

# UO composer shows passion for music

*A graduate student expresses elements of nature through music*

By Erin Snelgrove  
Oregon Daily Emerald

When Daniel Heila observes nature, he doesn't just see trees and water, he sees music.

As a graduate composer for the Oregon Composers Forum, a University course that offers professional composition experience, Heila is learning the tools needed to develop his craft. He learns how to prepare for concerts and perform the administrative tasks involved with performing.

Heila, a flutist, performed with six other graduate students Feb. 16 at Beall Hall. Each presented his or her own compositions.

The forum is a group of graduate composers that organize four concerts a year, work with musicians and do occasional presentations.

Heila said his music is a full-time job.

But it is not the forum experience that fuels his passion.

Absorbing what he sees in his day-to-day existence, Heila uses music to express his feelings about culture and environment.

"To remain sane, I had to address this passion," he said. "It's one of the ways I make sense out of things."

Heila is unable to separate music from life.

Every scene he encounters — from a lake to a wedding — gives him ideas for compositions. Whether consciously or unconsciously, every moment has the potential to be inspirational.

"When I'm not composing, I'm writing down my thoughts or shaping ideas in my head," Heila said. "I don't think of my composing as a career. I didn't



Amanda Cowan/Emerald

Student composer Daniel Heila (left) and a University ensemble will perform his piece, 'Me, His Idea,' at an upcoming concert.

choose it. It chose me."

Heila's inspiration stems from more than just visual experiences. The sounds of nature have continually played an important role in his compositions. From the time he was a child, even the most seemingly ordinary scenes had extra significance.

"When I was a kid, I liked swimming in a particular area of a creek and ducking behind waterfalls," Heila said.

"The waterfalls would be in front of me, and I would stand there, listening to the sound. It was so exquisite I could only stand it for a little while."

Elements of nature have continued to play an important role in Heila's adulthood. A memory of a

wedding reception, in particular, was an unforgettable experience.

Late into the evening during the reception, Heila and some of his friends went down to the lake and sat on the dock. They heard what they thought was rain, but because the sky was clear, the origin of the sound was a mystery.

"We realized the sound had been fish sucking at insect eggs at the surface of the water," Heila said. "For me, it was a moving experience, and I wanted to draw something out of that."

Bernie Sherr, the director of the composing forum in which Heila is enrolled, recognizes that much of Heila's inspiration comes from the environment.

"Dan has a deep connection

with nature," Sherr said. "He sees these things visually, and he translates that imagery into sound."

Although Heila works with many styles and formats, he struggles with deciding whether his works should have meaning.

He said his music represents mutual experiences and he hopes his audience will be able to understand that.

"I hope that if anyone is inspired by my music that they would try to achieve the same kind of integrity that I look for in my life," Heila said.

"I'd also want them to be able to find their own original voice — what they truly are instead of what society has pressured them to become."

## CRIME WATCH

(Reported from Feb. 9 to Feb. 12)

■ Feb. 9, Theft I, 1100 block of Franklin Boulevard, Lawrence Hall: items taken.

■ Feb. 9, Theft II, 1400 block of Moss Street, Bean Complex: bike stolen.

■ Feb. 10, Shoplifting II, 200 block of East 13th Avenue, Circle K: items stolen.

■ Feb. 10, Reckless Burning, 1300 block of Agate Street: posters burned.

■ Feb. 12, Trespass II and Unlawful Possession of a Controlled Substance, 1400 block of Moss Street, Hamilton Complex: transient in the building with LSD.

■ Feb. 14, Missing Vehicle, 2900 block of Willamette Street: vehicle taken.

## News Brief

### Career Center to hold interview workshop

The Career Center is holding a workshop on interviewing skills today from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the EMU Multicultural Center at the EMU.

This is the second of three workshops hosted by the Career Center that targets students of color and leaders of ethnic student unions. The mock interviews that will occur are an opportunity for students to practice their interviewing skills with professionals from the Eugene community.

The mock interviews will be taped so students can evaluate their skills. For more information, contact Pam Howard, multicultural affairs liaison, at 346-6040.

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