with egregious tonal shifts. Some of the gags go on too long with the Hulk with too little payoff and sometimes it seems as though there's a mandate that every 25 minutes there will be a big fight no matter what. One particular army of the dead sequence seemed like it could have been lifted from a "Pirates of the Caribbean" movie — which is not the most flattering comparison.

While Waititi's energy and wit is apparent in the film, it still feels as though he had to operate from the same Marvel "base flavor" and was allowed on occasion to sprinkle a few of his own original toppings on.

"Thor: Ragnarok" is the most fun of the Thor movies by a long shot, but it is still very much a Thor movie for better or worse.