

Takin' it to TEXAS

Joseph musician sets his site on Austin's Ameripolitan scene

By Stephen Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Joseph resident Jimmy Bivens has been a lot of different things in his life: a ranch caretaker, golf course grounds keeper, handyman ... one thing he'll never stop doing is music.

Bivens has never let any of his jobs take his eyes off of music for long. The Wallowa County musician is a staple on the regional scene, including gigging in Idaho, Washington and Oregon, even Oregon's west-side.

Bivens comes by his passion for music honestly, but he didn't grow up with it, even though his father was future country swing music hall-of-fame member Jimmy "Wayland" Bivens.

Born in Lewiston, Idaho, young Bivens didn't stay long. His father had three children with the singer's mother, but the elder Bivens couldn't knuckle under to his wife's request to step out of the music world. The father lasted about two weeks. The son thought the mother's request tragic.

"I don't agree with what she did," he said. "She knew who he was." Bivens' mother left the marriage.

Her son was three at the time. Years later he found a letter from his mother to his grandmother, telling the older woman how popular her husband Wayland was in Oregon, Idaho and Washington. She also mentioned a station called KWVR in a little Oregon town called Enterprise where her husband's records were spending a lot of time on the turntable.

In fourth grade, Bivens told his mother and stepfather that he wanted to become a musician. Not wanting him to follow in his father's footsteps,

his mother convinced the singer's two sisters to tell him he was tone deaf every time he started to sing. When he was 14, his mother shipped him to Long Beach, Calif., to his father in the middle of the night.

His multi-instrumentalist father gave him a guitar and taught him three chords. Bivens attended Long Beach Polytechnic High School where he played basketball for two years before following his father upstate to Sacramento. He played his first concert there with an audience of three: His father, the club owner and Tammy Wynette.

After nearly flunking out of high school, the singer had to put music down to concentrate on his studies. He didn't pick up the guitar for a decade. After graduation, he took a number of jobs and moved back to Idaho, where he managed ranches and trained horses. Then the music bug bit him again.

During the last part of his decade-long hiatus, he ran a camp in Idaho for children with cancer. When scheduled entertainment fell through, Bivens contacted local musicians who performed.

"That's when I started playing music again," he said.

In the early 2000s, Bivens ran a prosperous resort ranch in the Sawtooth Mountains of Idaho where he connected with country musicians. This led to playing in Las Vegas at a south-side casino called "The Boardwalk" during the 2002 National Finals Rodeo.

Bivens played six of nine nights and met a number of Nashville musicians and songwriters. An instrumentalist named Rex Weisman, who played for country star Clay Walker, encouraged him. Bivens gave Weisman a cassette tape of songs he'd written.

"There was a reggae song in there, a ballad, a rocker," Bivens said. "I write diverse — whatever hits me." At Weisman's urging, Bivens gathered

\$7,000 of his own money to record an album in Nashville. He hired studio musicians, including Weisman.

Bivens took the album, "Tell the Story," to a Boise studio and laid down the master vocals and waited to see what would happen. The album received good reviews from critics, even though he intended it to showcase his songwriting talents so other performers would pick them up.

An overseas promoter offered the singer a chance to play England and France as a solo act. Bivens jumped on the possibility.

The tour was successful. When Bivens returned, Don Tunnell, who had done videos for a number of famous names and planned to put together an overseas blues revue, scrapped the tour for Bivens when he heard the album and took over as manager, a position he's held for a decade.

Tunnell invested the blues money into a tour called "Americana on Tour." Bivens worked on the tour for more than a year as the headliner.

"Don believed in me and still does," Bivens said.

The singer kept touring with Boise as his home base. While playing a solo act in Boise, he met Art Bell who convinced him to come over to Wallowa County. As Bivens and his wife, Michelle, came down Minam Canyon, they knew they'd found their home.

The couple moved to the county in 2008 and quickly learned the phrase, "If you're going to live here, you have to have three houses or three jobs." Bivens doesn't own three houses.

"It was part of the decision of being able to be here," he said. "The spice and variety for me is I don't mind doing it at all."

One of the many upsides of moving to the county was the change to Bivens' touring regimen.

