

Musicians create with computer

By Mary Lichtenwalner
Of the Emerald

With just a touch of a finger, Greg Herman plucks at nonexistent strings to the lull of a cello in an orchestra. But the sleepy melody of the orchestra is suddenly silenced as he reaches up, removes the floppy disc and inserts a new one into the synthesizer.

Then eerie, haunting chords float about the room, and a ghoulish voice calls in different tones as Herman's hands travel across the keyboard.

One more touch of the finger turns to the sound of a glass shattering. Another touch — the bark of a dog.

Computerized music — that's what University students Herman, 21, and Dave Farrell, 20, create in their hobby-turned-business, HFX Studio.

"It's converting music into a computer language," Farrell says.

A computerized, synthesized keyboard in the studio "enables you to take any real sound, hold it in memory and trigger it to play," he says. "It's a computer with sounds stored on digital discs. Our studio isn't normal."

Digital recording makes it unique, he explains. Digital recording eliminates any wear on the tape, and it also takes away or minimizes distortion, Herman says.

The word is getting out. Local musicians are coming to the modest studio inside a little, white house, nestled in a quiet, Eugene neighborhood.

But the studio is modest only in size, Farrell and Herman agree, calling it "one of Oregon's most progressive recording studios."

"We feel this quality really rivals studios that charge three to four times as much," Herman says.

Farrell and Herman charge \$15 per hour for a recording session. A demo tape costs an average of \$150 to \$200 to produce — far less than they have paid as musicians renting time in other studios.

"We've been playing together for five to six years, and several years ago in Portland we spent \$850 to produce a demo tape that turned out to be a horrid thing. We ended up just getting taken," Herman says.

In their two-member band, 2 Humans, Farrell plays the bass, guitar and computerized drums, while Herman plays keyboards and synthesizer and sings. They consider themselves "technical musicians," comparing their technique to many



Dave Farrell

English bands.

Farrell had direct exposure to English music last spring when he went on an exchange program at a London university.

"The Eurythmics' first album was done in a studio very similar to this," Farrell says. "I think the English are the most progressive musically. I think (computerized) music is catching, and Americans need to be more progressive."

Herman says 2 Humans will release an album this summer, and he describes the works as "electronic-based, rhythmic music."

Herman, a history major and a part-time consultant at a local communications company, owns the studio. Farrell, a business major, handles the booking and scheduling of clients and assists Herman in the engineering when putting together a recording.

"There are three other recording studios in town, but I think our approach is much different. We have things they can't offer," Herman says.

Good, clear, non-distorted sound is what Herman and Farrell are after, and they know their clients have the same goal in mind.

"You'd like your initial recording to be as dry as possible — completely dry, with no reverberations," Farrell says. "We can control that with a digital reverb."

The two musicians invested in the bulk of equipment about three years ago, but they keep up with the demands of the musical styles they record. "We buy keyboards and make other changes constantly to keep us state of the art," Herman says.

Farrell and Herman say they record creatively, and they will record anywhere in the house to achieve the effect they want. "If vocals are going to sound better in the bathroom, then it's in the bathroom," Herman says with a laugh.

On a recording mixer, Farrell and Herman put together the sounds after the separate tapes around the house have been completed.

The average musician takes about two to three hours to record a song, and mixing takes about one to two hours per song, Farrell says. But it does vary.

The John Workman Quartet, a local "jazz-fusion" group, is an exception, Herman says. Workman recently recorded an album at Farrell's and Herman's studio.

Workman's musical production knowledge helped him save recording time and costs. "(Workman) recorded the whole project for slightly over \$100," Herman says.

But, he adds, "It sounds good no matter what the price."

The type of music that comes out of the studio varies from jazz to punk rock. Herman says E-13, a local punk rock band, recorded at the studio.

Although music fans may not see the duo performing in local bars, Herman says 2 Humans have the potential to be recognized in the music world. "We'd have a hard time playing live, there's simply not enough of us to do it," he says. "But being proficient in the studio is just as good as being proficient live."

Photos by Karen Stallwood



Greg Herman

Chilean woman to talk about Indian struggle

Sofia Painiqueo, a Mapuche Indian leader from Chile, will speak on "The Struggle for Survival of the Mapuche Indian in Chile" on Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the EMU Forum Room.

The Mapuche is one of the largest indigenous tribes in Chile with one million members. Long threatened with encroachment of their tribal lands by mining interests, the Mapuche were granted the right to live undisturbed on their land by Chilean President Salvador Allende, says sociology Professor Ken Liberman.

But those land rights were nullified by President Augusto Pinochet, who came to power following a 1973 coup in which Allende was killed. The Mapuche land was appropriated by the Chilean government, and the Mapuche were moved to relocation centers Liberman equates with concentration camps.

"These people have been suffering terribly," Liberman says.

Since U.S. government supports Chile, it is in a position to pressure the Chilean government to change its policy toward the Mapuche, he says.

Painiqueo is visiting Oregon as part of a three-week tour of the United States. Painiqueo speaks no English, but her speech will be translated by an interpreter.

Some fliers have been distributed giving the wrong time for the event. Painiqueo will speak at 7:30 p.m., not at noon.

Awards banquet honors scholars with high GPAs

About 140 juniors will receive the Junior Scholar award at a banquet today in the Gerlinger Alumni Lounge, says Eric Bressman, vice president of Mortar Board.

All juniors with a 3.75 GPA and above will receive the award, sponsored by Mortar Board and Druids, two honor societies.

Stanley Greenfield, president of Phi Beta Kappa and a University English professor, will be the speaker at the 2:30 p.m. banquet.

Bressman says the number of students receiving the award has remained fairly constant since the award was initiated three years ago.

"I was fairly shocked that that many students had such a high GPA," Bressman says.

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