

CLOCK WORK — Former local produces first CD

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middle school, he was playing the alto sax. By age 13, he had his first home-recorded acoustic piano album.



Ben Clock

He began exploring musical technology, using sequencers and synths.

At Eagle Valley High School, which he graduated from in 1992, Clock took up percussion instruments,

and played with the EVHS band for two years. He picked up the electric guitar and played in bands at parties and special occasions outside of school.

Clock credits three local teachers in particular with helping him shape and explore his musical talents. In middle school, teacher Rimas Vitatis, helped Clock learn a Beethoven piece to audition for a concert.

In high school, band leader Carmen Domek helped Clock build upon his unique musical strengths.

"She was a great inspiration," he says. "She was able to determine what elements of your music were part of you, and draw out those elements and push you to what you were really good at."

His love of playing music was only matched with his love for singing and writing it.

MUSICALLY BROADENING

Clock's main focus was always piano. About the time he entered high school, he began taking lessons from Vail pianist Peter Vavra.

Vavra helped him with his music, and with the interviews and audition that got Clock into the University of Denver. They sat down and came up with a four-year plan, which helped get Clock admitted to DU's Lamont School of Music, with a substantial scholarship tied to classical studies. Vavra remembers helping Clock work on Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata." Mostly, he adds, he works with students on their technical abilities.

"You can't play much of anything very well if you don't have the technical skills," states Vavra.

"Classical was kind of a really good base and stepping ground for moving into more of the jazz and improvisation and theory of music," Clock observes.

But it was the improvisational nature of jazz music that continued to draw him.

He played in a college jazz combo band, and sang with DU's chorale. He also performed in bands outside of school, including Jah Creation, a popular local reggae group, and with the East Colfax All Stars.

He ended up with a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Commercial Music Composition, with an emphasis in Jazz Performance.

After college, he moved into a place in Denver with a fellow musician and Eagle local Allen Burki. Together, the duo created a band called InFunktion. Burki and Clock co-wrote the group's music, which was a

blend of funk, jazz fusion and improv. Clock also did all the group's promotion and worked as its agent, too.

Among the many venues Clock has performed are The Blue Bird Theater in Denver, The Fox Theatre in Boulder, and The Starlight in Fort Collins.

CLOCK TICKING

After nearly four years with the group, Clock, whose day job is as a web designer, decided to become a solo artist.

"It's always been my goal. It kind of took all the elements that I've learned," says Clock. He created a recording studio in his home.

"Tick" is his first professionally produced, limited run EP, and available only through his website. It was three years in the making.

Clock has always eschewed strict classifications of his musical style. He describes it as alternative, but only in the broader sense. Although some professional mentors and colleagues have compared his style to numerous artists, from Steely Dan to Nine Inch Nails, he says many influences have helped shape his music. Included in those influences are Prince, U2, Peter Gabriel, and more recently, The Killers and Wheezer.

"My tastes in music have kind of changed throughout my career. But I've always known that I wanted to write and perform music," he says.

His fluid style embraces improvisation and jazz elements in a sort of rock alternative blend.

"It's the style of Ben Clock," he states, simply.

His musical knowledge lends depth to his compositions. His lyrical talents are often thought provoking.

Clock states that many of his songs are kind of organic in nature, exploring "the kind of things everybody in life kind of goes through and can in some way associate with." For instance, on the CD "Tick," the song, "Puppet," is about reminiscing about things which have happened throughout his life, particularly growing up with friends.

*"Well I am just a puppet
A puppet to you and me
A puppet to this society
I can't control this in me"*

"We were all kind of questioning this society, and what we want to be a part of," he explains. Still, he adds, his



music is never about trying to tell others what to think or how to feel. "I try to leave it open to interpretation."

Clock is now working on a full retail album, which he hopes to have available in area stores, and perhaps through Amazon and via downloads stores by the beginning of 2009.

Judy has frequently asked her son if he wished the family had moved to a bigger city when he was younger to better prepare him for a professional music career. He always replies, "no."

"Ben feels very fortunate to have grown up here. He felt very lucky because he had Mr. Vitatis and Carmen Domek, and Peter Vavra — good teachers," she notes.

You can keep abreast Ben Clock's latest releases and accomplishments via his website: BenClock@BenClock.com.



Special to the Enterprise

The cover of Ben Clock's first limited CD, "Tick."

AIRPORT

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airport title, and said county leaders need to think about what they want the airport to be in five or 10 years.

"Do we want five runways, and planes landing day and night?" he asked, noting that the impacts would be felt in downvalley communities. Eagle Town Manager **Willy Powell** stated some of the same concerns, but acknowledged that there is a lack of identity with the current airport name.

Paul Gordon of the Vail Valley Jet Center, argued that 'Vail International Airport' was the most sensible name.

Ian Arthur, vice president of marketing for Vail Resorts, said the name decision rests with the county. He

said the ski company will market whatever the county comes up with.

"Let the community, and taxpayers at large decide," he said. "Our desire is to market the airport on a year-around basis."

Gypsum Town Council member **Tom Edwards** teased that "Gypsum International Airport" was his preferred airport name. However, he lobbied for the "Colorado International Airport" name suggested by the consultants.

"You paid the experts to come up with the most advantageous name. If the goal was to name it 'Vail Airport,' there was no need to hire an expert," he said.

LETTERS

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are a low priority.

No one knows who the ERS retailers will be. We don't know how successful it would be — both short and long term. Should we even entertain taking that big of a risk in these economic times? It's a risk that severely impacts our quality of life and small town character.

There is community consensus to promote infill development on Highway 6/Grand Avenue, downtown and the rest of the vacant spaces in the five business districts of Eagle before doing a mega mall on the outskirts of town. Scott's comment that despite the renovation, "Downtown can never be more than a bit player in the town's revenue" is merely his assumption. His analysis doesn't

account for attrition of existing sales tax producing businesses, which is likely to happen if ERS gets built. We all need to get creative about alternatives to ERS. For instance, special events stimulate sense of community and have a great trickle-down effect on generating sales tax dollars and don't burden our infrastructure long term. People come, spend money and leave.

Bottom line — expecting Eagle River Station to solve all of our financial needs is like playing Russian roulette. There are way too many unanswered questions and absolutely no guarantees.

Jan Rosenthal Townsend
Citizens for the Future of Eagle

www.eaglevalleyenterprise.com