"If I need to play somewhere, I call a couple of buddies and we meet up and play the show," he said.



Jimmy

"Then it's 'see you next time.' It keeps me from having to tour with people and babysitting."

Bivens places a lot of emphasis on his shows, and he has a simple recipe for performing: The audience is number one. He said he gets paid to take people away from their woes, and he takes that seriously.

He works on establishing a connection with his audience, something he says a lot of performers neglect. To keep his show from getting stale, he doesn't use a set list.

"When the guitar player takes a lead, I look out in the crowd and gauge where I want to go next. If you're reading the crowd, they'll tell you."

Bivens' next career step is to travel to Austin, Texas, and explore Ameripolitan music

"There's a regeneration of what we call real country music," Bivens said. He noted performer Dale Watson started Ameripolitan, which is a combination of country music, western swing and rockabilly.

"Those are three things I'm really strong in writing and performing," he said.

The singer said the current plan is to record an Americana album and follow it with a tour while delving deeper into Ameripolitan.

"My job is to entertain people," he said. "I do this for the love of sharing what I do with people and put a smile on their face."

You can learn more about Bivens and his other recorded works at jimmybivens.com.

IN BRIEF

'Stem Afternoon' planned Jan. 26

Family fun and science are on the agenda for a Stem Afternoon event Friday, Jan. 26, at Building Healthy Families, 207 NW Park St., Enterprise. The event includes prizes, a snack and variety of fun hands-on science stations exploring robotics, physics, biology and the Olympic sport of curling.

EOU Stem Hub and Wallowa Resources are co-sponsors.

Parent Café opens for 2018

Networking and conversation about parents accompanied with a free lunch is offered through the Building Healthy Families Parent Café Wednesdays, beginning Jan. 18.

Building Healthy Families and community partners are on hand to host the discussions regarding child care and other topics that help parents connect.

The sessions are at 207 NW Park St., Enterprise. Free.

Fishtrap lands two grant awards

The Oregon Arts Commission has cut Fishtrap two checks recently. A general support grant from the Learning Grants division of \$11,306 will help expand youth labs that include K-8 Fishtrap Storylab; 2018 Summer Fishtrap, which will include a Youth Workshop led by educators Cameron Scott and Mosley Wotta; and youth participation in The Big Read.

"Our goal is to reach every kid in the county," said Shannon McNeerney, executive director of Fishtrap.

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Methaqualone pill (slang)
- 5. Religious service
- 9. Woodland gods (Greek myth.)
- 11. "Where Is My Mind?" rockers
- 13. Deliberately contrary states of affairs
- 15. Inflection of the voice
- 16. "Great Expectations" character
- 17. Becomes a butterfly
- 19. Spoke
- 21. Tennis player Sharapova
- 22. Midway between northeast and east
- 23. Afrikaans
- 25. No instruction set computing
- 26. Pacific Standard Time
- 27. Relaxing places
- 29. Confiscates
- 31. Gladys Knight's fellow performers
- 33. Witnesses
- 34. Taking place in a series
- 36. Satisfy
- 38. Freshwater fish of N. America
- 39. Laments
- 41. "Girls" creator Dunham
- 43. Indian title of respect
- 44. Cocoa plum
- 46. Network of nerve cells
- 48. Link together in a chain
- 52. Cool 70s crew "The ___ Squad"
- 53. Persons engaging in energetic pursuits
- 54. Accumulation of glacial debris
- 56. Fastened
- 57. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
- 58. Whiskey and bread are two
- 59. Scottish tax

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Rope used to lasso
- 2. Idyllic places
- 3. Field force unit
- 4. Guitar great Clapton
- 5. Slang for type of skirt
- 6. Figure skating jump
- 7. Innocent
- 8. Mathematical ratio
- 9. Slowly drinks
- 10. Line where edges meet
- 11. Offices of the pope
- 12. Dry or withered
- 14. "___ the Man" Musical
- 15. Difficult situations
- 18. Greek goddess of discord
- 20. Marked by smartness in dress and manners
- 24. Habitat
- 26. Annoy constantly
- 28. Full of life
- 30. Great energy
- 32. BBQ and soy are two
- 34. Virtuous
- 35. Not fatty
- 37. Foes
- 38. Merchandiser
- 40. Dishonest scheme
- 42. Repents
- 43. Protective crust
- 45. Native American people
- 47. Any place of bliss or delight
- 49. Bring up
- 50. Birds
- 51. Geological times
- 55. Consumed

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Church Directory

Church of Christ
502 W. 2nd Street • Wallowa
541-398-2509
Worship at 11 a.m.
Mid-week
Bible Study 7 p.m.

