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Returns

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"A Minor Masterpiece"

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PERUGINO



Nemo adds color to local scene

A quirky local artist, known only as Nemo, uses many different art styles to show off his numerous abilities

By Ryan Nyburg
Senior Pulse Reporter

In a town rife with artists, it can often be difficult to get noticed or make a living as a painter. So it says a lot for this local artist, known only as Nemo, to get the attention of so many people. With regular shows at a number of venues around Eugene, in addition to performances at the annual Burning Man Festival and murals painted on the sides of buildings in North Carolina, Nemo has made his two-syllable moniker well-known in alternative culture.

With such a wide range of accomplishments under his belt, Nemo still sees the central problem of being an artist in Eugene as a simple one.

"The greatest challenge is not creativity, but being economically viable," he said. "I like inspiring others to be creative and to make their own art. But at the same time I need to pay the bills. In that way, Eugene is hard."

To this end, Nemo has found a number of ways to be creative while staying afloat in tough economic times. He has designed concert posters for bands like the String Cheese Incident and the Greyboy Allstars, he has put his art on sweatshirts and he has prints for sale all over town.

"The project I'm working on right now is the graphic design for a company making a line of pornographic rolling papers," Nemo said. "My job is to work with other artists and make



Lauren Wimer Photographer

Nemo's artwork is sold as prints and on various clothing at Sweet Potato Pie.

it look pretty."

One of Nemo's strengths is that, in the world of art, his technique is atypical.

"I started by doing marker drawings," he said. "When I started, I had no clue about painting, what brushes to buy and all that. So I looked for something familiar, and markers were easy."

But doing work in marker presents its own difficulties, mostly because people do not take it seriously, Nemo said. And while the form is more often found in "disreputable" art forms, such as comic books and rock poster art, it is still precise work.

"I can spend 12 hours a day hunched over a draft table," Nemo said, adding that he works meditatively. "A lot goes into it. I've been doing more painting recently, and I find

there is more freedom with painting since it's not as precise. Precision can often limit freedom."

Another area not often considered artistically valid, but that Nemo has come to specialize in, is 3-D art.

"I used to sell paintings by the side of the road," Nemo said. "What I found was that people were more likely to look at my stuff if I gave them a pair of 3-D glasses to look through. Sometimes they would be skeptical, then they would look through the glasses and see the art pop out at them."

Performance also plays a role in Nemo's work. Often at his exhibits, he will paint a piece in public, working ambidextrously. This eclecticism as a performer and artist has also earned him fans, particularly among Eugene's alternative art galleries.

"I think it has a lot of color and depth," said Shawn Mediacast, the owner of the Museum of Unfine Art and Record Store. The museum, located at 537 Willamette St., has shown Nemo's work in the past.

"The 3-D glasses were a real bonus. The art really jumps out at you, literally," he said.

Walt Hunt, owner of New Odyssey Juice and Java on 1044 Willamette St., which also had showings of Nemo's art, also said good things about Nemo's work.

"I think that we look for art where it's not and we find it where we don't expect it," Hunt said. "That's where Nemo stands."

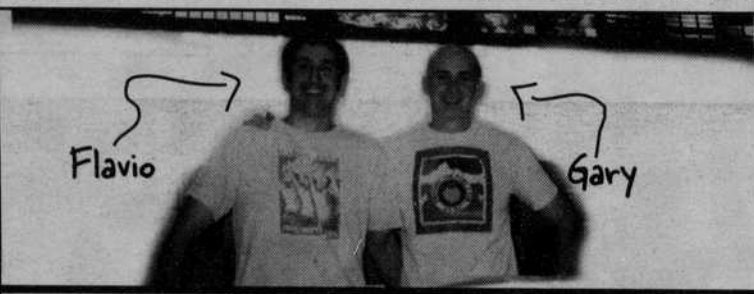
Examples of Nemo's art can be found at his Web site, <http://www.nemo.org>.

Contact the senior Pulse reporter at ryannyburg@dailyemerald.com.

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Celtic rhythms stimulate album

David Helfand will play this weekend at Cozmic Pizza, showcasing his new record and string instruments

By Ryan Nyburg
Senior Pulse Reporter

David Helfand's music often reflects his journeys. Playing Celtic harp, mandacello and a variety of other string instruments, Helfand has created albums that attempt to evoke the mood of his experiences and the places he has visited.

Like so many musicians, Helfand got started as a drummer for a garage rock band.

"My big aspiration as a kid was to be a rock 'n' roll drummer, to the horror of my mother," Helfand said. "At that particular point I was really inspired by Ginger Baker from Cream and Mitch Mitchell, who worked with Jimi Hendrix."

Helfand eventually discovered string instruments when he found a guitar in his parents' attic that had only three strings. Allowing two of the strings to drone on while playing melody on the third, Helfand had inadvertently created a sound similar to the sitar. After discovering a mandolin in a small music shop in Ithica, N.Y., he began a love affair with stringed instruments that has yet to cease.

But while Helfand played acoustic instruments, he was still interested in big sounds.

"I started getting into 1970s British progressive rock," Helfand said. "King Crimson, Yes, Emerson, Lake and Palmer and of course Jethro Tull. They would be doing these really big, theatrical concept albums and come around and do them live."

The idea of concept albums stuck with Helfand, and many of his releases deal with larger structural themes. Helfand's latest release, "At the Edge of the Cornish Sea," was inspired in part by an extended trip to England,



Courtesy

String instrumentalist David Helfand says he was influenced by British progressive rock.

as well as his feelings after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

The atmosphere of Great Britain infected the album, and many of the songs are inspired by events during the trip.

"The biggest part of the experience that really seeded the energy of the album was a visit to Tintagel, which is the ruins of the castle where King Arthur would have been conceived," Helfand said. "It's really where that story began. It's way up this mountain bluff overlooking the ocean. It's where the album begins, with this really intense moment."

Helfand's music has attracted a number of local musicians. Violinist David Burham, who plays with The Sugar Beets and the Eugene Symphony, has recorded on a number of Helfand's albums.

"We speak different musical languages, but somehow we communicate," Burham said. "His music is like Celtic soul moving over expansive dreamscapes."

Another musician who has worked closely with Helfand is local bass player Jeff Schenck. Schenck and Helfand have worked together for a number of

years, touring England and collaborating on Helfand's "Cornish" album.

"We met while working for a program that taught music to at-risk youth," Schenck said. "As a bass player, I'm into a lot of rock and blues, along with some jazz. Dave got me into some Celtic and Middle Eastern styles. His music is really a melange of those influences, kind of like Celtic impressionist sound paintings."

In the future, Helfand said he had hopes to return to Britain in order to bring back the music inspired by that country. He also has some plans for future recorded works.

"I have another idea for a concept album that I wrote awhile back," Helfand said. "I also have just a lot of odd songs that I've written over the years that don't fit in with any overlaying concept. So I might record an album of just tunes."

Helfand will be performing with a group at Cozmic Pizza at W. 8th Ave. and Charnelton Street Saturday at 8 p.m. Admission will be \$7 at the door.

Contact the senior Pulse reporter at ryannyburg@dailyemerald.com.

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