

Arts and Entertainment**Professor to hold rock recital for charity**

by Adam Eshleman

A Penn State School of Music professor is donating the proceeds of a solo concert he will perform to the Centre County Women's Resource Center, a not-for-profit organization that assists women in abusive relationships.

Paul Barsom is leaving behind violins, timpanies and the other instruments on which he built his career as a concert music composer, bringing only an acoustic guitar and a microphone to his April 5 gig at Webster's Café in State College.

"I think I'm at heart just a rock musician," he told *Voices*. "But I happen to be also good enough at doing classical music to somehow manage to make some kind of a profession out of it."

Although his classical compositions have been performed in major cities and universities across the nation, this will be the first time Barsom performs solo before a State College audience. He'll be debuting a peck of original rock songs—which he describes

as sounding like "prog rock masquerading as indie-pop."

"I've been in this community for 20 years now," he said, "and there are lots of people who know me and don't know what I do as a musician. I want to share what I've been doing the last four years."

Barsom said he planned to pursue rock music from the beginning, but the demands of family life and his day job got in the way. Only after a sabbatical did the 47-year-old have time to devote to creating popular music.

"By the time I was in my early 20s I had pretty much stopped playing any kind of rock or pop music," he said. "I concentrated on all the academic music I'd been doing. I just didn't feel like I had the time to invest in it to really do something like this. It's only now coming to a point where I can."

Plus, he said, only recently has he become artistically prepared for this undertaking. "If I had done this 20 years ago, it would have been kind of lame," he said.

His decision to donate proceeds to

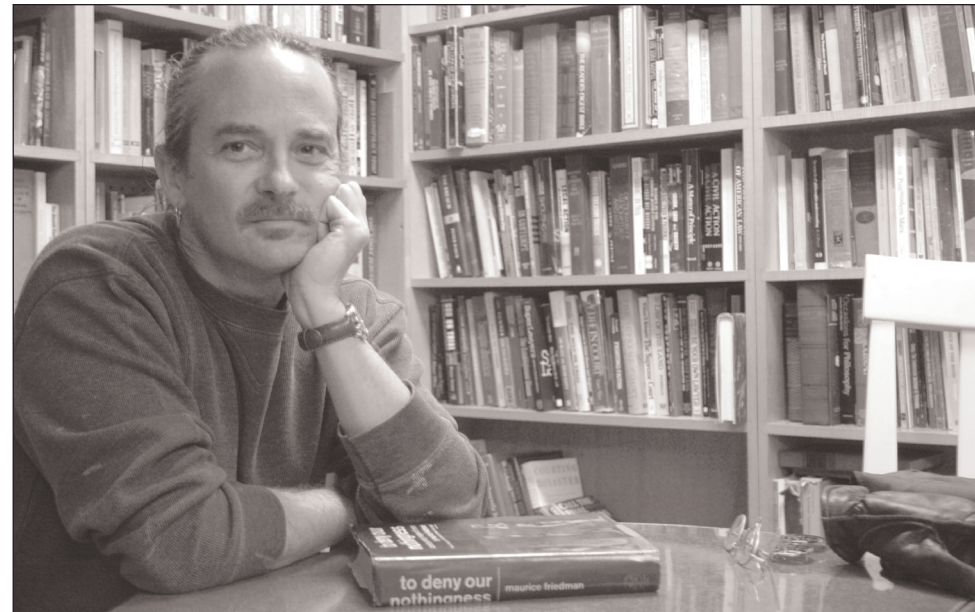


Photo by Adam Eshleman

Paul Barsom, a composition and music technology instructor at Penn State, will perform a concert at Webster's Bookstore Cafe to benefit the Centre County Women's Resource Center.

CCWRC was "not a deliberative process at all; it just came to mind," he said.

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Animated documentary waltzes through warfare

by Joel Solkoff

Israeli director Ari Folman served in the army during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. According to Folman, the event produced thousands of cases of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), emotional damage that can be crippling and permanent. In part, Folman directed the movie "Waltz with Bashir" to come to terms with his own case of PTSD.

In creating the film, Folman used an unusual technique. He created an animated documentary to help him remember the traumatic events that took place during his military service. The film shifts from animated interviews with nine veterans to animated footage of the events themselves. "I went through a major psychological upheaval during the four years I worked on Waltz with Bashir," Folman told interviewer Luke Ford. "[D]uring those years, my wife and I brought three kids into this

world. This makes you wonder. Maybe I am doing all this for my sons. When they grow up and watch the film, it might help them make the right decisions, meaning not to take part in any war, whatsoever."

