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an age-old
craft
See Page 5B



THE Friday EDITION

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arts & entertainment

Piano man: 'In Flight' to the top at last

Early Saturday evening a physically small man plans to make big music. He'll sit down in front of a nine-foot Steinway concert grand piano in the Hult Center's Sorenson Theatre and try to communicate every ounce of the emotion that drew him into music in the first place.

His eyes will close. His head will shake and sway. And at times he may even make someone sitting in the back row wonder what planet he's on. But make no mistake: Michael Harrison, a

Story by Eric Eloff
Photos by Ross Martin

27-year-old Eugene composer-pianist and University graduate student in music, will be celebrating that night — and with good reason.

At Christmas time last year Harrison received word that the bigwigs at Windham Hill studios in San Francisco were interested, if not excited, about one of the songs he recorded and sent them in June 1984 called "In Flight."

And after several trips to the Bay Area, three revisions of the song and a ten-month wait, Harrison finally saw the reality of his dream come true. "In Flight" was just released on the new Windham Hill piano sampler.

Originally a 12-minute song, "In Flight" has been reduced to six minutes on the piano sampler, but Harrison says he's completely satisfied with the sound he and the people at Windham Hill created.

But perhaps the most revealing news of what it took to produce what he now considers his best piece of work is his story of where the idea for "In Flight" evolved.

"I was out at the Oregon Country Fair in the summer of 1984, and I'd been hearing music there all day long. And I'm not impressed by most things I hear, and I didn't expect to hear anything that would blow me away. I very rarely do.

"I happened to be in front of the main stage when Windham Hill guitarist Michael Hedges got up and started playing. And the guy had such charisma, and he was so strong. It was like one guy up there with his guitar and all of a sudden hundreds of people were gathering around and really listening to the guy.

"It blew me away. And actually I felt really kind of hurt inside. I think there was a sort of jealousy. It was like I im-

Continued on Page 4B

