



James Book

MUSICIAN,
RECORD PRODUCER
AGE: 52

James Book had some moderate success in what he calls the “former” music business in the late ’90s when his band The Flys scored a one-hit-wonder with the song “Got You Where I Want You.” In 2009, Book relocated to Eugene from SoCal. He began producing records at Ninkasi Brewing Company as what Book describes as “a pillar of our marketing.”

Otherwise, Book says, he moved to Eugene to make “records, beer and offspring.”

With Ninkasi, Book has worked with artists from as far away as Dallas, Texas, but also with local artists such as Tyler Fortier, Marv Ellis and WE Tribe as well as local favorites from Portland, The Shook Twins. Ninkasi’s current “resident artist” is Neal Williams, bassist with popular Eugene band Gazelle(s).

“We recently tracked their new full-length at my buddies’ place in Rancho De La Luna in Joshua Tree, California, and we are mixing it in Eugene now,” Book says. “Ours is a cross-marketing approach. We try to support artists [to] meet their own goals and definitions of success, primarily in studio and through production support.”

Tell us about producing records in Eugene, Oregon?

Eugene is such an isolated scene that it makes for super creative musical experimentation, but at the same time can also be isolating for some artists that hope to expand out of the area. It can sometimes

feel like you are stuck in a beautiful musical garden. The jam bands and post-reggae band stereotypes are arguably stigma. That may not always translate well outside of Cascadia, but I think both those genres and especially some of the bands we have in Eugene flying those flags are amazing.

How is technology changing music in Eugene?

Technology and even the notion of a musical “instrument” will continue to evolve while maintaining a consistent sense of “Eugene” culture and place.

I’d like to see [Eugene music] continue to head where it’s heading. It’s good to see live music attendances begin to grow again and especially in such a wide variety of musical micro-niches, thanks in no small part to new venues, [from] Hi-Fi’s ambitious booking approach to the solid standards like Black Forest. How cool is it that that place is still always free, but good bands also play there?

There are so many little musical movements happening at once here, and art is such an abundant part of everyday Eugene life. Living here is great, and Eugene is just enough of a “best kept secret” to make it continually alluring if you keep your ears open. The music trove in Eugene is probably as deep as one would dare to venture.

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