

# Goss drives crowds at concerts to Whole Lotta Shakin'

By Hector del Castillo  
Wallowa County Chieftain

A natural pianist, Brady Goss of Wallowa dismisses sheet music as if it were shackles.

Goss, 18, has grown up playing from his soul. The keys are practically extensions of his fingertips. Performing at concerts around the county, he quickly determines the mood of a show and plays along. All the while, the platform above his piano keyboard remains empty: If someone gave Goss a booklet showing measures and notes, he'd most likely shrug his shoulders with a puzzled expression.

"A lot of professional musicians improvise," Goss said. "I imagine three-quarters of them can't read music, or choose not to rely on it."

Already, Goss has released four albums while studying at Wallowa High School. Almost all of his tracks cover tunes from favorite artists, including Jerry Lee Lewis, Louie Armstrong, Ray Charles, Fats Domino, Hank Williams, Chuck Berry and the Eagles. As a youngster, Brady and his father Mike loved listening to Lewis. Jokingly, Brady classified their devotion as "religious." Goss has rehearsed many of their songs until the performance is ingrained in his memory. In addition to playing football and baseball in school, Goss found three or four days each week for three- or four-hour practice sessions.

With new music, Goss taps the piano board for a starting key. Once he figures the basic structure, he improvises and progressively adds more and more rhythm.

At age six, Goss slapped the board with one hand and managed his first song: "The Star Spangled Banner." Since then, he's tried more formal and traditional lessons. During third grade, he struggled learning from Iva Lindsey of Wallowa. She eventually told Dad, "You're going to have to take him to someone who can work with his abilities." Little changed with drives to La Grando for lessons from Margaret Bristow. By the time Goss started high school, Peter Donovan of Enterprise, the boy's latest piano teacher, concluded, "This is a waste of time. We're getting nowhere."

But over the last three years, Goss has blossomed in developing his own fast-paced style. His most recent CD, titled "I'm with a Band," includes an original tune ("A Piano Can Play the Blues") and has sold over 400 copies. The disc was his senior project. With the help of his mentor, Janis Carper,



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**Brady Goss plays and occasionally sings along with talented vocalist Jessie Borgerding at the Wallowa County Fairgrounds.**

he spent nearly three months mixing piano with recordings of other instruments.

In "I'm with a Band," unlike previous albums, Goss' piano work accompanies his own singing. Previously, all his music had been strictly instrumental. Then, working on his third disc, he sang Gene Vincent's "Be-Bop-A-Lula."

"I'd never heard him sing one note until that day in the recording studio," Mike Goss said with a grin. Brady had rarely opened his trap, even with a tape of another Jerry Lee Lewis tune blaring in their car.

In the end, they opted to drop his debut in vocals from the final product. But the young musician's act seemed complete.

Organizers at Portland's annual Bite of Oregon booked Goss last summer. The event showcases food, beverages and talent from around the state at Tom McCrall Waterfront Park. This year, he is scheduled to return Aug. 8, along with talented local singer Jessie Borgerding. She and Goss have partnered at several concerts throughout the season. Most recently, they performed July 12 at the Wal-

lowa County Fairgrounds in Enterprise.

The busy summer continues. Soon after listening to Goss' latest album, an events director in Clackamas County slated him for a week of solo concerts. Later, Marty Davis, a veteran musician known as a singing cowboy, will join Goss for performances at FFA Fairs in Clackamas, John Day and Island City, Wash.

By summer's end, Goss hopes to head east to Nashville in pursuit of his calling. "I'm not nervous," he said. "It's what I've always wanted to do."