

Bright Red Paper plays Blue Pepper

Portland rock band takes the pretension out of the cello

BY ANGELA YEAGER
Statesman Journal

Cellos are the hip instrument in indie rock — it seems like any band with cred (think of Rasputina, The Decemberists) has got to have one.

So it's good fortune for Portland's Bright Red Paper that the band not only boasts a cello player, but also had its debut, self-titled CD mixed by Larry Crane, the engineer for The Decemberists and the late Elliott Smith. The band has received positive reviews from major publications across Oregon and seems to have no problem getting shows.

"Our niche with the cello helps," said Douglas Jenkins, who plays the instrument for Bright Red Paper.

"We haven't had a problem getting shows. We play classy wine bars that tend to book a lot of jazz bands, even though we're not jazz. But we also book a lot of rock shows because the cello is so hip right now."

Bright Red Paper will perform at Blue Pepper Gallery in downtown Salem on Friday.

The four-piece band has played in Salem only once before — at Sesame Donuts.

"That was a cool show," Jenkins said. "Hey, anytime you get to eat as many doughnuts as you want, it's never bad."

Jenkins is classically trained, but Bright Red Paper bass player Arcellus Sykes has a jazz background. Guitarist Daniel Enberg was brought up on Northwest indie rock, and drummer Eben Dickinson has played in jazz, reggae and surf bands.

All of the musicians except Jenkins live in Portland. Jenkins teaches reading and writing at Lebanon High School and lives, as he put it, "in a farm in the middle of nowhere. Literally, there is no town. I think Tangent is the closest."

The band's debut CD features mostly instrumental music, with minimal vocals on a few tracks. The music is chamber rock, which the band describes as "pretentious cello music ... with none of the pretension."

Bright Red Paper

WHAT: The Portland cello and instrumental rock quartet performs in Salem

WHEN: 7 p.m. Friday

WHERE: Blue Pepper, 241 Commercial St. NE

COST: Free

CALL: (503) 371-4600

Online extras

Go to StatesmanJournal.com and see this story for a link to more information about Bright Red Paper, or go to www.brightredpaper.com

Jenkins said the group gets together and composes music in a jazz improvisational style.

"It's all very organic and very natural," he said.

Although Bright Red Paper released its debut in September, Jenkins said the group already has a batch of material for a new CD, which it has started recording at Salem resident Kyle Sander's Small Blue Studio.

After putting down the initial tracks, the band will go back to engineer Crane in Portland for mixing the final tunes.

"I think the first (CD) came out a little bit dark," Jenkins said. "In general, I think in the new material we have a happier mixture. And it's more intricate rhythmically."

Jenkins said he and his bandmates don't generally talk about music, unless it's hip-hop.

"We all like hip-hop, but I don't think that's really reflected in our music," he said. "I do think that rhythmically, when we're jamming, we're thinking of hip-hop."

Still, he thinks listeners and music critics who appreciate the music of Bright Red Paper recognize that this is not a band about influences, but one carving out its own niche.

"We're kind of figuring it out as we go with this whole rock music thing," Jenkins said.

"We're perfectly happy with the success that we're having."

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Special to the Statesman Journal
Bright Red Paper from Portland will play at Blue Pepper on Friday.

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