

Modern Mono

Lenny and Dave: perpetrators of punk, play "hard core" Fridays on KLCC

It's Friday night and the airwaves of Eugene are suddenly torched white hot by the fire of new wave and "punk" rock.

This is not the "usual" FM-radio rock music Eugene is accustomed to. This is KLCC's Modern Mono with Lenny D' Mocher — known on the air as Lenny Tone — and Dave Scholz. And they are just barely maintaining order between the anarchy of the studio and the driving rhythm of the music.

"New Wave sucks," D' Mocher shouts, in response to the obligatory question: What is new wave? Others in the studio laugh.

He cues a 45 on the turntable while Scholz reads a public service announcement for Maude Kearns Art Gallery. "Maude Kearns" — the name sounds strangely incongruous pitted against the "punk" tone of Modern Mono.

The bass line of Missing Persons' "Mental Hopscotch" fills the studio.

D' Mocher is short, thin and angular. He moves about the cramped studio with spider-like precision. His attention is scattered among cueing records, writing in the log, setting up the PSAs and doing the "outtros."

"Live mike," D' Mocher says. He breaks into the middle of a

song. "Taping is illlll-leeeeeegallll," he says.

D' Mocher is originally from New York. He is part-owner and chief buyer for Diana's, a new wave record and fashion shop on the mall. D' Mocher is a musician and has achieved some notoriety as a member of the "Whitetones", an acappella singing group patterned after groups of the 1950s.

Scholz sits before the console, monitoring the levels. He is large, with blond hair cut short in a ragged style. He wears tortoise shell glasses with lenses of livid green. Scholz's smile is laconic and constant. He moves about the studio with lethargic confidence.

Also from the East, Scholz now lives near Florence. He is a veteran of many bands. His latest band — "Soft Monkeys" — is now getting together and making tapes.

Modern Mono first took to the airwaves in January of last year. In the beginning they were only on the air once a month. February of this year they went to a weekly format, fitting into the 11:30 p.m. to 2:30 a.m. niche they now occupy.

They say the music they play is hardcore punk. They argue the distinction between "new wave" and "punk."

"New wave is kinda like what

jocks and preps listen to," D' Mocher says.

The request line lights up, interrupting the discussion.

Hilary wants to dedicate Josie Cotton's "Johnny Are You Queer" to Brian. But on the air Scholz gets it turned around, dedicating the song from Brian to Hilary.

Modern Mono exists in part as a response to Eugene's album-oriented-rock station KZEL, with which Scholz says they have a friendly rivalry. But there is some rancor to the pair's on-the-air comments about KZEL.

Modern Mono plays the music their rival won't play, D' Mocher says. However, he understands KZEL is "doing what they have to do to get ratings."

"Oregon is behind the times," he adds. "KZEL is on top of what's happening in Oregon."

KLCC, 89.7, is Lane Community College's FM radio station. The station is non-profit, receiving supporting funds from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and local businesses. Modern Mono is supported in part by B.J. Kelly's, and the Bijou and Cinema 7 theaters.

Among the record piles there seems a preponderance of unknown labels. One, The Anemic Boyfriends' "Fake ID" is on Red



Lenny D'Mocher cues records with spider-like precision.

Sweater Records. The group itself is from Anchorage Alaska. Red Sweater Records is like a hundred other small labels that are on the upsurge in this country.

By choice, D' Mocher programs more American new wave and punk recordings than British.

"The American stuff is hottest, especially out here," Scholz says.

Black Flag's "TV Party" plays in the background as D' Mocher says "most people don't get to hear anything good."

"There's so much good music now. As much as I like fifties and sixties stuff, this is better," he says. Being the buyer for Diana's has kept him up on the new wave and punk scene since the start.

They don't play everything new though. "I refused to play the Feederz album 'Jesus Entering From the Rear'," D' Mocher says.

"For enough money," Scholz jokes, "we'll play almost anything."

This week Modern Mono has a top 10 of their most requested songs. They put on number one, Mag and the Suspects' "Erection."

Good rock music has an edge to it, a ragged edge. This music has more jagged edges than a shattered mirror. Mag and the Suspects' song, like those by Anti-Nowhere League and nearly all the bands D' Mocher and Scholz play, have a power that is simple and direct.

D' Mocher says with candor that he's not a true punk. "I'm a balding middle-aged poseur." However, D' Mocher is probably more in tune with what's happening in rock music than all his peers in the Eugene area. "I've been a punk all my life."

In the cramped studio, lights blink and the needles nod into the red zone as D' Mocher works with precision that comes only from knowledge.

The request line heats up. Someone wants to hear Waitresses' "I know what Boys Like." Another call comes in for anything by the Ramones. Yet another caller asks for "I Drink Milk" by Teen Idols.

D' Mocher writes down each request, murmuring "I gotta have some coffee."

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