

HELPING HAND

OK Theatre more than just a venue to musicians

By Steve Tool

Wallowa County Chieftain

Life can be daunting for struggling musicians. Finding a place to live and making enough scratch to put food on the table, much less find a place to record your art, can put creativity on the back burner.

Darrell Brann, owner of the OK Theatre in Enterprise, is doing what he can to help ease the burden of some local musicians' struggle up the ladder. Brann is a musician himself, and he has experienced a few hard times over the course of his career.

Rather than placing financial burdens on musicians whose music needs exposure, Brann tries to barter work in exchange for favors. He said that offering musicians work in exchange for theater privileges benefits both parties.

"Having them change the marquee or clean up the floor and keep an eye on things is a help for me since I'm so busy, and they're happy to be there," he said.

Bart Budwig lives in an apartment in back of the theater when he's not touring. Brann knew Budwig as a sound man in Moscow, Idaho, and recruited him to perform sound duties at several shows he produced before buying the theater.

As Budwig gained prominence as a musician he started playing Wallowa County regularly and frequently jammed and spent the night at Brann's home. After buying the theater in 2014, Brann frequently called on Budwig for sound duties and eventually offered Budwig the apartment in exchange for sound engineering, which allowed Budwig more time to advance his career.

"Knowing I have this place to come back to after touring and being able to live pretty much in the space where I work really helps me concentrate on what I do, and I wouldn't have that without Darrell," Budwig said.

Seth Kinzie is a local pianist with the distinction of solely making a living playing and giving lessons with his chosen instrument. Kinzie moved to the area about three years ago. He rented the OK for a trumpet and piano show more than a year ago. He also knows Brann through his own work as a recording sideman and solo artist.

Kinzie said the theater is becoming known as a kind of underground studio because of Brann's generosity and Budwig's recording expertise. The musicians Kinzie has met through the theater have given him session work as a sideman and have influenced him to expand his own recordings to include other musicians.

"Now I just don't play solo Seth Kinzie compositions, which is what I've always done in the past," he said.

Having access to a large, affordable hall for musicians to rent for concerts and CD release parties also is important to Kinzie and others.

"If you want to play small shows you can always do open mics," Kinzie said. "There's no other big place here where people are definitely going to



The OK Theatre on Main Street in Enterprise.

Steve Tool/Chieftain

Reckless Kelly featured for OK Theatre fundraiser

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OK Theatre owner Darrell Brann is holding a fundraiser Thursday, Aug. 4 to help pay for a facade renovation. Texas band Reckless Kelly will headline the show.

Brann got the idea from a Restore Oregon theater workshop.

"Any town that has a historical theater should have everyone behind it," Brann said. "It's an invaluable resource and should be utilized to its full potential. That's been our goal, and the city and everyone has been supportive, but now it's time to

start working on getting dollars together. It's a labor of love."

The State Historic Preservation Office has offered Brann some revenue in the form of matching grants. This concert is the first in a series of fundraisers to restore the theater to help its former glory.

Reckless Kelly's reputation as fearless Americana/Texas Country musicians preceded it as the show quickly sold out.

"I barely did any advertising, so obviously it's a good show, and the band cut us a real good deal on the fundraiser," Brann said. He add-

ed that the band is originally from Idaho.

Also included in the evening's festivities are silent auctions and raffle items, including items the band donated. Sammy's Barbecue is slated to offer nourishment, and beer and wine will be available.

"There's a lot of funds available for matching grants, and we'd love to raise upwards of \$40,000," Brann said.

The theater's facade restoration is tentatively slated to begin in August 2017.

The theater is located at 208 W. Main St. in Enterprise.

listen to you instead of talking or eating their dinner."

Kinzie also lauded Brann for staging shows from Grammy winners to local musicians.

"Darrell obviously had a vision of what he wanted to do with this, and he got it right. We're all appreciative of what he's offering people," he said.

Fiddle player Caleb Samples is another local musician who works with Brann both as a musician and as a sub-contractor for Brann's construction business. Earlier this year Samples rented the theater for a CD release party for his "Untouched Ground" recording.

When Samples asked Brann to rent the space, Brann not only said yes, but immediately took over the marketing.

"He took care of the whole thing, really," Samples said.

