

Music, Cheap, Fast and Sexy

30 songs in 30 days.

Some record labels and recording studios in other parts of the country are a band's dream. Piles and piles of computers and machines promise incredible sound quality and that precise riff or hook that will sell a million records. Here in Eugene, however, some people have the philosophy that if a band is spending lavish money on something like that for the sake of their musical "value," they're probably wasting it.

Mike Hansen, 25, is one of those people. When he got started writing songs, he kicked things off with his trusty computer, a borrowed acoustic guitar and a \$2 microphone. Today? His technology's slightly better — a \$35 used computer, Acid Pro software and a collection of Casio keyboards, assorted drums and guitars. "You don't need an expensive studio to make quality music," he says. "You can do it on your own in your spare time. If anyone wants to learn what I do, if you want to get it done, just do it yourself."

With three music projects already under his belt — *Sir Anthony's Ghost*, *Yestertomorrow* and *Hasbean* — Hansen's ready to release his inner rock star. This last project is the biggest one he's undertaken: recording 30 songs in 30 days, from May 20 to June 20, and posting them on his MySpace account for all the world to listen. "It just kind of started as something I wanted to do because I was bored," he says. "I've been doing a lot of solo stuff and this is a new challenge where I can have some fun and write songs that are, well, absurd."

Hansen operates *Hasbean* by himself. He plays all the instruments and mixes those tracks together with the lyrics, even throwing together a music video when he sees fit. "Come Dance With Dance Machine" is an aptly-named song with organs, choir-like vocals and a slammin' beat. It even has a hilarious music video where Hansen runs around town in a robot costume dancing with everyone who will get down with him.

"8-Bit Opus" takes a journey through '80s Nintendo games like Pac-Man, Super Mario Bros. and Zelda. From every infernal "wakka-wakka" noise that Pac-Man makes to Link's sword blast when he's at full health, it's by far the most intriguing song on the album, especially to a geek like me.

"Unlike *Sir Anthony's Ghost*, where everything is more emotional, this is the exact opposite," Hansen says. "It's everything I wanted to do that's humorous. Bands like Ween showed me that music can be beautiful and absurd at the same time. What I'm doing with the 30 songs in 30 days project is I set up a structure, then go from nothing to being complete within an hour."

The beauty in the music of *Hasbean* shines the brightest when he mixes in the goofy game songs with something completely different. In "Rio Pacifica" he experiments with a Japanese flavor and hard-strumming electric guitars. "We Say Zephyr, Zephyr Crazy" doesn't have any



lyrics besides the occasional "awww, yeah," but it's still catchy as hell. Considering that these songs are all pieced together in just an hour out of boredom, it's rather stunning.

Even the song titles in themselves are actually clever indicators of what to expect out of the song. "The Hail Storm" paints a picture of staring out the window at exactly that, with soft guitars over an ethereal beat. "Holy Crap, I Love You!" is a cheesy love song with lyrical harmonies that soar like a '50s barbershop quartet.

"I try to keep things very improvisational," Hansen says. "I'll lay down a guitar riff, add some drums from the keyboards and build it part by part. Lyrics-wise, those will often be something that happened that day. Something from a news story I heard, perhaps. It's autobiographical and silly at the same time."

All three of Hansen's projects, put out by Secret Stash Records (an homage to his love for dark, mysterious moustaches), have different themes and styles of recording that cover a huge spectrum of his musical influences. *Yestertomorrow* uses drum samples and spacey vocals played over two tape recorders and previous record tracks. He even hand-delivers \$5 CDs of his work if said buyer is in Eugene, as a way of saying thank you.

"The trick is to never take yourself too seriously and make music for the fun of making music," he says. "With the technology and resources we have available to us today, anyone can be a rock star." **EW**

Check out Hansen and his most recent project, *Hasbean*, at www.myspace.com/hasbeanmusic



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