

Musicians ready to get back to playing

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After a difficult year of lockdowns and bans on gatherings, local musicians are beginning to hear the music at the end of the tunnel.

Tom Boylan is the one-man band known as Holus Bolus, which he describes as a “psychedelic acoustiloop.” Psychedelic because his music smacks of Pink Floyd and other psych-rock influences, and “acoustiloop” because Boylan uses a looper pedal to individually record instruments, including drums, guitars and shakers. Altogether, it’s as if Boylan has a full band behind him.

Pre-pandemic, Boylan was performing up to 80 times each year and touring across the West often. In fact, he had a slew of shows booked in the Pacific Northwest when the virus struck last March.

“All my shows got cancelled, like immediately,” said Boylan. “From the beginning of February to October, I didn’t play any gigs at all. That was the first time in my whole life that I didn’t have any gigs either with a band or my own solo stuff.”

Boylan’s first gig in the post-lockdown era was on Halloween, which is also his birthday, at Zola’s On The Water in Brookings. With live music beginning to make a comeback, Boylan said he can tell listeners now have a deeper appreciation for something they haven’t been able to experience in a while.

“You just see this totally different look in their eye, people are just super stoked,” said Boylan.

Another local musician, Zack Freiwald, did what many other musicians across the world did during the pandemic, he performed in his living room and live streamed it.

“In the initial hype of covidness, that was the way to go and everyone was doing it, so I jumped all over it,” said Freiwald.

If Boylan is a psychedelic acoustilooop, Freiwald is more cozy campfire. During his COVID live streams, he did covers, as well as his own original stuff, usually in front of his fireplace and bookcase.

Freiwald, a prescribed fire and fuel technician at Redwood National and State Parks, said his songwriting has come a long way since he started 25 years ago.

“You may not always just be writing about the one event, or one person, but you might combine multiple things that happened to you over the course of time, but they are semi-related and end up making a tolerable song,” said Freiwald.

Freiwald said he has used the last couple of months to regroup before he starts to perform in-person again.

Both Holus Bolus and Zack Freiwald’s music can be streamed on Spotify and Apple Music.

Holus Bolus will be performing at 5 p.m. on May 8 at Chetco Brewing in Brookings, and May 22 at Port O’ Pints in Crescent City. A full list of Boylan’s upcoming shows can be found on the “Holus Bolus” Facebook page.