

No place to play means little work for musicians

By STEPHEN MILLER
Of the Emerald

Wheatfield, a local musical group that "plays everything from folk to acoustic rock 'n roll," finds work scarcer after the Odyssey coffeehouse closed Sunday according to group member Will Hobbs.

"One frustrating thing about Eugene—there are a lot of really good musicians but there aren't places to play," says Hobbs. "I don't think people in Eugene realize the caliber of musician that exists in this town."

"The Sun Shop, Chrystal Ship, other places like that sell just thousands of record albums—people are really into music—but they don't realize there's such good live music around. But there's no place to play where people feel comfortable going."

The situation would improve, says Hobbs, "if some people would get together and open up coffee houses and get other sorts of trips like that going."

Closed by urban renewal

The Odyssey, according to Don Ross, another of Wheatfield's three members, was the only coffee house in Eugene serving that function. He called it "a stopping-off place, a local forum for musicians."

"The Sunday night broadcasts on KZEL-FM" Hobbs added, "were big, they drew a lot of good people."

The members of Wheatfield met last October in the Odyssey, simply played together, and "bang, the group was formed." They were soon "passing the hat at the student union." They have since played at Duffy's Tavern, The Grower's Market, the Wesley Center, Scarborough Faire, the Bavarian, the E.M.U. and private parties. They have also performed in California and Corvallis. Band member Peter Wolfe, however, stressed that they are, "not playing as much as we should be, as much as we nearly want to be."

Wheatfield is currently trying to "widen its audience with a single record. 'Ashland,' a melodic protest song, concerns a friend of Hobbs' in an Ashland, Kentucky prison. The flip side, 'Timekeeper,' is also by Hobbs. "It grew out of my experiences on the road," says Hobbs.

Record Released

The record was released two weeks ago. The group itself is distributing it to radio stations and stores but wants "to plug into" distributors situated in larger markets.

Wheatfield produced the record itself with added musicians, engineers and the general help of friends. It was made at the group's expense in a private home rather than a recording studio.

The record can now be heard at the E.M.U. jukebox.

Currently composed of three acoustic guitars, the group is considering using other instruments such as an electric bass, piano, mandolin, and flute more frequently.

Wolfe, 22, and Hobbs, 24, grew up less than 20 miles apart in Indiana but, oddly,

first met at the Odyssey. Wolfe describes his main interest to be "harmonizing." Hobbs feels his is the "poetic end" of the group.

Don Ross, 22, is from Sacramento. He usually plays lead guitar and pinpoints his interests as, "instrumentalizing to fit the melodies." Ross has played at the Odyssey for four and a half years.

Wheatfield will next appear this Friday in Newport at Canyon Way. Saturday they will be at WOW Hall, Eighth St. and Lincoln.



SKRAP Theatre presented its seventh free performance in Eugene Monday night. It was part of a program sponsored by the Eugene Parks and Recreation Department. The theatre presents several different selections, some of them in mime. This act is called "In the good old daze." The next performance, their last, will be tonight at Sladden Park.

Photo by James Link

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