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Acting? I'm too busy with music

What would you do if you were the child of one of the biggest actors and directors in the world ever? If you are Kyle Eastwood, you play jazz, as he told **Rob Garratt**

It can't be easy growing up as Clint Eastwood's son. With every media-shaped door instantly held ajar, the question must not be "what shall I do with my life?", but "what can't I do?"

In the case of Kyle Eastwood – one of seven children Clint fathered to five women – the answer, somewhat bizarrely, was "play jazz".

Known for its unpredictable and underpaid lifestyle, it's certainly not the most obvious career path for the firstborn son of a Hollywood legend.

Why not try his hand at acting?

"I was never... I've done some here and there," he says, a wry nod to working alongside Juliette Binoche in 2008's *Summer Hours*.

"I guess I was never bitten by the bug. I was very much into film, but I'm more interested in directing, the whole process. But I have been too busy with music."

It could have been very different; Kyle studied film at university, and made a few unaccredited appearances in his father's films, before finding his own voice as musician.

He drew on childhood piano lessons with his father, as well as memories of Clint's eclectic Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Miles Davis records played loud at their California home.

At annual visits to the Monterey Jazz Festival he benefited from backstage treatment, rubbing shoulders with the likes of Sarah Vaughan, Basie and Ella Fitzgerald.

"It was great to have seen all these people before they passed away," said Eastwood, talking from a crisp line from California, where he is "visiting family".

Two soundtracks he worked on, for the heart-wrenching films *Letters from Iwo Jima* and *Gran Torino*, picked up Golden Globe nominations.



Kyle Eastwood is playing in Dorking on April 28

Music and film have been the two things I've always loved. But jazz really gives the freedom to play your own emotion.

But he says touring with his quintet is a greater thrill.

"Soundtrack writing is a lot of sitting behind a computer and seeing what fits," Eastwood says.

"When you play on the road you play differently night to night – writing for someone else is a different kind of challenge.

"I enjoy working with my father, and making music with other people. Music and film

have been the two things I've always loved.

"But jazz really gives the freedom to play your own emotion, the kind of music you want, how you want."

Eastwood's band is a mean bunch of regulars on the London scene, including Graeme Blevins and Graeme Flowers, who lead funk show-offs *The London Horns*, and the incredibly gifted pianist Andrew McCormick,

whose album collaboration with Jason Yarde was one of last year's jazz highlights.

"We've been playing a lot over the last few years, we've become pretty tight," said Eastwood, who spends the bulk of his time in Paris.

Eastwood will be coming to Dorking's Watermill Jazz Club on April 28 to promote his latest release, *Songs to the Chateau*.

Recorded at a "friend's" 15th century castle in Bordeaux country last August, it boasts a relaxed charm and some pleasant moments, but is unlikely to be troubling the jazz album of the year polls.

"We had great food and great wine – and managed to get some music done," he adds.

LADIES OF COUNTRY

with **Billie Jo Spears**
Fairfield Halls, Sunday, May 8 Tickets: £22.40
from 020 8688 9291 or at www.fairfield.co.uk

This heart-warming and nostalgic show features hit recording star Billie Jo Spears performing all of her popular releases, including *Blanket on the Ground*, *What I've Got in Mind*, *57 Chevrolet*.

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