

Santa Cruz Sentinel.com

Derek Bodkin: Finding his muse in Santa Cruz

By STACEY VREEKEN

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Listen to 'Long Gone'

After a fast-paced life doing voice-overs, post-production work and playing music in Hollywood, Derek Bodkin traded



Derek Bodkin is a singer, drummer, former voice-over artist and professional whistler in Los Angeles. (Dan Couvo/Sentinel)

it all in five years ago to chase the dream of living in Santa Cruz.

Doesn't it usually work the other way around?

"I felt called to move here," Bodkin says.

Perhaps it was the allure of partner Randi

Motson, but it was also the thriving music scene that connects genres and cultures that gave a kick to Bodkin's creative juices.

"Maybe I needed to learn to be free," he says. The drummer, "closet" banjo player, singer and whistler felt hemmed in by the strictures of his music education that emphasized the rules.

"I invested a lot of myself, especially getting a degree in music, especially when you're aware of what a risky megillah it is," he says. "It was just unbelievable. I lost all my hair in college from the stress."

Bodkin's isn't the first person Santa Cruz has enraptured, but he may be one of its most ardent admirers. He loves his Pleasure Point neighborhood, and he loves having his band mates in Five Eyed Hand be his best friends.

"With what's happening in the world, there's a need for genuine," he says, describing himself as a warrior-poet. "I feel like there's a portion of society crying out for the real and genuine."

And he found it in Santa Cruz. "L.A. was all about the clothes... name dropping and things like that," he says. "I'm into the whole honesty thing."

Bodkin had held back on composing his own music, but his Santa Cruz life opened the floodgates for him.

He wrote songs about forgiveness, equality and people helping each other out "not sappy ones".

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Not only did the other band members encourage him, but the group's fans responded as well.

"This band is my life right now," Bodkin says of Five Eyed Hand. Bodkin, fiddler Mikey Henderson, bassist Jeb Taylor and guitarist Chris Zanardi play what he calls "surfgrass," a blend of rock, bluegrass, surf, psychedelic and folk styles.

An upcoming Talk Like A Pirate gig at the Crow's Nest Sept. 19 is a "reason to go a little nuts ... be silly and laugh. That's what I love about Santa Cruz, you can be silly and no one gives you a second glance," he says.

Bodkin is inspired by surfing along Pleasure Point "I'm awful but I'm out there smiling and having the time of my life" eating at Guang Zho and hanging out at Coffeetopia.

He loves all things Santa Cruz: the funky downtown, the Boardwalk, the fragrance of the redwoods, KPIG radio.

"I love this town. My heart's here."

Derek Bodkin

Born: Boston. Moved to Southern California with family at 5 years old.

Day Job: Marketing coordinator for Universal Audio

where you can see him play: With Five Eyed Hand for Talk Like a Pirate Day at the Crow's Nest. Concert begins at 9:30 p.m. Sept. 19.

Pirate-talking contest will take place. Cost is \$7.

Instruments: Drums, banjo, vocals, whistles. Has a music degree from San Diego State with an emphasis on conducting and composition.

LOVES MOVIE SOUNDTRACKS: His favorite composer is John Williams and his score to 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind.' He says the 'Harry Potter' music 'is gorgeous' and that composer Williams is 'one of the very rare orchestra composers who can write hooks.'

FAMOUS FRIEND: Cheers star John Ratzenberger. Two bonded over membership in Sons of the Desert, a bagpipe and drum band playing for charities in L.A.

on working with celebrities: 'The people you see on TV, now they're your friends.'

Musical influences: String Cheese Incident, Grateful Dead, Kingston Trio, Limelighters
Band's Name: From a line by San Franciscan Beat poet Sam Flot, 'My five-eyed hand sees everything.'

Shout Out: Dave Grove and Mari Doroud

On the Net: Derekbodkin.com , fiveeyedhand.com

SEE A BAND VIDEO:

fiveeyedhand.com/music.html

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