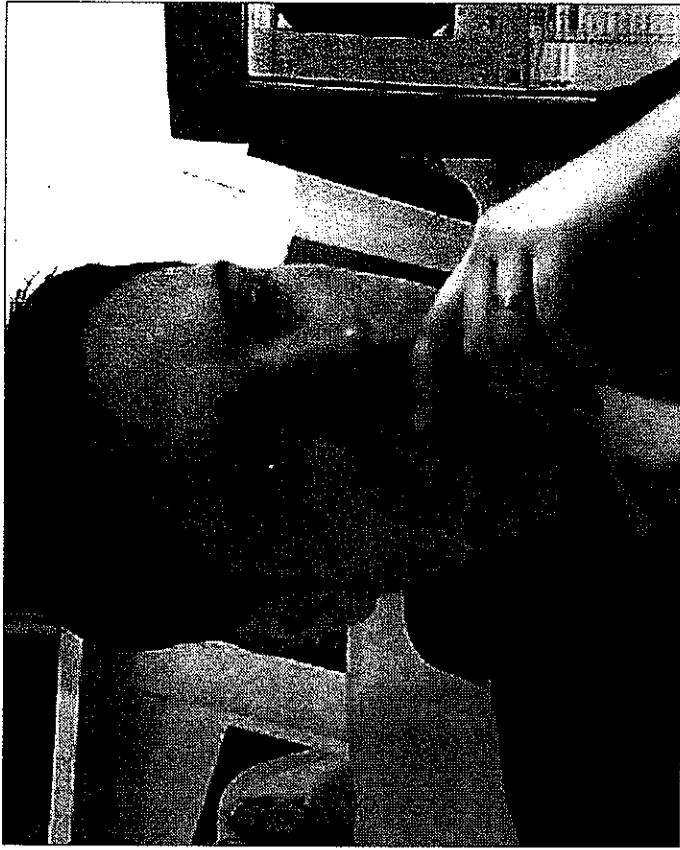




Pinkle: A musician with an eclectic taste and a DIY attitude



Bryn Martin, alias Pinkle, is a UIC graduate student and a musician embodying the DIY spirit.

By Kopinjol Baisiyya
Staff writer

Being a musician is a lot of work; it takes dedication and demands a lot of time. But what is probably even harder than that is to work on your Ph.D. while maintaining a steady musical profile. But then for

someone who is truly dedicated, whose love for music is of the deeper, purer kind, even such a seeming impossibility appears simple and manageable.

Bryn Martin is of such a driven kind. A fourth year graduate student in the Electrical Engineering department at UIC, Martin's musical alias 'Pinkle' is now a few

albums old. Starting off his musical career as part of a band called Ophur, which performed alongside well known rockers such as Sum 41, Martin nonetheless was eventually disillusioned with the slow commercial makeover of the outfit. It was then that 'Pinkle' was born. Holding fast to an artistic and entirely non-commercial ethos, Martin has consistently produced good music since then that, by now spans several albums.

It's this love for artistic freedom that naturally led Martin to the indie activist-music scene around the Pilsen neighborhood near UIC. The cheap 17th street apartment with the makeshift living-room recording studio couldn't possibly have been better located to serve his purpose. A deserted theater hall redecorated to suit the musician's whims and musical instruments, Martin's hideout echoes DIY from every corner. Attracting artists from as far as the south side of Chicago, the Wednesday open-mic at Café Mestizo, hosted by Martin is indeed one of the more flamboyant and yet sufficiently underground get together events around town, serving the much needed role of a platform for some active political and socially conscious dialogue between artists, writers and musicians from all over Chicago.

Martin's latest album under the Pinkle moniker, "images of two" is a delightful anthology of an eclectic jazz-rock-post-punk-reggae flavor. The opening track is a sweet, nostalgic, old-school love anthem complete with acoustic guitar chords and sappy romantic lyrics. The mood swings to a lighter note with "alabi;" a faster paced song with post-modern lyrics that recount how trying to be a good Samaritan by helping a sick person by the "desert fifty mile out of town" lands the narrator into trouble when the person dies in his house. The track also boasts

of some cool bass-work and intense vocal deliveries. "What has happened" is another mellow emo-esque track that breezily talks about love and related things.

Martin seems unable to help himself from getting philosophical from time to time. The result though turns out to be rather funny when he goes a step further and gets a little mathematical in his songwriting. "The derivative of my brain with respect to your eyes is undefined..." the song goes on to talk about a girl (...an engineer falling in love?)! The track though sounds rather good with the screaming electric guitar and the accompanying synth. "Patience" has a touch of reggae that comes as a delicious surprise. The track is rather well done and the skillful fusion of reggae with rock is a clear hint at the musician's standing. "Fight to death" has a definitive Dave Matthews touch that lingers on.

"images of two" is a good album with some catchy tunes masterfully layered over lively rhythms that are bound to force multiple listenings. Cool bass-lines and funky lively beats are one of the strongest attributes of the album. Martin's disregard for genres and his utterly experimental and unapologetically artistic approach also adds to the album's merits. Although the melodies themselves are beautiful, the sudden, unexpected appearance of diverse influences adds life to the tracks. This, by no means undermines Martin's skill as a musician. In fact, it is the skillful blending of apparently disparate genres that lends the album its unusual quality. Breaking away from fake commercial stereotypes is the artist's job, his duty, and Martin, in "images of two," has not faltered in carrying out his part.

All of Martin's albums are available for free download at his webpage at <http://www.pinklemusic.com/music.html>.