

KWVA 88.1 improves its radio scene

Support your campus radio! KWVA has finally come of age after going on the air four years ago. The University station has since gone through a growing-up process to become, if not a threat, a considerable nuisance to commercial radio in the Eugene-Springfield ratings' war.

Since 88.1 FM first went on the air, it was the object of some well-deserved criticism. The station evolved into more of a social clique than a paraprofessional radio station intended to entertain the student body.

ON THE SCENE



Ted Hinds

Many students interested in gaining broadcast experience were turned away because their musical tastes did not jive with those of station administration.

That has changed over the last year with the appointment of J. Pierson to general manager and Gil Hanson to program director.

With an administrative team that includes Scott Drew, Jason Kamrass and Jen Upshaw, they have implemented a policy of professionalism and fairness that has greatly improved KWVA.

The result is better quality radio and a wider variety of shows to suit the tastes of all students. The improvement has caught the attention of local businesses, which are directing more of their advertising dollars toward KWVA.

What KWVA — which is broadcast from atop the PLC building — lacks in power, it compensates for in market specificity.

Though the bulk of what you hear on 88.1 FM falls under that amorphous label "college music," campus radio has something for everyone these days.

Just pick up a programming guide and find out when you should be listening to the radio. This year you can hear Brunch with the Beatles, Death Sentence, Metal Madness, Travels Through Purgatory and shows specializing in folk, ska, jazz and local artists.

The only common thread is that, whatever style of music it is, you won't find it on KZEL, KNRQ or KDUK.

For example, Metal Madness fills the void left by the now defunct Z-Rock station with current metal singles. Hard On taps the archives of the '70s and '80s to complement newer bands like Red Hot Chili Peppers, but it plays classics that you won't hear on KZEL or the *Freedom Rock* album.

KWVA is becoming more professional but still tests the boundaries of Federal Communications Commission regulations and ultraconservative outrage. It is a fine line between bad taste and good college radio, but the staff at KWVA has struck that balance perfectly in 1995.

Ted Hinds, a senior double majoring in business and psychology, is an entertainment columnist for the Emerald.

Mythic Moment

Planetarium features acoustic concert and laser show

By Anne Moser-Kornfeld
Entertainment Editor

One balmy, wet day, musician David Helfand walked across the University campus, thinking about a name for the newly formed group with whom he had been playing Celtic harp, mando cello and guitar. Then he looked up and saw how dark and intense the sky appeared.

The clouds' menacing and gothic appearance struck Helfand, and he said to himself, what a mythic sky. Later, when he got back together with the other three band members, he asked them what they thought of the name Mythic Sky. The name stuck.



Mythic Sky members are, from left to right, Kris Thomas, Dennis Pearman, Peter Thomas and David Helfand.

Since 1989, the four-man ensemble known as Mythic Sky has explored the power of myth and epic much to the satisfaction of Willamette Valley and central Oregon Coast audiences.

Helfand said the group's music bridges the ancient world to the modern world.

Besides the Celtic harp played by Helfand, Dennis Pearman plays keyboards and bass, Peter Thomas performs on synthesizers and

classical guitar and Kris Thomas utilizes a Midi electronic percussion kit and acoustic drums.

On Nov. 16-17, the group will be at the Lane ESD Planetarium at 2300 Leo Harris Parkway in Eugene to present their CD release concert "Dreamtime."

"Dreamtime" is Mythic Sky's latest collaboration of their musical soundscapes with the Laser Artistry of Seattle-based Laser Fantasy International.

Laser artist Steve Taylor choreographed and produced sequences of geometric patterns to work in accordance with the original electronic, acoustic music composed by K. Thomas, Helfand said.

"The audience sits on plush, cushion seats under the planetarium dome where they are enveloped by the emotions and mood of the music. When audiences watch us play, we've been told the effect is pronounced," Helfand said.

Mythic Sky's mixed media breaks new ground. According to David Paul, main stage coordinator for the Oregon Country Fair, the distinguishing sound has been what appeals most to audiences.

The blend of the old and the new embodies everything Mythic Sky is about, Helfand said. Thomas'

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David Helfand's harp playing compliments "Dreamtime."



Enthusiasts will enjoy CD-ROM battle game

By Joshua Olson
Online Editor

Imagine yourself in the cockpit of a 100-ton giant robot. At your fingertips are the controls to its navigation and an impressive array of brutal weaponry.

Now imagine that you're on the surface of a barren planet. In the distance you see two metal monstrosities with powering-up weapons aimed straight for you, and they're closing in fast.

Defend yourself.

If closing your eyes and imagining isn't quite doing the trick for you, go buy a copy of *MechWarrior 2* for personal computer CD-ROM.

Based on the popular BattleTech game universe, *MechWarrior 2* is a first-person 3-D combat simulator, which lets players take control of one of 15 BattleMechs in more than 30 strategic missions or in spontaneous battles.

The BattleMechs can be custom-configured from a variety of nasty weaponry down to the heat sinks and endosteel skeletons.

Game play begins as you choose allegiance to one of two warring Clans and are



MechWarrior 2
Action/Simulation

★★★★

clear that you can reconfigure your 'Mechs for the upcoming mission.

Once you choose to begin the next mission, you are debriefed to the mission objectives and flown to the drop point. The missions themselves are not all of the search-and-destroy variety but vary from simple attack targets to escorts to defensive goals, often combined within the same mission. Completing each mission requires you to have varying degrees of strategy and piloting skill as enemy 'Mechs unleash everything they have to

defeat your purpose.

Mission play is engrossing, despite a somewhat complex set of commands used to control the BattleMech and a less-than-optimal but reconfigurable keyboard layout. The heads-up display is well-designed to minimize the time your eyes stray from the action.

MechWarrior 2's graphics are impressive, using real-time polygon rendering and texture mapping and video resolutions from 320x200 to 1024x768. Don't expect to fully experience them, however, unless you have a Pentium-class computer.

The game's stated minimum system requirements include a 486DX2/66 processor with eight megabytes RAM and local-bus graphics accelerator. On a computer with that configuration, it could only be considered playable using the lowest video mode and graphics options.

I understand the sound is equally impressive, though I was unable to get it to work with my sound card.

MechWarrior 2 is the culmination of a very long wait for enthusiasts of BattleTech and *MechWarrior 1*. It was worth it.