

ENCORE!

The Oregon Daily Emerald's Entertainment Guide



Courtesy photo

Local musician Mark Alan has released a new album, *Woody*, and will be performing in Shafer lounge tonight at 9.

Popular Eugene musician brings honesty to performances, albums

By Layne Laketfish
Encore Reporter

Mark Alan has made a name for himself on campus. He, his voice and his guitar have been called "entertaining," "romantic" and "fun to listen to."

It's this combination that gets him invited back for University performances, and he'll be back on campus Tuesday night at 9 in Walton's Schafer lounge for a free performance.

As with most musicians, Alan's story is longer than audiences might assume.

"I can remember following my mom around the house and singing when I was four and five years old," said Alan, describing his childhood in Colorado. "And I remember watching Elvis Presley movies and wondering why everybody was screaming at Elvis when he sang, because I just assumed everyone could sing like that."

He was wrong about everybody being able to sing like Elvis, but as all this was going on, he had taken his first musical step toward a performing career — he had started singing.

He took his second musical step when he was 10 — he picked up a guitar. "I decided I wanted to play the guitar when I was watching the Glen Campbell Show with my dad," he explained. "It was all I could do to talk him into buying me one, but he did. He bought me a \$15 one."

Growing up with a song in his heart did more than just give Alan fun and enjoyment. "When I was young, I liked music because it gave me a voice when I often times didn't have one," he said. "I could create whatever I wanted to create and say whatever I wanted to say. My music was mine."

Though he did spend the next decade of his life singing in church and school choirs, he basically dropped the professional ideas until he was in his twenties.

He said he decided to give up music after finishing high school because it wasn't something he thought he could make a living at. Instead he headed off to the University of Northern Colorado to study English and philosophy.

His idea backfired, however. "I studied English and philosophy thinking that I probably wouldn't get a degree, but I wanted a direction, and the combination of the two really actually led me back to my music."

And the rest is his musical history. He played in some different bands, started doing shows and then remembered his once-forgotten childhood dream. "That memory didn't come back to me until I was actually playing in clubs in

1982.

"I was riding home from a gig I'd played in Colorado, and I remember looking up at the stars and thinking to myself 'God, this is so strange. I always knew that I would be coming home after having played music,'" Alan said.

As for now, this 29-year-old is a one-man band. Two thirds of his performances consist of covers of other artists' work, such as The Police, Steely Dan, Joni Mitchell, James Taylor and Tom Waite. "I play a little bit of everything, I guess," he said.

When he's not playing covers, he plays some of his own compositions.

"I keep a journal, and a lot of what I use for lyrics comes from what I write about in my journal," he explained. "I'm also frequently inspired by things I read."

"If I have some space to myself, I can write songs," he said. That makes writing songs sound easy, but he says no. "The music comes pretty easy to me but writing lyrics is far and away more difficult, and what is said in the songs is really important."

"I just sit down with a large pad of blank paper and work the lines," he explained. "I like my music to be crude; music you can't help but move to."

"The music I write and the music I learn originates mainly from my need to express myself," he said.

He has already put together two full length albums and is currently working on a third.

His first album, titled *See the Red*, was recorded in Colorado. "I named the album after a line in one of my songs," Alan said. "Red is symbolic of passion which to me is about being alive, being really alive."

"So, to me, the title is saying, see life and live life."

The second album was recorded last February here in Eugene and is titled *Songs for Woody*. "Woody is my friends' dog and he's kind of a neurotic dog, and I could relate to him," he said.

"One day I was doing some recording at the house where Woody lives, and she started barking in the middle of my recording, and I got kind of uptight about it."

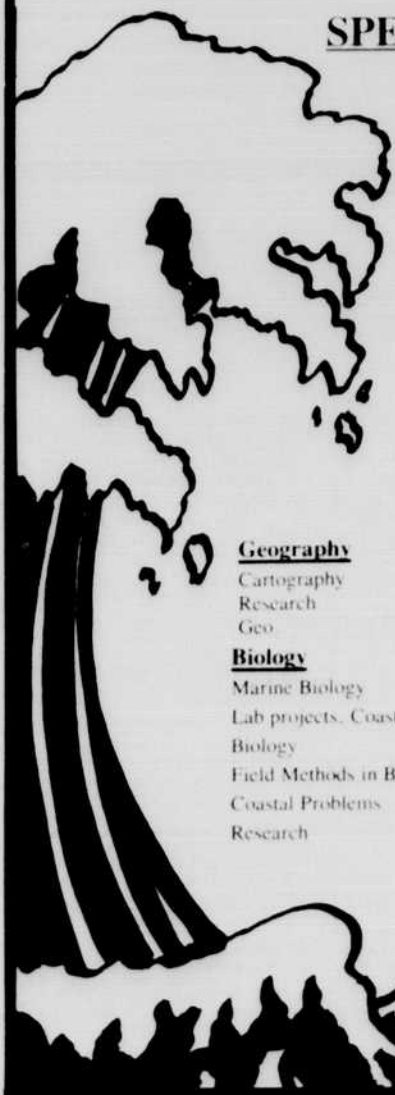
"And then I thought, wait a minute. This is no different than me needing to practice. Naturally, I equated that with both of us needing to express ourselves and be true to our natures," he said. Hence, *Songs for Woody* was born.

Alan sells his albums for \$8, and they can be purchased directly from him. "I feel like on such

Turn to Alan, Page 8

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