St. Katherine's Catholic Church
Fr. Francis Akano
301 E. Garfield Enterprise
Mass Schedule
Tues-Fri 8:00 am
Saturdays 5:30pm Sundays 10:30am
(541)426-4008
stkatherinecenterprise.org
St. Pius X Wallowa Sundays 8:00am
All are welcome

Joseph United Methodist Church
3rd & Lake St. • Joseph
Pastor Cherie Dearth
Phone: 541-432-3102
Sunday Worship Service
10:00 am
JosephUMC.org

Enterprise Christian Church
85035 Joseph Hwy • (541) 426-3449
Worship at 9 a.m.
Sunday School at 10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship at 6 p.m.
(nursery at A.M. services)
"Loving God & One Another"
David Bruce, Sr. - Minister

Lostine Presbyterian Church
Discussion Group 9:30 AM
Worship Service 11:00 AM
Childrens program during service
Blog: dancingforth.blogspot.com
541.398.0597
Hwy 82, Lostine
Stephen Kliever, Minister

Wallowa Assembly of God
606 West Hwy 82
Wallowa, Oregon
541-886-8445
Sunday School • 9:30
Worship Service • 10:45
Pastor Tim Barton
wallowasassemblyofgod.com

Wallowa United Methodist Church
Kaye Garver - Pastor
102 West 1st Street, P.O. Box 53
Wallowa, Or 97885
Leave Message at 541-432-9029
Worship at 9:00am
Bible Study Mondays at 1:00pm at
Senior Center, Wallowa, OR

St. Patrick's Episcopal Church
100 NE 3rd St, Enterprise
NE 3rd & Main St
541-426-3439
Worship Service
Sunday 9:30am

Summit Church
Gospel Centered Community
Service time: 10:30 am
Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise
541-426-2150
www.summitchurchoregon.org

Faith Lutheran Church
409 W. Main
Enterprise, Oregon
Worship 2nd & 4th Sundays - 2 pm
Bible Study
2nd & 4th Thursdays - 11 am
LCMS
(Lutheran Church Missouri Synod)

Christ Covenant Church
Pastor Terry Tollefson
Church Office: 541-263-0505
Family Prayer: 9:30 am
Sunday School: 10:00 am
Worship Service: 11:00 am
723 College Street
Lostine

Enterprise Community Congregational Church
The Big Brown Church with an open door
Pastor Archie Hook
Sunday Worship 11am
Bible Study 9:30am
Ark Angels Children's Program
Ages 4-6th grade, 11am
Nursery for children 3 & under
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305 Wagner (near the Cemetery)
P.O. Box N. Enterprise, OR 97828
541-426-3751 Church
541-426-8339 School
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Worship Hour 11:00 a.m. - Noon
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Births
A son, Dustin Dwayne James Quittschreiber, was born December 10, 2017 in Enterprise to Dustin Quittschreiber and Samantha Johnston of Wallowa. Grandparents are Melissa Zollman and Greg Johnston, and Kathy Bohms and Barry Quittschreiber.
A daughter, Evelyn May Stubblefield, was born December 16, 2017 in Enterprise to Andrew Stubblefield and Kathryn Rogers of Enterprise. Grandparents are Susan and Richard Rogers, and Kelly and Gary Stubblefield.
A daughter, Haven Grace Layton, was born December 18, 2017 in Enterprise to Jake and Kelsey Layton of Wallowa. Grandparents are Elizabeth Phelan and Terry Kamlade, and Rene and Ron Layton.
A daughter, Bayja Day Petrocine, was born December 30, 2017 in Enterprise to Kyle and Mary-Esther Petrocine of Joseph. Grandparents are Mary LaPointe and Dan LaPointe (deceased), and Rita wand Bill Petrocine.

