

STUDENT LIFE

Eli Stradler set to make Behrend debut at Bruno's

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"My junior year in high school my buddy gave me a tape called Bob Dylan Biograph and the first song that sang out was 'Lay down your weary tune'. After that I was hooked," recalls singer/songwriter Dan LaFuria, who goes by the stage name Eli Stradler. He will be playing an hour long set of his favorite tunes in Brunos Café Friday, Jan. 18 at 9 p.m., "and that's really what started it all."

LaFuria is a North East, PA native and is coming from five years of performing with various groups in the greater Erie area. He has recently been devoting most of his time to his solo act, but tries to meet up with his side project The Lost Dog Experiment about every two weeks however, he says that his current goal is to search for success in his personal music. "I like to sing about hard times and overcoming obstacles, while keeping it on a certain level that everyone can relate to. My main goal is to be able to get what I'm thinking about out there because I feel that I have some good things to say."

LaFuria struggles to place his music in a particular class because so many artists have influenced him to a certain point where he feels he can't really label his music. "Well Dylan, obviously, is a big influence, but there are so many others. Guys like Woody Guthrie, Dave Van Ronk, The Avett Brothers, Mason Jennings, oh and John Prine- he's one of my favorites. I guess if I had to call it anything it would be a cross between early American folk and modern folk."

The guitar is not LaFuria's only weapon on stage, as he is extremely fond of his harmonica, and on occasion, will rock out on the piano. But the guitar is his favorite instrument and will never pass a moment



to jam his Washburn hollow body acoustic. "She's my woman," jokes LaFuria about the acoustic.

Friday night LaFuria looks to play about three quarters of his own material and the rest will be some of his favorite tunes to cover. "I'll probably throw in some Mason Jennings and Dylan in my set, but the main focus will be on my latest album."

The album LaFuria refers to titled, "For What it's Worth" is currently available via Dan himself, however, he will not have any copies at his Brunos Café show. The album consists of 13 songs, and features one of his favorite old tunes "Amazing Grace" which, at one point, led him to inscribe the lyrics of the song around the perimeter of one of his guitars.

LaFuria is looking forward to playing plenty of tunes off his latest album including "Country Roads" and "Never Know Again". "It's a lot of traditional stuff, he said. "I just try to keep playing and learn as much as I can, you know?"

LaFuria does not exactly have a plan for his future, but is extremely optimistic about what it will bring. He loves music - everything about it. He knows that. What he doesn't know is where it will take him, but wherever he goes, he's taking his tunes with him and never forgetting what his true passion is in life-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

One of many shots of singer/songwriter Dan LaFuria rocking his tunes on stage. To the left is a picture LaFuria took himself- whereabouts unknown.

Music.

"It's always there. Music is timeless. You could listen to something from 30 or 40 years ago and it's still the same- it'll live forever. It's just always there, you know what I mean?"

On Feb. 10, LaFuria will be playing another show at the Starbucks on State St. in downtown Erie, Pa. where he will have copies of the album.

LaFuria is placing himself in the world of music to achieve two things- a different style of music than that of what we're used to today and for everyone just to relax and feel good when they here the tunes. "It's a step from a lot of stuff going on today," summarizes LaFuria. "I just want everybody to be able to relate to the music and just have a good time when they hear it."

Upcoming events on campus

Jan 21st - Campus Family Brunch
Reed Union Building, McGarvey Commons
Brunch - 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Key Arts Performance @ 12:50 p.m.

Jan. 21st - Basketball Game
Penn State Behrend Vs. PittBradford
Women @ 6, Men @ 8 - Junker Center - FREE

Jan. 22nd - Speaker Series featuring
John Bul Dau and Christopher Quinn
"God grew tired of us: The story of the Lost Boys of Sudan"
McGarvey Commons - 7:30 p.m.

Top Five Hockey Movies

By Ryan P. Gallagher and Scott R. Muska

5. Sudden Death
4. Slapshot
3. Miracle on Ice
2. D2: The Mighty Ducks
1. Mighty Ducks

Indie movies gain popularity

By Scott R. Muska
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A few years ago, the term "Indie Film" was a little known commodity in the entertainment world. They were a low-budget way for aspiring writers and directors to break into the mainstream entertainment industry as well as an avenue for previously established moviemakers to experiment with bold new ideas and concepts.

Until recently, these films gathered interest only from those with a vested interest in the filmmaking industry (producers, studio executives, etc.) and were shown, for the most part, at experimental film festivals.

Actor Zach Braff (Scrubs) became one of the poster boys for this film revolution when he released *Garden State*—a movie he wrote, directed and starred in. It became an enormous hit that transcended the cult and mainstream barriers. The film also gained extreme critical acclaim and helped to pave the way for the

Ellen Page, the Hollywood newcomer that played Juno, has already won numerous awards for her performance and was even predicted to win best actress last week at the Golden Globes, but was upset by Marion Cotillard, who won for her starring role in the French indie film *La Vie En Rose*.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Natalie Portman and Zach Braff, stars of *Garden State*.

Many of the characteristics in independent films are deemed experimental and attention getting, which have contributed to their growing popularity, but the characteristic inherent in nearly all indie movies that have gained audience acclaim have become known for their soundtracks.

These soundtracks more often than not employ the use of independent songwriters that are also not afraid to test the limits of conventional music. *Garden State* is viewed as the catalyst for this, and is known by some to be the foremost reason that groups like The Shins and Iron & Wine have become popular musicians that are signed by major labels.

Juno's soundtrack has been touted as phenomenal as well, with songs by the Moldy Peaches, Belle and Sebastian and Kimya Dawson. It also includes a song that is performed in the movie by Page and her co-star, Michael Cera, who has become a household name after his performance in last summer's comedic hit, *Superbad*.

The horizon looks very bright for independent films and they should continue to enjoy success. The only worry some critics have begun to express is that they may become too pretentious and lose their artistic merit, as so many movies made for the mainstream culture already have. It's become a point of interest and importance for those experimenting with the indie film genre to maintain their down to earth budget that gives such credibility to their filming style while still pushing the envelope with their experimental subject matter.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ellen Page, star of *Juno*.

success of both past and future independent films that would've otherwise remained underneath the mainstream.

Jason Reitman, a filmmaker that initially gathered success with his independent adaption of Christopher Buckley's novel *Thank You for Smoking*, released his latest indie film, *Juno*, earlier this month to record-breaking ticket sales and unparalleled critical acclaim.

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