



Jim Pipher uses personal moments to fuel his passion for music

By JEFF KORBELIK / Lincoln Journal Star | Posted: Thursday, September 10, 2009 11:45 pm

Jim Pipher tends to write songs about his life experiences.

"For me, that's my initial impetus, something that has happened to me," he said. "It may morph into something completely different from what I started."

That's why the opening track on his new CD packs such a punch.

"Just a Mighty Small Man" is a song about Pipher's father, who passed away three years ago.

Unsure of its impact, he played it for his sister a couple of weeks ago.

"She immediately began sobbing, and she sobbed through the whole song," he said. "I took that as a success. I guess the song worked."

Pipher has just released "The Last Tall Tree," his first CD in many, many years. He wasn't sure how long it's been, but said his last song collection came out on cassette.

"I'm sure that dates it somewhat," he said. "It was long ago and far away. Needless to say, this is long overdue."

The CD, along with a new disc from "The Lightning Bugs," the jazz trio Pipher performs in with Steve Hanson and Reynold Peterson, will be available tonight at the Prairie Dog Social, the season-opening event for the Lincoln Association for Traditional Arts.

The LAFTA concert will feature the artists on local musician John Walker's CD label, Prairie Dog.

It begins at 6 p.m. at 7th Street Loft - the new/old home for LAFTA - with homemade gumbo, chili, cornbread, boysenberry cobbler and more. Music begins at 7:30 p.m.

Also performing will be Terri Jo Dodson, Terry Keefe, Rob Kloefkorn, Chris Sayre and C.A. Waller. CDs from all the Prairie Dog artists will be available for \$10 each.

Although Pipher has been a fixture on Lincoln's music scene, he admits he and his Lightning Bug mates have been a tad negligent on the recording front. It's been 13 years since the Bugs released a CD.

"I guess we're seeing sort of a pattern developing here," he joked.

The solo effort contains 16 Pipher-penned songs, though the songwriter credits his longtime friend Hanson for putting "his 2 cents' worth on some."

Pipher recorded the CD at Hanson's "home of the hits" and includes the talents of Hanson, Keefe, Peterson, Pam Barger, Steve Blazek, Shawn Cole, Barry Hanson, Jim Williamson and Dan Newton.

The Bugs also recorded their disc, "Glow," at Hanson's. The 15 songs include the Bugs' spin on such favorites as "Mona Lisa," "Tiny Bubbles," "Beer Barrel Polka," "That's Amore" and "Jeepers Creepers."

Pipher is proud of both efforts, especially the solo CD.

"I've been building up a backlog (of songs)," he said. "I finally said, 'OK, which of these am I brave enough to trot out and which need to go back on the slush pile.'"

As noted before, many of the songs are personal to him. "Johnny Appleseed" is a song about his daughter being pregnant. She's due anytime now.

The title track also is about his father's passing.

"I came up with a set of tunes I feel pretty good about," he said.

For those unable to make the concert, CDs will be made available through Prairie Dog's Web site at www.prairiedogmusic.com.

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