

NEW MUSIC

Local label records area bands



Malcolm Conover, a co-owner of Eugene's Fatal Erection Records, has a great time doing

what he does: making and marketing record albums.

"It's a lot of fun having a (record) label, because you can entertain all sorts of ideas and fantasies," says Conover.

The aim of Fatal Erection, he says, has never been to make money; but neither is it to lose money. "It's kind of a full-time hobby," Conover says. He also finds it a good way to maintain contact with music fans and record collectors worldwide.

Conover, 29, a Eugene resident, first conceived of the idea for a record label in 1982, when he thought of putting out a compilation album of Northwest punk bands. As a widely known record collector he'd bought and sold records by little-known bands all over the world, before deciding to get "a little more involved."

He looked around and found a few bands which, he says, because of their politics, were overlooked by the record industry. He decided to start a record label to help give these groups better exposure.

Conover met with Tom Roberts from Portland, who he describes as "350 pounds of forcefulness." Roberts, guitarist with Poison Idea, had the same idea, and the two got along so well they decided to become partners in the effort, Conover says.

After what Conover describes as "a lot of beer and head scratching" they came up with the name, Fatal Erection.

"A lot of people might think (the name) is there for some kind of shock value, like, 'Who is the erection fatal for?' People can construe it in a lot of ways, but the idea is partially to get people to think. It's kind of a colorful name, but in essence, it's just a play on all the phallic symbols in nuclear energy; bombs, silos, nuclear-power plants. They all seem kind of phallic looking, so that's what I read into the whole thing," says Conover.

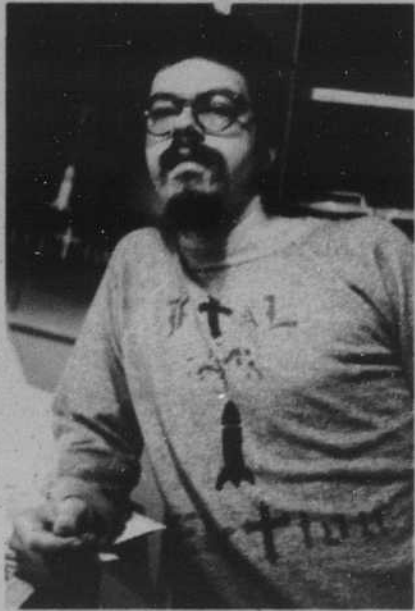
But, he adds, anything people want to make of it is all right. "People shouldn't take it as some kind of sexist crack, which it isn't. I'm very sensitive about that," he says.

The original idea of Fatal

Erection was to give exposure to musicians. "(To) bands that we had a certain confidence in...who weren't complete dicks spouting a bunch of right wing fascism or left wing stupidity," Conover says.

He is now trying to arrange for a record to be released on the Eugene/Portland-based label by a band from Poland, the Deserters.

He calls the band "too radical" to have anything released in their home country. "I don't know if it's going to



Malcolm Conover

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— Malcolm Conover.

materialize or not," he says, adding that he may possibly work with "half a dozen or more of the more accomplished bands from Poland that are heavily censored."

But, he says, there may be repercussions for the bands in Poland, and "I'd be hesitant to do it, because I wouldn't want to cook their goose...I think they'd be hesitant to do it, too."

It's unfortunate, Conover says, that there are no punk bands that he knows of from either the Soviet Union or the Middle East. "People over there certainly have a lot to scream about," he says.

Fatal Erection's first release, in March of 1983, was the "Pick Your King" EP by Poison Idea from Portland. "Pick Your King" features 13 songs in about 12 and one-half minutes, and features a record jacket with

a picture of Elvis Presley on one side and Jesus Christ on the other.

This release, Conover says, has "sold phenomenally well" in the Northwest, as well as throughout the rest of the United States and in Europe, especially in Germany, Holland and Poland, and in Brazil. ("They've got a big punk scene down there," says Conover.) They make a point, he continues, to ship at least 20-25 percent of the records pressed to foreign and overseas markets, especially since Poison Idea has become so popular in other countries. This EP, he says, was on the top 10 of one Brazilian fanzine's charts for about six months.

Last month, E13, one of Eugene's premier punk bands, released its first single, "No Mercy for Swine," on Fatal Erection Records.

The E13 single contains eight songs in just over eight minutes, and was pressed in a limited edition with each record numbered and with a printed label on side A and a unique, individual hand-drawn label on side B.

Future releases by the label include an EP by Final Warning from Portland, due out "any day," and a 12-inch, eight-song EP by Poison Idea, "Record Collectors are Pretentious Assholes," scheduled for release in December.

The releases on Fatal Erection have been well received in punk fanzines all over the world, especially in "Maximum Rock and Roll," an internationally known and respected publication out of Berkeley, Calif. He adds that the records are "more or less sold out" on release, due to advance sales and orders locally, across the United States and overseas.

They wouldn't really have to worry, he adds, about foreign distribution if they didn't "feel a need for the records to get into isolated nooks and crannies around the universe."

Fatal Erection's releases are sold in Eugene at House of Records and at Earth River Records. Conover personally sells them to his friends or to people who write him at home (693 East 16th, Eugene, 97401). "I'll either send (the records) to you or drop them by your house," he says.

Marty Schwarzbauer

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