



Heather Marie Ellison
and Kirt Lind of
Astronaut Ice Cream.
PHOTO BY JEFF SHANER

want to do this show.”

So they did. With the help of band videographer Joey Moshiri, on the evening of April 2, the duo staged a livestreamed concert from under a gazebo on a ranch in Capay. They followed up the show with a video for the song “Better Days,” a tune from the band’s then to-be-released album *Blue*, for which they’d end up making and releasing a video for every track—nine total.

“The whole rest of the summer, we’d finish one video and start the

The show’s still on

Public entertainment venues were the first to close and will be the last to reopen during the coronavirus pandemic. That, of course, is bad news for businesses who make their livings producing live shows as well as for the artists who perform them.

In addition to the financial impact COVID closures have had on Butte County’s entertainment industry, there’s also the spiritual impact on isolated residents deprived of experiencing art and public performances in person. Beyond distanced musical accompaniments to dinner and drinks at local restaurants, or drive-in style theater events, the only option for “live” events has been virtual.

Of the handful of local artists who’ve been able to harness the resources and the technology to present themselves online, none has delivered the much-needed connection to the performing arts so completely as electro-pop duo Astronaut Ice Cream.

“We had this big tour booked for April,” guitarist Kirt Lind said about the band’s pre-coronavirus plans. “And when that got canceled, immediately I was like, ‘I still

next,” Lind said.

“Even if COVID wasn’t over, we knew it was going to be awhile before we got to perform, so the videos became performances for us,” vocalist Heather Marie Ellison added.

Besides sharing videos online, the band organized additional interactive livestream events, including an album-release listening party for *Blue* and a Halloween Eve variety show/chat featuring Astronaut Ice Cream live with prerecorded performances other local performers—including spooky rockers WRVNG, and cocktails and comedy with local thespians Betty Burns and Delisa Freistadt.

“Halloween was really special this year, and I don’t think a lot of people can say that,” Ellison said about the interactive experience.

“At first it seemed like this was the replacement,” Lind said about the band’s forced shift online, adding, “I’m pleasantly surprised at how much fun we had doing it this way.”

—JASON CASSIDY
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YEARS IN
BUSINESS

BUTTE HUMANE SOCIETY

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