

Teaching the Trade

UO's Darrel Kau helps students get real life experience.

Have you been noticing those hugely popular shows the UO's been putting on lately? Well, you can thank the UO Cultural Forum for bringing acts like Dave Chapelle and Sting to town and for putting on the recent, sold-out Flogging Molly show.

It's no secret that since Darrel Kau came on board as director of the UO Cultural Forum, the organization has been doing some great stuff. Just over a year ago, Kau, a 38-year-old Eugene native, left his job as programming manager for the Hult Center and started working at the UO instead. "The opportunity to work with students in a creative environment where I could share my experience and expertise was the really exciting part about the job," he said. "Challenging myself and the students with new ideas and approaches is the fascinating thing about it."

He said he sees himself as a facilitator, educator and a coach and that he's been able to bring the contacts and network he built while at the Hult Center to the UO. With that kind of a background, he doesn't let the little details fall through the cracks. Always open to new ideas, he also spends much of his time playing devil's advocate for the 12 or so students who volunteer with the Cultural Forum.

"He's one to question every single angle, to make us really think through it," said Michael Zarkesh, a junior who's been with the Cultural Forum two years and who managed the Flogging Molly show. "I'm learning a lot about every single aspect, from concert promotion to event production to general schmoozing and how to negotiate contracts and keep multiple parties happy while watching out for your own interests."

It pays off in the end. The Flogging Molly concert at the WOW Hall was sold out with 40-somethings dodging flailing elbows in the mosh pit next to teens. And it



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went off flawlessly. That's because if Kau does his job right, all he has to do is sit back and let the students run the show. "He [Michael] was totally on the pulse and did everything for that show, including negotiating the contract with the band," Kau said, grinning like a proud older brother. "That's when I'm like, 'Yes!'"

EW

This article is the first in a new series to introduce the faces behind Eugene's arts and entertainment scene. Know someone we should feature? Contact Melissa Bearns by email: melissa@eugeneweekly.com

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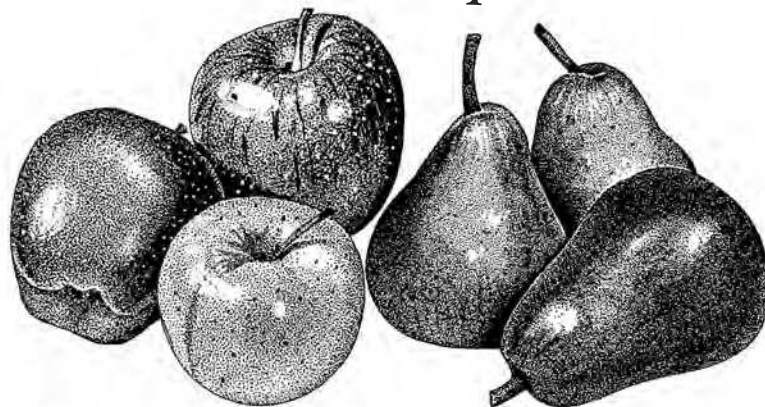
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