

Rhythm & Reviews

Friday, February 26, 1999

The W's 'skid-il-ly-doo'

Christian pop and swing band the W's has taken to the big stage touring with bands such as D.C. Talk / PAGE 6



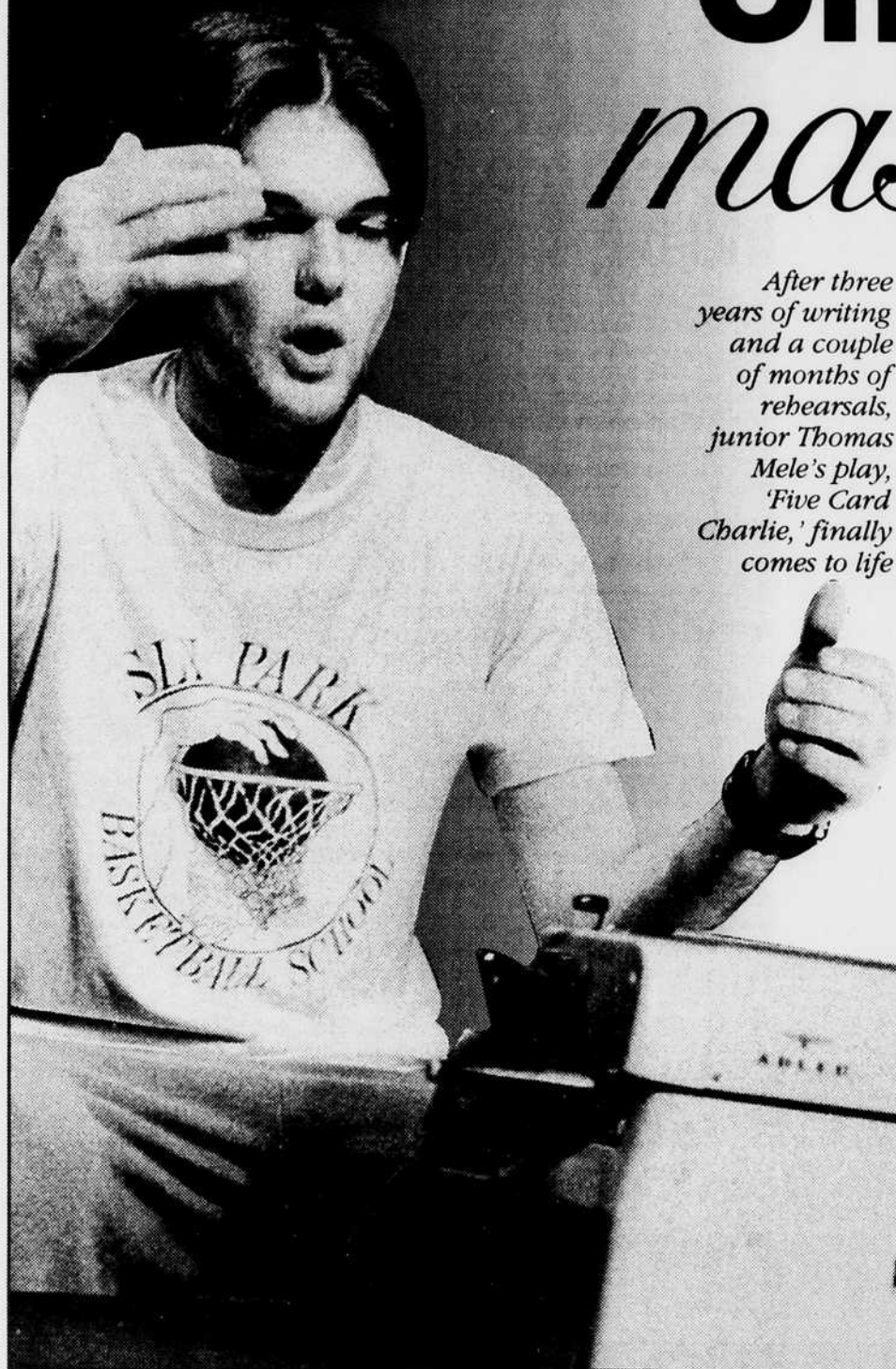
'Fiddler' at the Hult

The acclaimed Broadway musical will hit Eugene March 2-4 / PAGE 8

Oregon Emerald

Volume 100, Issue 107

One man's masterpiece



After three years of writing and a couple of months of rehearsals, junior Thomas Mele's play, 'Five Card Charlie,' finally comes to life

By Nicole Garton
Oregon Daily Emerald

Relaxing in the folding wooden chair with his arm draped over the back, junior Thomas Mele doesn't look as though the culmination of three years of work lies just two short nights away.

