

THE GILROY DISPATCH

Returning to his roots

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By Jodi Engle (editor@garlic.com)

Mary Jane and Frank Pattie lead a quiet semi-retired life on their 10-acre farm on Redwood Retreat Road in Gilroy. Meanwhile, their grandson, Lucas Ohio Pattie, is making noise in the music scene all the way from San Luis Obispo to Napa Valley.

Most recently, a song from his latest album, "All Good People", was picked up by KFOG 104.5 FM's Local Scene and included on the station's sixth compilation CD. Last month, loyal fans drove from as far away as San Luis Obispo to see Lucas and his band perform at the sold-out Red Devil Lounge in San Francisco, where the likes of Vanilla Ice and the Sugar Hill Gang have played.

"That's kind of a big deal," Lucas said modestly. "It was in my dreams to be playing at the Red Devil."

City with a touch of country

A life spent close to his family and the country has kept the lanky 26-year-old musician humble. Growing up, he left the urban landscape of Los Angeles during summer breaks to help Mary Jane, 81, and Frank, 85, with chores on their pastoral retreat in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains. He and his older brother, Nathan, picked buckets of apples to sell to juice maker Martinelli's and churned homemade ice cream from freshly picked blackberries. The reward for their labors was their grandmother's home cooking.

"Grandma is an amazing chef," Lucas said. "She cooks these amazing meals. Time spent here is a nourishing thing. Grandpa and Grandma have been pivotal characters in my journey and growth."

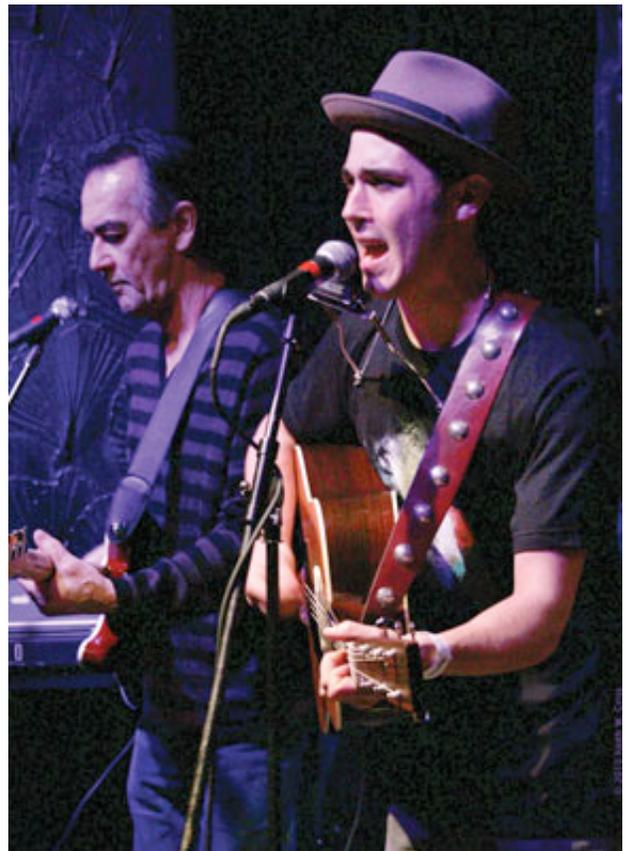
It was the best of both worlds. In L.A., Lucas grew up surrounded by artistic influences.

"My parents had large Christmas parties. There would often be a bonfire in the front yard and musicians would gather - singers songwriters, drummers, everything you could imagine," Lucas said. "I just happened to be a little kid in the mix. Sometimes I would be lucky enough to wield a shaker or a drum. They had a box full of instruments, and you could take what instrument you felt inclined to take. I remember sitting there as a kid and thinking, 'I want to play music someday.'"

In Gilroy, his grandfather, a mechanical engineer by profession and a World War II veteran, sang tenor with local musical theater groups in productions such as "My Fair Lady" and "Annie Get Your Gun", and when Lucas was in town, he went to watch.



Singer and songwriter Lucas Ohio Pattie, of Lucas Ohio Pattie and the Shamblers, stands near an apple tree in his grandparents' backyard in Gilroy on a recent visit.



Pattie, right, performs with members of his band during a recent performance at the Red Devil Lounge in San Francisco.

When he was 10, Lucas and his family moved to Pleasanton, where he took up clarinet when he was in seventh grade and swapped it for a Martin guitar that his father, Steve Pattie, bought him when he was a sophomore at Foothill High School.

"I was harkening back to the days around the bonfire," Lucas said. "I thought, 'I just never remember a clarinet being in the box.'"

The budding musician took guitar lessons for one year, which was long enough for him to learn the necessary chords and scales.

