

Dead Lee returns to Eastern Oregon

The duo has shows in La Grande and Baker City

By Lisa Britton

Go! Magazine

LA GRANDE, BAKER CITY — Brian Koch pauses while he tries to remember the last time he played music in Baker City.

Time is funny these days, with several years of music performances essentially lost to the pandemic.

"It's been awhile," he said.

Turns out that the last time he and Kara Harris — playing as the Portland-based duo Dead Lee — played here, they didn't have a live audience.

"It was still pandemic, but things were opening up again," he said.

But circumstances changed, and Dead Lee ended up performing a live streamed concert from Churchill School.

Now they are back — live and in person — for two shows in Eastern Oregon.

Dead Lee plays Friday, July 29 at hq, 112 Depot St., in La Grande. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the music starts at 8 p.m. Cover charge is \$10.



Dead Lee/Contributed Photo

Dead Lee — the duo of Brian Koch and Kara Harris — play at hq in La Grande and Churchill School in Baker City.

Then the band comes farther east to play Saturday, July 30, at Churchill, 3451 Broadway St. (enter through the 16th Street parking lot). Doors open at 6 p.m., and the music starts at 6:45 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 in advance at churchillbaker.com, or \$15 at the door. Proof of COVID-19 vaccination or a negative test is required. Fully vaccinated children age 15 and younger gain free admission with a ticket-holding adult.

TWO CONCERTS

Friday, July 29

7 p.m., hq, 112 Depot St., La Grande
\$10 cover

Saturday, July 30

6 p.m., Churchill, 3451 Broadway St., Baker City
\$10 advance at churchillbaker.com
\$15 at the door

ABOUT THE BAND

Dead Lee has played as a duo for about four years.

Their name came courtesy of Harris, who thought it up when she was playing solo in Los Angeles.

"I'd come up with at least 100 names, but there was already a band in existence," Koch said. "She came up with Dead Lee."

The name, which sounds like "deadly" when said fast, is particularly handy when they play in the UK, where the term is often used as an adjective.

"It's like saying 'killer' here," Koch said.

Their handle is "dead_lee_duo" on

Facebook and Instagram. (Get it? Say it fast: "deadly duo.")

Dead Lee just finished touring with the band Blitzen Trapper, of which Koch has been a member for 22 years. This week's concerts in Eastern Oregon are a "mini mini tour" for Dead Lee.

They released an album "right away" when they first started as a duo, and Koch said they just recorded a live album that includes songs from that first record.

"The songs have evolved a lot," he said.

And they have a new music video out too — it's called "Around the Bend." (Find it on YouTube.) They first developed the idea early in the pandemic, but couldn't get people together to make it happen. They finally finished it.

"It turned out exactly how we wanted it — it's so funny and so dark," he said.

They describe their style as "a mutual love of the darker folk and country traditions."

They've expanded their shows over the years, and performances now feature several guitars, a kick drum and harmonicas.

"We used lots of distortion and effects, too," Koch said.

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