As reparation for putting on the show, Brann asked Samples for some construction work.

Samples' release party proved successful enough that more than 230 people attended and also bought a number

of CDs. After the show, Brann congratulated Samples and asked how much money he wanted. A shocked Samples could hardly believe his ears.

"It was an interesting conversation," Samples said. "It worked out nicely and I was able to pay the musicians who helped me. Darrell is very open to helping others and I have nothing but great things to say about him."

Brann said that he lives by the maxim of treating everyone equally and does his best to make local acts know they're just as important to the theater as any Grammy winner gracing its stage.

"We bring in some really big shows, but we really try to focus on and take care of our local musicians. We cover all expenses and promotion and tickets to make a good event for those that we think are ready for that. I treat local musicians' efforts the same as anyone else. We provide a meal and get them beer and snacks for the green room. We don't want them to feel like we

take them for granted."

As for Brann, he intends to keep helping whenever he can because that's what he believes in.

"It's where my interest is, seeing that musicians get a leg up. I love to see that happen."

THE SCENE



Wednesday, Aug. 3

• Myrlin and Mic Maven, 7 p.m. at Lear's Main Street Grill

Thursday, Aug. 4

• Reckless Kelly (OK Theatre facade fundraiser), 7 p.m. at the OK Theatre. theoldok.com
• Blue Plate Special, 5:30 p.m. at the Wallowa County Courthouse
• Harumph, 7 p.m. at Terminal Gravity. www.terminalgravitybrewing.com

Friday, Aug. 5

• Open mic with guest host Bart Budwig, 7 p.m. at Terminal Gravity. www.terminalgravitybrewing.com

Saturday, Aug. 6

• EHS Class of '66 presents "A Night to Remember," featuring The Reactions. 8-11 p.m. at Joseph Community Center. \$5 admission with no-host bar.

Thursday, Aug. 11

• Brass Fire, 5:30 p.m. at the Wallowa County Courthouse

Aug. 12-13

• Bronze, Blues and Brews Festival, Joseph City Park. www.bronzebluesbrews.com

Sunday, Aug. 14

• Open mic night, 4-6 p.m. at the Joseph Center with emcee Ted Hays. josephy.org

Thursday, Aug. 18

• The Sagebrush Sisters, 5:30 p.m. at the Wallowa County Courthouse

Friday, Aug. 19

• Don Flemmons, 8 p.m. at the OK Theatre. theoldok.com

Thursday, Aug. 25

• JW McClure, 5:30 p.m. at the Wallowa County Courthouse

Thursday, Sept. 8

• The Purple Hulls, 7 p.m. at the OK Theatre. theoldok.com

Wednesday, Oct. 5

• Liz Vice, 7 p.m. at the OK Theatre. theoldok.com

Thursday, Oct. 20

• HoneyHoney, Wallowa Resources fundraiser, 7 p.m. at the OK Theatre. theoldok.com

Please submit Entertainment Calendar event information to editor@wallowa.com



Bank of Eastern Oregon Bank Teller

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Free classes are available to anyone living or working in Oregon.

For class listings and registration, visit OregonCarePartners.com

COMING SOON TO ENTERPRISE

Positive Approach to Alzheimer's and Dementia Care (PAC) Workshop

August 19, 9:00am - 4:00pm

Wallowa County Fairgrounds, Cloverleaf Hall

Learn more and register for this free class at OregonCarePartners.com. Family members, all levels of caregivers and walk-ins welcome. CEUs offered for professionals.



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Please help us welcome Michelle Janik, D.V.M.!



Enterprise Animal Hospital, Inc.
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Dr. Janik has joined the team at Enterprise Animal Hospital and will begin seeing patients August 1.

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BIRTHS

A son,
Jackson Lee Dylan McNall,
was born July 25, 2016 in
Enterprise to Jacob
White-Hart and Rose
McNall of Enterprise.
Grandparents are
Misty McNall and
great-grandfather
Harry McNall.

A daughter,
Hazel Jeanne Wall,
was born July 26, 2016 in
Enterprise to Sweeny and
Beckijo Wall of Wallowa.
Grandparents are Teresa &
Bill Smergut, and Marilyn &
Frank Wall.