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ALL THINGS MUSIC

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MUSIC FOR
THE WEEK
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The latest music from Central Oregon artists

BY BRIAN MCELHINEY • For The Bulletin

It's time again for another music review roundup. Here's a look at what's new, what flew under the radar and what's coming from Central Oregon musicians. This week, we'll focus on albums and EPs.

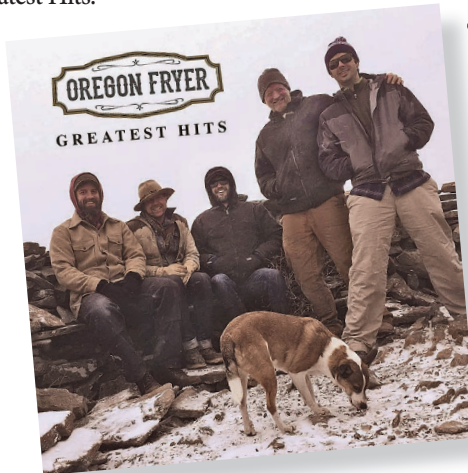
"GREATEST HITS," OREGON FRYER Self-released

Bend-based rock group Oregon Fryer offers up Bend's answer to The Band on the seven-song "Greatest Hits." Released in the midst of the first lockdown in May 2020, the record, much like the group's raucous live show, is a fun-loving (and often very funny) romp through blues, country and good old-fashioned rock 'n' roll that doesn't shy away from the reality of life in Central Oregon.

Third song "Days Like This" is perhaps the best example of that. Anyone who's struggled to make ends meet in this idyllic desert town can relate to the opening line: "I'm sick of this money

staring at me like I don't belong," keyboardist and songwriter Lucas James (also of Company Grand) roars as the rest of the band creates a wall of sound around James' bouncing piano chords. Lead-off track

"American Barstool," one of four songs written by guitarist Billy Burks, provides more slice-of-life Bend-icana, and name drops the music scene "living room," M&J Tavern.



"AN EXTRAORDINARY ORDINARY LIFE," JOHN BATDORF Self-released

John Batdorf, of '70s folk-rock groups Batdorf & Rodney

and Silver, once again displays his considerable abilities as a storyteller on "An Extraordinary Ordinary Life." Hot on the heels of last year's full-length, "Last Summer," "An Extraordinary Ordinary Life" features

six upbeat songs co-written with longtime collaborator Michael McLean.

Where "Last Summer" found Batdorf in a contemplative mood, especially considering the pandemic the album was birthed into, this new EP often takes a lighter approach. The opening track, "I Wanna Know," is a pure, wide-eyed love song, as is the yearning rocker "She's So Lonely."

As mentioned, Batdorf is at his best when he has a story to tell. "Tone Deaf and Two Left Feet" is a charming country-ish ditty about a musical duo — a man who has no rhythm and a woman who has no melody — filling out each other's weaknesses. And perhaps the strongest song here, "Why Don't You Move Home" zooms in on a couple trying to reconcile when "finding the perfect words isn't so easy."



"PEAKS," TATONO Self-released

Multi-instrumentalist and producer Mike Howland (he's worked with hip-hop groups Kingsuns and Ladedá) was traveling through India when the pandemic hit. He wrote much of "Peaks," his latest ambient electronic release under the name Tatonno, during this venture, and finished up the record at his home studio in Bend upon returning.

Tatonno's music has featured in YouTube travel channels such as Kara and Nate, Sailing la Vagabonde and Chasing a Plate, and "Peaks" fits right in with that wide-eyed, wanderlust vibe. Howland's sense of rhythm and knack for strong hooks keeps the material fresh: "Tide Pools" plays with what feels like Indian-inspired melodies and rhythms, while "Sequoia," one of the strongest tracks here, melds tribal drumming, flute and organic piano with more ethereal, electronic noises.

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