

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Folk singer Laurie McClain works and records in her Lincoln home.

Jay Calderon/DN

Folk musician in tune with life

By Jeff Randall
Staff Reporter

Lincoln folk musician Laurie McClain has spent more than twenty years working on her music, but right now she's worried about something else — a hamster.

"I spent two hours this morning searching for it," McClain said, "and I'm really worried."

The hamster belongs to her daughter, and McClain fears the worst.

"It was so cute and cuddly," she said. "I just hope it's all right."

This may not seem like the type of concern musicians typically have. But Laurie McClain isn't a typical musician.

McClain is the single mother of three daughters, ages 2, 10 and 14, and has spent the last 20 years creating original folk music in Lincoln.

Her third album, "We Were All Babies," was recorded and mixed on a four-track recorder in McClain's home.

"It took me about three months, recording in the middle of the night while the kids were asleep," she said, attempting to forget

"If I could do folk music as a full-time job, I would. But it would have to be really low-key, because I would have to be able to see my kids all the time. I don't know how realistic that is."

Laurie McClain

Lincoln folk singer

the plight of the missing hamster.

Talking about her music seems to do the trick. As she sank into the discussion about her musical career, McClain leaned back in her wooden chair for the first time.

McClain's balancing act between the responsibilities of motherhood and her musical aspirations has been a bit one-sided, she said.

"Being a single parent, taking care of my family is the major concern in my life," she said. "And music has become more of a fun

diversion, but I'm sure having a family permeates even that."

Family life recently managed to bump music down to a low priority, McClain said. Besides raising the girls, McClain owns a transcription business. Spending a few years away from songwriting, however, is something McClain said she needed.

"I hadn't written anything for about five years, and then I wrote almost all of the songs (from "We Were All Babies") in

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Pleasant's pop music appealing

By Joel Strauch
Senior Reporter

Wally Pleasant, accompanied only by his guitar, will deliver his own satirical brand of pop music in Lincoln tonight.

Dave Rabe, Duffy's Tavern spokesman, called Pleasant "a ray of light in the dark world of rock and roll."

"I find him hard not to like," Rabe said. "He appeals to everybody."

Andy Fairbairn, KRNU's music director and senior broadcasting major, said he first heard Wally Pleasant about two years ago.

"We got a CD of just a guy and his guitar singing some weird little songs, so we put it in rotation," he said.

Fairbairn said Pleasant's music really appealed to KRNU listeners.

"People really dug his song, 'She's in Love with a Geek,' and then his other songs got really popular," he said.

Pleasant is currently touring in promotion of his third album, "Houses of the Holy Moly."

Fairbairn said people either loved or hated Pleasant's eccentric brand of music.

"If you don't like it, you'll probably get annoyed by it," he said, "but personally I like it and a lot of other people do too."

Pleasant will be putting in an appearance at the downtown Homer's, 1339 O St., before his live shows.

Fairbairn said the Homer's set should be interesting.

"He'll be walking around the store, and whatever section he's in, he'll play a song of that kind of music."

Pleasant will give an all-ages show at Le Cafe Shakes, 1418 O St., at 7 p.m.

"The first time he came here he was just gonna do a 21 and over show, but I encouraged Dave (Rabe) to do an all-ages show too," Fairbairn said.

"He always does well at them."

Pleasant will top off the evening with a 21 and over show at 10 p.m. at Duffy's Tavern, 1412 O St. He will be joined by opening act Alex Lumelsky.

Fairbairn said Lumelsky played a darker version of solo acoustic music.

"He's not quite as poppy and cheery as Wally," he said.

Rabe said Pleasant was appealing because he was so unserious.

"I think he takes it sorta serious, but he's not this conceited, butthead, rock-star kind of guy," he said.

Artist takes walk on cutting edge

By Charles Russell
Staff Reporter

Edges fascinate artist Kaiti Slater.

Her new installation, "Ecotones," which is on display at the gallery of the Department of Art & Art History, proves it.

An ecotone is the edge where two different environments meet. In this very delicate area it is difficult to know where one environment ends and another begins, Slater said in a gallery talk Tuesday. Those edges are the focus of her latest work.

Slater calls her work an installation, which is "an environment we enter, instead of just looking at," she said. Her current installation is made up of digitally manipulated photographs embedded

in red sandstone rocks.

The pictures reflect suburban locales and present a distinct contrast to the rocks, which are left in their natural state. The edges between culture and nature are vividly detailed and subtly blurred.

The blurring of edges is not limited to the subject matter of Slater's art work, but also carries over into the presentation as well.

Viewers are encouraged to pick up the rocks "and investigate their embedded history, much as a cultural geologist," Slater said. In this way the viewer becomes a part of the exhibit, she said.

Slater, who teaches art at the University of Utah, said she got interested in object/environment pieces in graduate school in the late 1980s.

"I wanted to focus on the experience of relationships," she said.

Slater started using repetition, which plays a major part in her recent work. She said she wanted to explore "the relationship of the one to the whole."

This interest in relationships led her to get involved with computers and digitized imagery, she said.

"Our culture is fascinated with simulated reality," Slater said.

She began playing with the idea of simulated reality in her art. By altering images digitally, she tries to create a perspective that can help the viewer better understand their experiences.

"Unless we get far enough away, we can't really see clearly," she said.

"Ecotones: an Installation About Edges" will be on display in Richards Hall until Feb. 23. Gallery Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

Video releases offer mix

By Gerry Beltz
Film Critic

This week and last week's new video releases bring a mixed variety of the good, the bad and the so-so.

"It Could Happen To You" (PG-13) — A nice, smarmy romantic comedy for the early Valentine's Day movie renters.

Nicholas Cage plays a down-on-his-luck cop who, in lieu of a tip, offers to split the possible winnings of a lottery ticket with his waitress (Bridget Fonda).

No Oscars are expected for this flick or any of the performances, but it's still a wonderful little film to watch with someone you care about.

"Clear and Present Danger" (PG-13) — Harrison Ford is back in the proverbial saddle again as Jack Ryan, the defender of truth,

justice and other American stuff.

This is Ford's second Jack Ryan film; this one takes place with Ryan chasing drug smugglers in South America. However, unbeknownst to our hero, political forces are working against the greater good (big surprise!), and soon Ryan finds himself hip-deep in trouble.

Another strong performance from Ford, and strong supporting performances from James Earl Jones and Willem DaFoe, come together for a decent **"BUT LONG"** — rental.

"The Color of Night" (R and unrated versions) — Bruce Willis bares all for a film put out by Walt Disney; isn't this a sign of the apocalypse?

A psychiatrist (Willis) takes

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