In fact, he's grinning as he recounts the long hours he has spent fine-tuning his play in the Pocket Playhouse.

"Last night I was here from 5 o'clock until two in the morning," he confides. He has brought his laptop with him so he can do homework while the cast rehearses.

But he doesn't mind. For Mele, writing, directing and producing the one-act comedy "Five Card Charlie" has been a labor of love.

"To create a story, write a play and watch it come to life is just magic," he says.

Mele began writing the play while studying film and theater at Cambridge University in Eng-

land three years ago. He recalls attending a London performance of the Neil Simon play, "Laughter on the 23rd Floor," starring Gene Wilder.

After the show, Mele met the entire cast, including Wilder, who asked what he thought of the show.

"I was really nervous—I'm not used to speaking with stars," Mele said.

But Mele told the truth, that he didn't really like the play.

"I regretted it. He just looked at me, and I swallowed," Mele recalls, laughing.

He went back the next night, and this time he took his journal. Mele watched the play during his favorite parts and wrote the rest of the time. He found himself "really turned on" by Simon's dialogue, and he began writing "Five Card Charlie."

"['Laughter'] went from a show I didn't really like to a show that inspired me," Mele says.

The result is a punchy, sarcastic comedy about a man who is in denial about his life. Mele is directing a cast of five for three performances at the student-run Pocket Playhouse in Villard Hall.

Martin, played by sophomore Brian Henderson, is a high school

Coming up

■ **WHAT:** 'Five Card Charlie,' a one-act play by UO student Thomas Mele

■ **WHEN:** Today and Saturday at 5 p.m.

■ **WHERE:** Pocket Playhouse, 102 Villard Hall

■ **ADMISSION:** Admission is free, but a \$1 donation at the door is appreciated

Martin, played by Brian Henderson, yells at his typewriter during a rehearsal of 'Five Card Charlie.'

Amanda Cowan/Emerald

Turn to **PLAY**, Page 10

Chico Schwall takes listeners far away

The folk musician, who incorporates Welsh and Malagasy music into his performance, will entertain crowds at The BUZZ this weekend

By Jack Clifford
for the Emerald

Just because you're stuck in Eugene this weekend doesn't mean a visit to Madagascar is out of the question. In fact, you can probably can even sneak in a side trip to Wales.

Forget the travel agent, however. Instead, take a short jaunt Saturday evening to the BUZZ Coffee House in the EMU for the eclectic sounds of William "Chico" Schwall.

Schwall is well-known on the local music scene, having played gigs ranging from appearances with the Eugene Symphony and at the Oregon Festival of American Music to more than a dozen shows at the Willamette Valley Folk Festival. Schwall recently expanded his cul-

Coming up

■ **WHAT:** A musical performance by local musician William 'Chico' Schwall

■ **WHEN:** Saturday at 10 p.m.

■ **WHERE:** The BUZZ Coffee House at the EMU

■ **ADMISSION:** Free, with free coffee and snacks available

tural awareness with journeys to Madagascar and Wales, and fans are reaping the benefits.

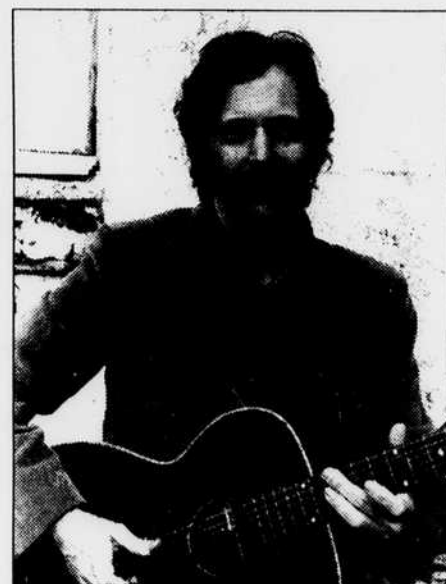
"As a listener, if you tie yourself to one music or another, you really are limiting yourself," Schwall said. "As a musician, I love to play in groups for the interaction, but I got to a point where I had my own vision to pursue."

Schwall is yet another performer making the weekends "buzz" at the EMU. Mary Jo Kannasto, entertainment coordinator at the BUZZ, said students have supported the recent addition to the campus music scene. Kannasto hasn't heard Schwall's music, but she has been pleased with his Eugene Folk Alliance colleagues who have already fit the bill.

"They're all very talented musicians who write their own music," she said. "Chico's show will be a new experience for me, too."

Schwall's musical philosophy manifested itself a little over a year ago in a two-week working vacation in Madagascar, where he fine-tuned his appreciation for Malagasy music

Turn to **CHICO**, Page 9



Courtesy photo
Local musician William 'Chico' Schwall has played many times at the Willamette Valley Folk Festival.