



Dominique Ehmig

BOOKER, DJ, SINGER

AGE: 21

A student in her final year at the University of Oregon, Dominique Ehmig books shows at The Boreal, an all-ages DIY venue in the Whiteaker; she DJs for KWVA campus radio; and she is vocalist for Eugene grindcore band Paranoiac.

“Extreme music, and its subculture, is the place where I have found sanctuary and support. I love this community and the music and values we share with each other,” Ehmig says.

While Eugene is a relatively small city, it has a well-developed music scene. What makes it work?

Everyone knows each other, and since many shows are put on by volunteers and community members, the ethic of DIY feels genuine and can be inspiring. There are some seriously talented and creative musicians in Eugene and some really great fans and community members.

Socially speaking, music and shows bring people together. I’ve met people through the music scene here that I never would’ve expected to in my life, and I think everyone has something to gain from hearing others’ perspective and stories, and that’s what happens when you see someone play music: You get insight into their mind and what’s going on in their life.

Talk about some things you think might surprise some people about Eugene’s music scene.

I am biased because I’m engaged in heavy music: hardcore, death metal, grindcore, etc. So I am apt to say that extreme music does well here as well as music that pushes the boundaries of genre and sound. I think people are surprised by the amount of noise and experimental artists in the area.

I also think it depends on the act, but there’s a lot of artists here with a strong anti-hate message, which is awesome. I think that music from the Pacific Northwest also tends to be on the moodier side as well; I know I gravitate towards music that has emotional output and feeling, but I also like sillier acts that have fun on stage and joke around with the audience. The scene can feel like a family.

What do you think Eugene’s music scene will be like in ten years?

I’d like to think there’s going to be an increase in the diversity of bands and musicians. Already there are a bunch of really rad bands that include members of marginalized communities, and I think that’s incredibly important going forward so that genres that maybe some people felt were exclusionary or pretentious will become more accessible or friendly.

Something that would be really radical and different is if we had a music festival, or some event that would draw in crowds from out of town and state, so that others can experience the Eugene music scene.

I think that the limits of genre and creativity are going to continue to expand and be tested. When a lot of people think of punk or metal music, they have a pretty limited view of what they think it sounds like or looks like, when in actuality there’s so much diversity in sound and aesthetics.

There are some really creative minds emerging in Eugene, and I think it’s only going to get wilder.

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