

'Mandala' is Hazleton native's first album

Jeremy dePrisco says the collection of songs is based on his personal experiences. The album's sound draws from his many influences.

BY AIMEE TABOR

Standard-Speaker

As a teen, all Jeremy dePrisco wanted was a career in music.

Now that dream has come to fruition with the release of his debut album, "Mandala."

The recording, which debuted in music stores on Monday, contains a collection of songs based on personal experiences of the former Hazleton man.

"It's a collection of 12 songs written over the past six to eight years," dePrisco, who now lives in Harrisburg, said.



dePrisco

Today," all have some kind of meaning to dePrisco.

The album's sound also is attributed to a variety of influences in the singer/songwriter's life.

Those influences include Ian Anderson of Jethro Tull, Rush, Pink Floyd, Secretes, Franz Kafka, Friedrich Nietzsche, J.S. Bach, Davey Graham, J.R.R. Tolkien, J.C. Mellencamp, Cat

The songs reflect dePrisco's innermost thoughts.

"It's something I put my heart and soul into for the past two years," he said. "The songs are of personal experiences."

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concentric circles.

Each square Mandala represents one of the five levels of Kalachakra's palace, DePrisco's web site stated.

But as soon as the Mandala is constructed, it's taken apart as part of the ritual.

"At the end of the week, they do a ceremony where they take the whole thing and sweep it up, put it in an urn and dump it into a river," dePrisco said.

There is a correlation between the Mandala ritual and the music in dePrisco's album.

"I want to put my personal experiences behind," he said.

With the album containing so much of his heart and soul, it was only natural for dePrisco to be able to have total artistic control.

"I wanted to do it my way," he said. "The only way I would see to do that was to finance it on my own."

Although he did have the chance to get financial backing on "Mandala," dePrisco decided against it.

"The album is a statement of what I accomplished," he said.

With the drive to do it by himself, tracks for the album were recorded in dePrisco's home studio, at Schrum's home, and at an outside studio.

The final touches were put on the tracks by a sound engineer from York, dePrisco said.

DePrisco's musical talents also extend beyond making an album.

Over the past few years, he has performed his songs in various locations both live and on television.

His music also has found its way to the theater.

Two productions so far by Steve Schrum, a former Penn State professor, feature dePrisco's music.

The Hazleton native's debut album also grabbed the attention of a local music store. The Gallery of Sound, which has 10 stores including one in West Hazleton, is selling the album. "Mandala" also is available at the Emporium of Curious Goods in Jim Thorpe, or through dePrisco's web site at www.mindspeak.com.

dePrisco

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When he first ventured out as a solo artist, dePrisco never used drums.

"When I recorded previously, there seemed to be something missing," he said. "There were no live drums on any of the songs."

Then someone suggested that dePrisco add drums to his act.

"I already knew the songs were good," he said. "Now they come across more palatable."

Besides putting his personal experiences into "Mandala," the album has another message that dePrisco felt is important.

"I want to spread awareness of what's going on in Tibet," he said. Being a Buddhist himself, dePrisco said it was only natural for him to try to spread the message of Tibet.

Inside the album sleeve, one can find thought-provoking quotes and a picture of the Tibetan flag.

The picture on the front of the album also has special meaning, as the concept for the artwork came to dePrisco in a dream.

Knowing that he wanted to use the Mandala, he then set out to find the best one to represent him and his work.

"The Mandala is made out of different types of materials," dePrisco said. "Sand is one of the materials that can be used."

He found the Mandala he wanted to use on the Internet. It was one that Martin Brauen, a photographer from Switzerland, took of the Dalai Lama performing the Kalachakra ritual.

"The Kalachakra Sand Mandala is a two-dimensional representation of the five-story palace of the deity Kalachakra," dePrisco's web site, Mindspeak, said of the one he used. "It is one of the colored-particle mandalas, a generic term used to describe any Mandala made of crushed materials such as jewels, flower petals, rice, or, most commonly, sand-like stone ranging in density from soapstone to marble."

The Mandala on the album cover consists of five square mandalas, with one being inside the other, and is surrounded by six

