

# SHOP & GUY

by Bethany Kohoutek

M-Shop's  
student  
music  
director  
works  
tirelessly to  
bring you  
the hits.

**B**oonie sits back in his office chair in the Maintenance Shop as he explains why he likes Sarah McLachlan's music. At first, this preference may seem odd for a guy with a shockingly deep voice, who sports black hair and muttonchop sideburns and today, a Murder City Devils t-shirt and big black boots. Next he talks about his high school-era love for The Misfits, and then his current country favorite, Hank Williams III. There is musical paraphernalia affixed to most of the limited surface area in his office. A Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds poster takes up part of the wall. A Napster logo jockeys for position among countless other stickers on his filing cabinet. Chris Isaak casts a cool eye down on him from a picture above his desk.

Music is Boonie's life. Boonie, by the way, is what he insists on being called. Even his professors call him Boonie. It's on his business card. The only time he uses his real name is when he's with family members and when he fills out Scantron sheets. Don't even think about asking what it is, because you won't get an answer.

"It's just that I've been going by Boonie for a lot of years now," he explains. "It's kind of a family name; all of the males are called Boonie. My uncle, my father, my grandfather. ... I just kind of got used to it. I don't really like my real name, anyway."

Boonie is the director of the Memorial Union's Maintenance Shop, which is one of the few local concert venues that features national and local bands.

Music runs like an artery through the 22 years of Boonie's life, from his early childhood days of hair-metal cassette tapes to his high school obsession with the more sinister metallic sounds of Danzig and Marilyn Manson. His future centers on music. It is the reason he spends 30 to 40 unpaid hours per week in his M-Shop office, trying to please a wide and fickle audience of college students and community members.

Boonie, along with M-Shop coordinator Eric Yarwood, is the driving force behind booking every band that plays the M-Shop. This means that in addition to the 30 to 40 aforementioned hours, he also sacrifices every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night supervising M-Shop performances.

Boonie says that a typical day for him consists of checking and sending e-mails, going through contracts, asking bands for promotional materials, checking to see which bands are on tour, and seeing how much those bands gross. It also consists of many, many phone calls and messages, which Boonie says is his least favorite part of the job. He gestures toward his office telephone. "See this light?" he asks with a sigh, pointing to the impatiently blinking, red message light. "It's *always* on."

Most college students would shudder at the idea of devoting such an enormous amount of time to an unpaid position. Not Boonie.

"It's just the love of the music," he explains. "That's the real thing. The money doesn't matter so much. ... It's getting to listen to things I enjoy and bringing it to the Shop, and if people come, it's just great."

Lonnie Brooks, John Doe, and The Anniversary are just a few acts that Boonie and Yarwood have scheduled already this year. The pair has to look beyond their own personal tastes when booking bands. Co-worker Yarwood says Boonie is very unbiased when he selects bands for the Shop.

"Boonie brings variety to the M-Shop," Yarwood says. "There are some types of music that he isn't necessarily a fan of, but he knows there is an audience out there for it. He tries to cater to all crowds. Not all student directors realize this [need]. If they don't like it, they're not gonna bring it in. But Boonie is a little different. He looks at the whole picture and tries to satisfy as many people as he can."

Boonie says that the best part of his job is "just that people appreciate what we're doing."

Boonie had been mixing the sound at the M-Shop for two years when he found out there



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Boonie, junior in pre-journalism

was an opening for a student director. He applied and got the job. The difference between Boonie's and Yarwood's positions is that Yarwood's is a permanent position, while Boonie's is unpaid and designed specifically for a student. Boonie has the job for this academic year, and come May, he can choose to leave or stay on another year.

In addition to his full-time M-Shop duties, Boonie is also an ISU junior in pre-journalism with an emphasis in electronic media studies. He has DJed a radio program for KURE 88.5, Iowa State's radio station, since his freshman year, when he started out spinning a rotation of heavy metal. Now he has switched over to playing punk, like Speeddealer, Black Flag, and Jets

to Brazil, something he says he has gotten into more during his college years. He also works for ProSound where he occasionally installs sound systems and mixes sound for parties and other social events around central Iowa. And as if all this weren't enough, he works in the maintenance department of the Memorial Union to help pay bills.

Just last December he quit his catering job, which also tied him to the music industry. The company he worked for catered lots of concerts, so he got to meet Korn frontman Jonathan Davis, Tori Amos, and The Who's Roger Daltrey, to name just a few. His favorite was Harry Connick Jr.

"He's the most down-to-earth, big-name artist I've had the pleasure of meeting," Boonie says. "He's a joy to be around and talk to. I can't say enough good things about that man."

One of Boonie's priorities is promoting the local music scene. He says there are very few places besides the Shop where local bands have the chance to perform.

"I feel obligated and honored to help," he says. "We're in a position where we can help out. I've talked to a lot of bands that need places to play. Here they can come in and play and

even make some money at it. It's always good for bands starting out."

Already this semester, local favorites Mr. Plow and Grubby Ernie each have held sold-out shows at the M-Shop. These groups, along with Pookey Bleum, Mediocre Superheroes, and Why Make Clocks are Boonie's favorite local bands.

"We do what we can," he says. "We try, and we're going to try even more next semester to bring more local acts in."

You'd think that with his numerous obligations, Boonie wouldn't have a great deal of free time. That's true — his number-one hobby is sleeping. When he does get some time off, he likes to golf and snowboard. And one of his

favorite things to do is travel; he's been to Switzerland twice and to the Ukraine.

Yarwood attributes Boonie's success in so many areas to his easy-going and level-headed nature. "He's just very honest, an all-around nice guy. Performers love him, the [M-Shop] volunteers love him, and students love him," he says.

These traits, as well as his devotion to music, date back to his childhood. Boonie grew up in Madrid, about 15 miles southwest of Ames, with his parents Daniel and Pat Boone (yes, you read it right), and his younger brother, Squire, a college sophomore.

As a second grader, Boonie loved hair metal; bands like Skid Row, Poison, and Motley Crue were among his favorites. In fact, the first — and second — concert he attended was the '80s pop-metal group Nelson. And he went with his parents.

"I was like, 'Wow — a concert. Rock n' roll,'" Boonie says.

"It was loud," mother Pat says, "but fun."

"He's always been addicted to music," she adds. "We have always played music around him, usually the oldies. I'm a big Harry Chapin fan, and my husband is a Jim Croce and Buddy Holly fan."

After his Nelson experiences, Boonie developed a regular concert habit. In fact, it was on the road to a Pantera concert that he and his high school buddies almost got in some trouble with the law. They had a case of beer and some bottles of Calvert in the car, going 85 miles per hour and passing on the shoulder. A highway patrolman pulled them over, but Boonie managed to get out of a possession ticket because it was so cold outside that the officer's Breathalyzer wouldn't work.

Boonie's devotion to music is connected to his appreciation for art in general. Creativity is something he says he has always felt strongly about.

"I believe in artistic creativity and that anything can be seen as art," he says. "Everyone needs an artistic release."

Boonie says that he hopes to be able to use his love for music, creativity, and art in his career someday. And although he plans on doing something in the music industry, Boonie says he's not quite sure what the future holds for him.

"I've been telling everyone that if I could have the job of my choice, I'd do the villain's voice in a feature-length Disney movie," he says. "I would really enjoy that. I just want to be able to be happy every day of the year. ... I don't care about the money, necessarily. I just want to be comfortable and happy with myself, at a state of ease."

*Bethany Kohoutek is a sophomore in pre-journalism. She's a staff writer for Ethos and also writes entertainment articles for the Iowa State Daily.*