At the end of the nearly five-minute YouTube preview, an Israeli soldier grabs a submachine gun and begins dancing and firing at the same time with battle-torn posters of Bashir Gemayel in the background.

Understanding who Bashir Gemayel will be useful in appreciating Director Folman's rationale for making Bashir symbolic of the central message of the film: All wars are folly. Bashir was the head of a small army



Photo provided

in Lebanon during the 1980s, a decade in which parts of Lebanon were occupied by troops from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Syria and the United States, among others. For Israel and the United States, Bashir represented the hope that the Lebanon of recent memory could quickly and easily be restored.

In 1967, standing on the northern border of Israel, I stared at the cedars of Lebanon. At the time, Lebanon was the only country on Israel's border to be consistently neutral. Travel brochures called Lebanon "the Switzerland of the Middle East" because of its snow-covered mountains and its firmly established banking system. The country combined a large indigenous Christian population with a growing Muslim population and was often cited as an example of how people of different faiths could live together in harmony. Beirut was famous for its cuisine and its sophistication; it was a good place to visit if you wanted to have fun.

With Israel's dramatic success in the Six Day War of 1967, the pressures on Lebanon increased as Palestinian leaders used the country as a base of operations against Israel. Internally, Lebanon was torn apart by Christian and Muslim militias and by forces from the Arab world, nominally brought in to maintain order.

By 1982 Bashir's Christian militia had so successfully killed off the opposition that Bashir was able to take advantage of the nuances of Lebanese politics (more intricate and dangerous than State College school board elections) and have the legislature elect him president of Lebanon. Bashir was supported by the Israelis and eventually by the Reagan Administration. The hope was that having established a well-earned reputation as a strong man, Bashir would be wise enough to combine it with the wisdom

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Lemont jazz-fusion troupe records first EP

by Craig Keener

"We don't want any [expletive] jazz!" yelled a drunken patron of the Gingerbread Man in State College. Perhaps a few steps removed from the cover bands that normally grace the bar's lineup, Juno Day tries to mesh many genres and generations of musical influence into one coherent sound. Yet that sound sometimes goes unappreciated among the college-age crowd.

From Steely Dan to Phish to popular contemporary indie-folk act Sufjan Stevens, singer/keyboardist Zac Halbrook and guitarist Chris McKenna are influenced by all types of music, but together they deliver a clean acoustic/electric sound that lends itself most closely to jazz.

The duo has recently mastered a self-titled EP in Santa Anna, Ca., after several months of recording in a studio they built

from the ground up at their Lemont residence. With tracks like "Blue Milk" and "(Born in the 80s)," the two showcase a loose musically-driven series of songs where lyrics, according to the guys, were "always sort of an afterthought".

"Blue Milk," with its two minute guitar solo, often sounds like it was recorded by a jam band like Grateful Dead or Allman Brothers while "the Home Stretch" is often sentimental, a reflection of the experiences of McKenna, the band's writer.

He's quick to say that the words aren't too close to reality, stressing that he prefers ambiguity in lyrics.

"[It's] not that I've never gushed out a poem about love in my journals, but I prefer to keep that to myself," he said.

While each says lyrics are becoming a more important aspect of their music, they both say it was about the sound first.



Photo by Dana Donofrio
Zac Halbrook and Chris McKenna jam in the studio they build at their Lemont residence.

Mckenna and Halbrook tried to see both sides of their live performances.

While both members are sworn to secrecy as to how the name came about, they were willing to say that it involved a trip abroad, when the two studied in Spain for a semester.

Mckenna also wanted to address any confusion people might have with Juno Day and the popular film Juno.

"We thought of the name nine months before that movie came out," said Mckenna. "Make sure you document that."

Both members mark the release of their EP as a huge success, but stress that it's just a starting point from which to spring.

"I'm very happy with the progress, feels good to have something to show people, but with that said I think we still have a long way to go," said Halbrook.

The two added that the EP was something tangible they could show their families, who were supportive but skeptical at first of the two's decision to eschew their Penn State degrees to pursue their music.

With an EP in the bag the group is focusing on creating a press package to send out to different labels around the country, hoping someone will sign them for a full length album.

They already have twelve finished songs, seven in addition to the five on the EP, along with about 100 tracks of rough material that represent raw ideas for new songs.

Mckenna and Halbrook hope to continue to tighten up their sound, reminding people that while they have a substantial jazz influence they are also a product of the times in which they grew up.

"I think a lot of people think Miles Davis and Johnny Coltrane when they think of jazz," said Mckenna. "We're not that."

They also listened to a lot of 90s rock growing up, including Goo Goo Dolls for Mckenna, and Counting Crows for Halbrook, and it's these memories that make music fun for both of them.