"I had a problem with doing the homework," he said. "I decided to quit music lessons and see where I was able to take my own music."

Growing into guitar

Lucas discovered that the bucolic setting of his grandparents' farm was conducive to continuing to practice, and he started writing his own lyrics while sitting on the porch. The setting, with its wild turkeys in the backyard and apple trees, inspired him to capture some of those images in his songwriting.

"I liked the rich open spaces and having leave to sit down and sing without having to worry about aggravating the neighbors," he said.

The farm also influenced his choice of majors when he enrolled at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo in 2002.

"I remember very vividly flipping through the course catalog when I stumbled across fruit science," he said. "It spoke to me."

Between studying "pomology" - a science that focuses on the cultivation, production, harvest and storage of fruit - he kept honing his skills on guitar and writing song lyrics.

"My way of transcribing the world is by way of music. It's a way of communicating," he said. "I didn't discover my own voice until my sophomore year of college. It took me a while to grow into the guitar."

Recording milestones

In college, Lucas and two friends decided to start a band called The Shamblers. He describes their style as Americana - a blend of folk, rock 'n' roll, blues, and country.

"We had no grand ambitions," he said. "It was a very organic grassroots effort in the sense of starting small and working my way up, starting on the curbside with my buddies playing to passers-by. I remember a couple of 20s thrown into the guitar case, and I thought, 'Wow, this is amazing.'"

From there, the band booked gigs in coffee shops and bars around San Luis Obispo, attracting a loyal following. They performed several times at Downtown Brewing Co., where they opened for some big names, including Charlie Musselwhite and Jackie Greene.

"He's a rippin' harmonica player," Lucas said of Musselwhite.

Shortly after Lucas graduated from Cal Poly in winter 2006, the band members parted ways. Together, they released two albums: "The Shamblers" in 2006 and "Steps Toward Home" in 2008.

"Both albums were huge projects," Lucas said. The CDs were self-published and are sold at Rasputin and Amoeba Music stores.



Lucas Ohio Pattie walks with his grandparents, Mary Jane, 81, and Frank, 85, in their former orchard on a recent visit.



Lucas Ohio Pattie and the Shamblers perform in San Francisco.

"Recording is what I love to do. They were two big milestones," he said.

Making new connections

Wanting to check out the lively Nashville music scene, Lucas traveled to Nashville and performed solo at a few venues, including the revered Bluebird Cafe. He returned home with a longer musical resume and a new pair of favorite cowboy boots that he often wears during concerts.

Lucas moved back to Pleasanton in late 2008. A few months later, he was at a house concert where he and a family friend, David Zink, performed in front of friends and family members. Musician Don Bassegy attended that performance. He had listened to Lucas' records beforehand, and seeing him perform, Bassegy saw charisma.

"He is as talented of a singer-songwriter that I've come across in my experience," Bassegy said. "I saw magic."

Bassegy had recently started jamming again with his old friends Don Fox and Steve Trovao. One jam led to another and soon the reincarnation of Lucas' old band, The Shamblers, was born. They renamed the band Lucas Ohio Pattie and the Shamblers.

"It's great getting back together with Don and taking off from where we left," said Trovao, who plays drums. Bassegy plays bass guitar, and Fox plays lead guitar. The new Shamblers are all over 50, but that doesn't matter.

"Lucas is so mature that it doesn't seem like that there are many years in between us," Trovao said.

Lucas is the frontman and singer. A prolific songwriter, he is in the midst of working on 14 new songs for the next album.

"With the band, I bring the songs to the table, and I see what sticks," he said.

The band rehearses in the basement of Bassegy's Vallejo home on Monday nights. Because the space is in a residential neighborhood, the band ends its practices promptly at 9 p.m.

Shambling, but still rambling

Besides the CD, Lucas is contemplating another visit to Nashville.

"I may still go there," he said. "There's a lot happening in San Francisco, too."

He hasn't been courted by any major record labels yet. If his singing career doesn't pan out, he has hopes of writing songs for other bands to turn into hits.

When not writing and performing, he can be found brewing award-winning beer. He won the Best of Show at the Mid-State Fair for Pale Ale in 2008. He also enjoys hiking, and his dream vacation would be to travel along the Russian River.

"It would be a dual purpose trip - camp out but also go hit up some really cool breweries," Lucas said.

Until then, his performance schedule is keeping him busy. The band will be jamming on March 4 at Armando's in Martinez.

Someday, he would like to take the stage for people in Gilroy.

"I would love to perform at the Garlic Festival," he said. "If given the opportunity, I'd be honored to perform the Garlic Festival. That would be a blast."

Jodi Engle

Reach Jodi Engle at editor@garlic.com