

Behrend MBA student makes his mark in music

by John Amorose
Features Editor

A lot of people, especially college students, have dreams and aspirations for the future. Some want high paying jobs, while others want to be happily married and raise a family. For Scotty Knight, his dream is to create music.

Scotty began his musical training in 1978 here in Erie, Pennsylvania. At age seven, he was schooled in the art of the classical piano. Soon after, he received his first electric keyboard and began to write music, which he enjoyed very much. It wasn't until the age of seventeen, after accumulating more instruments, that Scotty realized a career in music was not only possible, but attainable. And in 1992, one of his songs was featured on a compilation CD released by music producer Adam Rodell. Scotty moved to Orange County, California, with hopes of making it big. His stay was short lived, though, because as Scotty puts it, "everyone out there thinks they are a star." So it was back to Erie, where he finished his degree in electrical engineering, and began working at General Electric as an electronics reliability engineer.

In 1995, Scotty started Knightsound Records, as well as released his eight song debut album titled *Something in the Mind*; an album in which Scotty produced, arranged, composed, and performed every song. The

album, although considered a rough demo by Scotty himself, harkens back to an earlier, more simplistic time in R&B music. It doesn't have the complex, jumping beats of Boyz II Men, or the overt sexual stylings of Jodeci. What *Something in the Mind* does have is tight lyrics, beautiful piano, and a good mixture of songs; an attribute that Scotty vows to include on all of his albums. In soulful tracks such as *In the Twilight of a Beautiful Night* and *Dream Another Dream*, Scotty's biggest influence, the artist formerly known as Prince is clearly evident in the smooth lyrics and sensual rhythms. Funk legends *Sly and the Family Stone* and *George Clinton and P-Funk*, also influences to Scotty's music, can be seen in some of the faster, more hard-core songs such as (*Here We Go*) *Get it Up and Are U Wasting My Time*. *Something in the Mind* sold roughly 1100 copies, mainly by word of mouth, and put Scotty Knight on the musical map, so to speak.

In the Fall of 1996, Scotty began his MBA degree here at Penn State-Behrend. He feels that with a business degree, all the money earned through his music endeavors can be invested properly back into the record company. So if Scotty loses his money, it will be his fault, not the fault of an outside investor. Late 1996 also brought about Scotty's second album, as well as the back up duo *Sensitive Minds*, made up of Scotty's older brother Barry, and Donnie Cooley. After

scrapping the first version of the album, *What's Meant 2 Be* was finally released in March of 1997. Scotty felt that the backup vocals of *Sensitive Minds* were necessary to make the new album stronger, both musically and vocally, than *Something in the Mind*.

What's Meant 2 Be is definitely a more mature and complete album. The songs have a wider variety of beats and samples, yet still express the "Scotty" sound. The combination of the new voices of the *Sensitive Minds* along with Scotty's poetic lyrics solidify Scotty as a bonified R&B star.

Scotty is very stingy in the music he selects to put on his CD's. He has written over 200 songs, some saved on disc, and most of which he keeps in his head for future reference. Seven out of ten of these songs, though, will never "see the light of day," as Scotty puts it. The majority of the songs are about Scotty's life experiences.

Scotty cites his father, Romeo Knight, as his greatest musical influence. Romeo, being in the jazz/rythm and blues band *Eddie C and the B's*, wanted very much for Scotty to follow in his footsteps, and was not going to let him quit his dream. In a fitting tribute, Scotty dedicated his first album to both his mother and his father, Romeo for their years of inspiration.

For aspiring musicians, Scotty offers this advice. Seek out a well-known music agent or lawyer. Search the internet for

independent labels. Make a five or six song demo on CD. If you are sending the demo to a record company, make it professional. Don't misspell words on the cover letter and address it to someone who works at the company, not to the company name itself. If you are going to the record company, dress up: nice shirt, tie, dress, etc. And don't think you have to live in New York or Los Angeles to make it in the music industry. There are plenty of stars, like Hootie and the Blowfish, Rusted Root, and Scotty Knight who are from reasonably small markets but still found their musical niche. "The opportunity is there, you just have to grab it."

To purchase a copy of either *Something in the Mind* or *What's Meant 2 Be*, there are a few options. First of which is by asking Scotty personally. The CD's are also sold at Media Play, Dig Dios, Record Den, Disc Go Round, and Mr. G's. Or send a check or money order for \$10 to Knightsound Records, 4619 Duncan Rd., Erie PA, 16505. Anyone interested in recording on Scotty's 64 track studio can call 875-3014. For a three song recording, there's a flat fee of \$100.



Playhouse honors *The King and I*

by Nadine Cross
Collegian Staff

Siam in the early 1860's was ruled by a colorful yet obnoxious king whose power ultimately fell to the love of an English schoolteacher. It began as royalty at its finest and strongest and ended up being dominated by the West. *The King and I* tells the story.