"The great thing about music is it allows you to latch onto something and associate it with all sorts of memories," Mckenna said.

Mckenna and Halbrook recently played Movin' On's battle of the bands. Their EP can be played online at www.myspace.com/junoday.

However, they aren't quite ready to define what their sound is yet.

"Sound is something that will continue to evolve, it's never something that we've ever talked about," said singer Halbrook.

Much of the band's direction seems to be like this: never something that's talked about, it just seems to sort itself out over time.

Like how the two met. Both lived in a Penn State dorm and Chris would regularly play guitar with a friend on the first floor. Zac overheard the two one day and asked if he could join in on the piano. What followed, both of them describe as a good jam session. Eventually, the two connected and began tinkering with some original music.

Each of the guys needed to earn some cash so they decided to try their material on the bar circuit. Memories of this period seem to be a mixed bag.

"We wanted an opinion from the audience as to how the group's been received and [the comment cards] said stuff like 'that jazz stuff at the beginning needs to stop'," said Halbrook.

Both agree that playing music at the Gingerbread Man bar wasn't their likely demographic of listeners, but each went on to say that their first shows taught them a lot about audience.

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"This organization is indispensable," he continued. "We would just be a less civilized society if we didn't have it. There's so many things in this community that have given me the opportunity to cultivate this project. Any chance I have to take any of the resources I get from that, and put them back in the community where they could do something worthwhile, why not?"

Anne Ard, executive director of CCWRC, said although her organization covers the majority of its operating costs with federal and local government subsidies, donations are more important now than ever.

"[Private donations are] absolutely critical, especially as funds from the state and federal sources get tighter and tighter," she wrote in an email. "We use the funds raised locally to fill in those gaps."

"I think it is really great when people use their gifts and skills to find unique ways to

"[Private donations are] absolutely critical, especially as funds from the state and federal sources get tighter and tighter... I think it is really great when people use their gifts and skills to find unique ways to support victims of domestic and sexual violence."

--Anne Ard, Executive Director of CCWRC

support victims of domestic and sexual violence," she said. "We could not do this work without them."

As much as this concert will benefit CCWRC, Barsom's music also has a lot to gain from it. He said the songs as they appear on his Web site, www.paulbarsom.com, are rough drafts; some of their components having been virtually improvised.

"To me those recordings sound incredibly raw and rudimentary," he said, adding that he realized the songs needed time to "sea-

son and develop a personality."

"It doesn't sound like they've really gelled yet," he said. "So I thought the only way I can get to that point, especially on the guitar parts, is to create some sort of solo version and play them."

Barsom's music is a fresh variety of indie rock, crisp and tasty, with all the complexity one would expect of a highly educated concert composer—and of course, it's locally grown. He said he draws influence from all corners of the musical world, from the exotic complexity of Balinese Gamelan

to the jarring simplicity of The Sex Pistols.

"It's probably not going to be like anything people expect or maybe ever even really heard before," he said. "Whatever they think they're going to hear when they come, it's not what they're going to hear."

He said his array of musical influences often surface as a single passage, which in no way resembles its creative source.

"There's one little moment in one song where it's just two chords played with a slide that comes from an Aaron Copland ballet," he said in illustration. "I know it's not the same note, it's not the same music. It's a gesture and the intent of the whole thing is right out of 'Rodeo.'"

Apart from his body of original work, Barsom will perform about an hour of covers. His concert will begin at 8 p.m. with tickets costing \$5.

The CCWRC's 24-hour crisis hotline is 234-5050 locally and toll free at 1(877)234-5050.

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to reach out to the Muslim community and restore Lebanon.

The rhetoric in Washington was that if Nixon could go to China, then Bashir could unite the Christian and Muslim communities of Lebanon.

Then Bashir was assassinated before he took the oath of office and the hope for a quick solution to the Lebanese crisis was blown up with him. Members of Bashir's militia, using the death of their leader as an excuse to express years of pent-up anger at the Palestinians, entered the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps and massacred hun-

dreds, possibly thousands, of unarmed civilians. Israeli soldiers were stationed to protect the camps, and the fact that they were not able to prevent a massacre conducted before their eyes by their own allies haunts Folman and his fellow veterans. Waltz with Bashir captures the horror of that moment as the movie ends. One sees the dancing Israeli soldier firing his machine gun into the air, then the posters of Bashir, and finally, the horror of the massacre comes into detailed focus.

This is not a date flick.

Editor's Note: Go to www.voicesweb.org to read Joel Solkoff's reminiscence about speechwriting for Bashir.

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