

## Salem DJ mixes it up

By Larry Claflin Jr.

Staff writer

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Scott Buchanan of Salem is not your typical collector. He doesn't compile baseball cards or rare coins; rather he collects thousands of sound bites — chatter on the beaches of Spain, funny voice mails or late-night conversations — and layers them with samples of his original music. The results can be heard at clubs around the North Shore when Buchanan performs with his laptop as Radio Scotvoid.

He often invites area musicians to sit in with him at the gigs and improvise, layering live music over his original tracks.

"Whatever it may be — it could be field recordings, found sounds or (recordings from) dictaphones. I'll create a melody from it ... and from that different players will come, adding layers of different sounds," said Buchanan. "When the mood takes me, I sometimes ask a drummer, flute player, MC or guitar player to sit in."

Buchanan, a native of Scotland, said he got his first gig in Edinburgh about 10 years ago at a club called Curios, a concept for unsigned DJs and MCs to perform in front of an audience. When he moved to the North Shore in 1999, Buchanan brought the Curios concept with him. Starting in 2002, he played regular sessions at Front Street Coffeehouse in Salem with other DJs, and got to know area musicians and bands, like Henley Douglas Jr. of the Boston Horns, Benny Benson of Headshaft and Jesse Ciarmataro of Further from Zen.

"I basically found a bunch of local dudes ... and asked them if they wanted to join in," he said.

Buchanan said his Salem apartment is stocked with keyboards, guitars, drum machines, samplers and old TVs and stereo equipment — "stuff you can buy at a thrift store" — which he uses to record original music. He then layers in collected sounds, which he stores on portable hard drives. He processes masters through any of three home computers, using editing software.

The music is mostly instrumental, with his found sounds mixed in as spoken word.

"(I record) social commentaries over the beats that I make up," he said. "If it sounds good enough then I'll release it, for free," on an online British label, [www.earthmp.com](http://www.earthmp.com).

"The theory is you should record everything you do because you never know what real-life moments will happen that you can't re-create," he said.

Buchanan will play every Wednesday in April at the Pickled Onion in Beverly, starting at 9:30 p.m. He'll also play the first Friday of every month at 8 p.m. at the Gulu-Gulu Cafe in Salem, as part of its Friday Night Spins program.

Features editor Larry Claflin Jr. writes his "Music Notes" column weekly. He can be reached at [lclaflin@salemnews.com](mailto:lclaflin@salemnews.com).

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Scott Buchanan, known as Radio Scotvoid. Courtesy photo