

# Music from the heart



RONY ANGKRIWAN/THE BATTALION

## Local musician shares his desire to expand B-CS scene

By RHONDA REINHART  
Staff writer

music and how they all relate."

After graduation, McAllister returned to College Station where he is pursuing his solo career. He also plays in two local bands, Veil of Veronica and Snook Cats, gives guitar lessons at Holze Music Company, and plays classical guitar at weddings, clubs and restaurants.

McAllister said there is more freedom for musicians in a city like College Station than in larger cities.

"In big cities, there are so many other people just like you that you are not contributing anything," he said. "You're just trying to climb a ladder. Here, you can make a difference. Not too many people are climbing over each other to get to the top. There is a small family of very close-knit musicians here. It's a comfort."

McAllister said getting on a record label and becoming rich and famous are not part of his goals as a musician.

Matt Elsik, McAllister's drummer, said there is an underground music scene in

Bryan-College Station.

"In Austin, there are too many bands and not enough fans," he said. "Here, there

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Mike McAllister  
Local musician and music teacher

aren't enough bands but a lot of people who want to hear music."

McAllister said his favorite places to play are coffeehouses because they allow more freedom for improvisation and experimentation.

He incorporates a variety of musical styles into his live shows, playing every-

thing from bluegrass to 17th century operas to Pink Floyd covers.

"That's the exciting part," he said. "You never know what is going to happen next."

Elsik said the mood of the crowd determines what the live shows will be like.

"It's a give and take relationship with the audience," he said. "Everything is fusion. Mixing our energies is soothing and invigorating at the same time."

Even though McAllister said his musical style does not fit into any one category, he said the folk movement in music influenced him greatly.

"Folk is very real," he said. "It's not just the music, but the attitude. These were people nobody ever knew because they played on their front porches all their lives. They were never trying to sell their music. They were just playing songs."

McAllister's music has a message. His songs are critical of greed and power and in favor of having faith and going with the flow of life. He said people can relate to

the common situations in his lyrics.

"To me, music is love," he said. "It's about making connections and turning people on to something new. People might actually learn something from my songs."

McAllister plays a variety of instruments, including all styles of guitar, piano, and various reed and percussion instruments. He said he tries to learn a new instrument every few years, and through his guitar lessons, he passes that knowledge on to others.

"Teaching is in my blood," he said. "I come from a long line of teachers. In a lesson, when someone breaks through and makes a discovery, that's the moment I live for. Giving lessons is not so much teaching, but making someone feel good about himself. It's like a psychology session."

McAllister said music is his life. "Call me a lifer," he said. "I love to play. The day I die, it better be on stage."

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