I recently experienced the Erie Playhouse's production of this famous play and was both amazed and disappointed by it. The play begins with the arrival of Anna Leonowens and her daughter Louisa at the palace of the King of Siam. He has brought Anna from England to teach seventeen of his seventy-seven children and his twelve wives of the ways of the West. The King is interested in adapting to Western culture - especially the sciences - because he wishes to make Siam the richest and most powerful country in the world. The story is largely involved with the relationship between the King and Anna and their conflicts concerning the position of women in society. She not only teaches him English words and customs so that he won't be mistaken for a barbarian to the visiting British,

she teaches him love and understanding in dealing with his subjects and children. These teachings lead to his demise because he feels that he can no longer be a strong king if he can feel compassion for others.

The Playhouse did an adequate production of this play. The King (Jim Gandolfo) and Anna (Tammy Gandolfo) were wonderful actors and singers alike. Being a musical, *The King and I* told a large part of its story through song, and I cannot say that any member of the cast did not do well in this respect. I especially liked the King. Gandolfo was overbearing, loud, and obnoxious to the hilt. I think that being a husband and wife acting team helped the chemistry between the Gandolfos because they acted completely natural and at ease with each other in every scene together. The children in the production were also very talented. It was amazing to hear seventeen voices speaking in unison when answering their teacher. They provided much of the humor in the play because they were always getting in the King's way. The best performance, however, was given by the Prince (Christian Gandolfo). A boy of about

thirteen, this young actor has incredible poise as well as a powerful singing and speaking voice.

One of the best parts of the production was the costumes. Rented from D.C. Theatrics, these made the play. Sometimes local theaters try to fend for themselves in costuming, but in this case the Playhouse seems to have gotten the best that it could get. The Siamese costumes were simple, richly colored, and threaded with gold, while Anna's English dress was what the King called a "swollen skirt" - full and worn over a hoop. The King's clothing was made of a velvet-like material decorated with gold pieces and ribbons. This color scheme carried over into the scenery. The interior of the castle was predominantly red and gold.

The only problem that I had with this production was the space. *The King and I* was originally a tremendous Broadway production performed on a stage and in a theater of considerable size. The Erie Playhouse was a bit small to furnish such an event. The stage was overloaded with scenery, drops, and cast members much of the time. The actors and set were placed well for the space available, but the closeness

seemed to limit the production. I could not vision the stage as rooms of a castle when everyone was jammed into one corner. I have been lucky enough to see productions of many plays of this caliber in New York and London, and my feeling is that the Playhouse should stick to productions for which they have the space. A small stage cannot do justice to such a powerful piece.

I would recommend this play for three reasons. First, the costumes. Second, because the King wants to write a letter to President Lincoln asking him if he would like to receive some elephants to help him win the Civil War. And finally, the unusual conception of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* done here as a ballet for the King and a visiting British diplomat. The ballet is written and directed by one of the King's princesses who has been sent as a gift from the King of Burma. She hates being held in virtual enslavement because she is in love with another man and is making plans to flee the castle. Needless to say, her version of the Stowe novel - titled here "The Small House of Uncle Thomas" - is an interesting comment on the position of women in Siam.

The Erie Playhouse has done well with its resources to develop a decent production of *The King and I*. The physical aspects of the play are dealt with wonderfully as well as the themes of slavery and Westernization. The ending brings about many changes in the kingdom as well as the world as the West begins to spread its influences to the waiting East.

ACROSS

1. Boisterous play
5. Used the book
9. Swifty
14. Opera highlight
15. Musical group
16. Kind of eclipse
17. Lots and lots
18. Peel
19. Inclines
20. Wallet items
21. Intact
23. Kind of blanket
24. Container for feed
25. Disabling injury
27. de guerra
28. Musical work
33. Falls behind
35. A pronoun
36. Toward the sheltered side
37. Secrecies
38. Be victorious
39. Go slowly
40. General Bradley
41. Ice mass, for short
42. Love god
43. Something precious
45. Composer
46. Prov. in Can.
47. Chamos' tag
51. Meas. of heat
54. They foot me bills
55. Brainstorm
57. Usher's beat
59. Go quickly
60. Reputation
61. Futive one
62. Claret, e.g.
63. Skeletal part
64. Ibsen's Gaeber
65. Wonderful thing
66. Meeting; abbr.

DOWN

1. Boca —
2. City in Maine
3. Excavations
4. Theatrics
5. Flow of water
6. Twist
7. Misbehavior
8. Making changes
9. Rasing
10. American writer
11. Here bought to
12. Woody's stam
13. Formerly, once
14. Edges
15. Office VIP
16. County in England
17. Concordant
18. Scream for toast
19. — cowell
20. Sangy affirmative
23. A fruit
24. "Bace"
25. Gun of a certain caliber
26. Swire
27. City in Normandy
28. — ice
29. A state capital
45. Maccox
46. Inclines
48. Make confuses
49. Bright e.g.s
50. — Buce
51. Strike
52. Fork part
53. Saccharine
55. Ice and
56. Youngster

See answers next page

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