

## The Evolution Of Evermore

### *Group finds fitting venue at arts center*

Like the mythical phoenix, Evermore continues to reinvent itself, but its evolution is its staying power.

The local independent band Evermore will add its unique flavor to the Murfreesboro/Rutherford County Center for the Arts' "musical Potpourri" at 8 p.m. March 19, and the performance should be a modern music experience to remember.

Comprised of founder Jeff Germscheid (synthesizer, lead vocals, piano) and Blake Smith (vocals, guitar and guitar synth), as well as Marie Hickey (vocalist) and Chris Rueger (bassist), Evermore will perform material from its new album, "Research Among The Ruins."

But while the group has found its groove with new members Hickey and Rueger, Smith says this Evermore is only the latest incarnation of the idea started by Germscheid.

"Evermore has evolved into different incarnations to what it is now," Smith says. "Jeff actually started another band in Philadelphia when he was in high school called 'Evermore,' and was primarily him with some guest musicians."

Smith and Germscheid teamed up later after meeting at MTSU.

"We met in college, and we started working together in the studio," the former recording industry management major says. "We put out the CD ('Absinthe') last year under the name Evermore, and a lot of the work was songs Jeff had written in high school. It was just the two of us with side musicians."

"Our new CD, 'Research Among The Ruins,' has the two new band members and more collaboration, so it's more solidified," he adds.

Described as modern music, Smith credits Evermore's repertoire to all sorts of influences.

"Influences depend on which band member you're talking to," Smith says, listing the likes of Peter Gabriel, Daniel Lanois and Eno as strong contenders. "We like everything from progressive rock to classical, Bob Dylan, folk influences, Bartok, and jazz."

"It's hard to label the influences with today's modern music."

Especially difficult when the group has gone through an evolution of sorts, but its growth and influences can be heard on Evermore's two CDs. Smith acknowledges that "Research" takes a different direction than "Absinthe".

"The tracks are very different from song to song," he explains. "On 'Absinthe,' the first time you hear it, there are some hard-edged songs that stand out. But after listening to it for a year, the ones that stand out to me are the most lyrically intimate."

"On 'Absinthe,' everything was written by Jeff, and there were very few collaborations," he continues. "With 'Research,' there are actually songs by Chris, and a lot more collaboration."

Smith also notes that the title of the first album had nothing to do with a fondness for the potent drink.

"There's a lot of tie-in between us and Absinthe (the name) – we have been influenced by a lot of impressionist artists, and many of them were known for using absinthe. Van Gogh and Mamet were absinthe bingers," he notes.

He adds that there's a personal connection as well.

"There's also a tie-in between absinthe and epilepsy, and I'm epileptic," Smith says. "But as far as any overt drug references, no, that's not what it's about."

"And some people have connected it with the appearance of absinthe in a

Nine Inch Nails video, and that's a connection we don't want."

Evermore's music features a little of everything.

"We feature a lot of electronic music," Smith explains. "Some is acoustic and piano, while other songs feature synthesizers and electric guitars."

After the group's 1997 debut, venues to fit their brand of music have been hard to find.

"Generally, we take up a lot of space – we have a piano, synthesizer, drummer, our bassist has a lot of gear, and I have a lot more guitar gear than anyone should," he notes. "It feels like a small orchestra when we carry our stuff in."

The band played at The Arts Center of Cannon County last month and felt that setting fit their style well.

"We have been playing in different venues, but we're trying to stay away from the bars," Smith says. "When we would play bars and clubs, there would be a lot of people there who really weren't there to hear us perform, so you had a lot of talking going on while we were playing."

"We decided we'd get a show for the music, and not for the people who didn't want to hear it," Smith says.

Following the Murfreesboro performance, the group will head to Nashville for upcoming projects.

"After the Center For The Arts, we will be working on doing some things in Nashville to suit us," he says. "I really liked the layout of the Center For The Arts, and I want to find someplace similar to that."

"And we want more people to hear us," he adds. "We're not necessarily in search of being rock stars, but more into producing the music we enjoy."