

LIVE IN THE CLUBS



The instrumental trio Efbom will be performing at The Dublin Underground in Albany on Friday.

Eccentric trio Efbom defies description

BY BRIAN MCELHINEY
Gazette Reporter

Instrumental trio Efbom hasn't had too much trouble finding an audience. Finding a venue to play in has been a bit trickier.

The Albany-based group's blend of traditional jazz, funk grooves, rock riffs and improvisation has won the group a following over the past two years. According to guitarist Roger Noyes, there's something for everyone in the group's blend.

"[Our music] has those elements that people are seeking in those other genres," Noyes said, while with his bandmates at a coffee shop in Colonie. "So if they want to get out of the chair and move, we have that; if they're interested in the intricacies of straight-ahead jazz or the harmony or all that kind of stuff, they can seize upon that."

But the band's eccentricity means that it doesn't quite fit on the bill at clubs used to showcasing particular genres.

"The hesitation that I had initially, and I think we all had, [was], 'Well, this is what we have, what do we do with it?'" said drummer Steven Partyka. "We're not going to play Justin's because it's not straight-ahead stuff, but we're not going to play a rock 'n' roll club because there is no vocalist to tell people to drink your beer and tip the waitress."

It's still an ongoing struggle, although the band has found a home at venues such as Saratoga Coffee Traders, The Bread and Jam Cafe in Cohoes and The Dublin Underground, where they will play Friday night.

"We play places — we play rock 'n' roll venues and people say, 'OK, who's singing?'" Partyka said. "There is no vocalist, but people wind up enjoying it because it's not a straight-ahead jazz thing. ... People say, 'Oh, it's jazz,' expecting jazz, and then they hear it and they

Efbom

WHEN: 9 p.m. Friday

WHERE: The Dublin Underground, 1 South Pearl St., Albany

HOW MUCH: \$5

MORE INFO: 426-9647, www.thedublinunderground.com

go, 'Wow, that's a lot of fun.' So I think we surprise people that just wander into it."

JAZZ GIANTS

Jazz is a large part of the group's foundation, although needless to say, the band members' influences run the gamut. John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Frank Zappa, Wilco, Soulive and Earth, Wind and Fire all find their way into the group members' musical rotations. Partyka's first foray into jazz and instrumental music came from local saxophonist Brian Patneau, an old college friend.

"He handed me a couple cassettes back in the day and said, 'Check this out,'" Partyka said. "I was playing at the time and was really not exposed to anything instrumental, and that completely changed the course that I was on."

Partyka and bassist Tony Gabriele first met when Partyka auditioned for Gabriele's former cover band. That band folded, but Partyka and Gabriele stuck together, eventually responding to a Craigslist ad from Noyes.

"Tony was the first to reply to it, and we had a good vibe, good conversation," Noyes said. "And then, well, he said, 'I know this drummer that would be a pretty good fit for us.' In the meantime I had gotten a reply to my Craigslist ad from a drummer who turned out — in both instances it was Steven, so it really seemed to be that the stars were aligned."

The trio had always envisioned Efbom as an instrumental project.

"We've all played in bands with singers, and honestly I've always just enjoyed the instrumental part of it," Gabriele said. "I'm at a point now in my life where I'm playing music for me. If people want to enjoy it as well, then that's the icing on the cake."

Originally, Partyka and Gabriele thought the band would focus on standards and other covers, until Noyes came on board with songs. The group will arrange Noyes' ideas together, often completely changing the feel of a song. The trio is hoping to record its first album sometime in the next few months.

"I think a good example would be the song 'Modest Sloothing,' where [Noyes] had initially intended it to be a ballad," Gabriele said. "[He] brought it to us and instantly I heard something else, so I put it out there, and the song is what it is today based on our collaborative efforts, but not at all what Roger had initially intended it to be."

PEPPERS TO DAVIS

The covers the band does do range from Led Zeppelin to Red Hot Chili Peppers to Miles Davis.

"The Chili Peppers thing, I wanted to make a personal statement, that I thought that that record, that band, the rhythm section was great, and the vocals were irrelevant," Partyka said. "We do a two-song medley off of 'Blood Sugar Sex Magik,' because that's just a super groovy funk record with a guy singing, and the guy's irrelevant — nothing against him. We've played it and people have sang along to stuff like that."

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