

INTERVIEW WITH DAVID GEISTER

David Geister is one of the stars in "Donovan's Brain". David is currently finishing up a series of historical paintings that will be used to help tell the story of Fort Ridgely and the 1862 Dakota War. The Musicker's Gazette snuck an interview in with him between his brushstrokes.

Musicker's Gazette (MG): What is your connection to the locale of your upcoming shows (Prescott, Wisconsin)?

Dave Geister(DG): Well, I live in Minneapolis with my wife Pat and my two step-daughters, Eva and Allie, but I was raised in Prescott. I graduated from Prescott Senior High School in 1982 and many of my good friends live here. Most of my siblings and extended family also live in Prescott.

MG: Did you begin your artistic endeavors in Prescott?

DG: The people of Prescott have always been very supportive of my artistic efforts and some of my earliest drawings and paintings were done for people I knew while growing up here. Two years ago I placed one of my historical paintings, "The Death of Captain Converse", on more-or-less permanent loan to the Welcome and Heritage Center. The oil painting is a scene from Prescott's Civil War history, and I had painted it with the feeling that it should someday be displayed there for future generations to see.

MG: How is it, that in addition to being a painter, you are also a performer in "Donovan's Brain"?

DG: To be honest, I have never really seen

myself as an actor. I consider myself a "living history interpreter". Lately, I have portrayed the artist George Catlin, and even Philander Prescott, the town's namesake. So I come to "acting" more or less through the back door.

Jeff Nordin (also a performer in "Donovan's Brain") and I are two thirds of "Professor Wyllies Magnificent Moving Panorama", a mid-19th century entertainment involving costumes, dialogue, music and a sixty-foot long "moving picture" that I painted specifically for the show. I should point out that five of the six performers in Donovan's Brain, including myself, are interpreters at Historic Fort Snelling.

MG: What is it that attracted you and your group to present "Donovan's Brain"?

DG: Well, I can only speak for myself. When I was asked if I would be interested in joining the cast to do a recreation of a 1940's style radio broadcast, I was intrigued. When I was told it would be "Donovan's Brain", I jumped at the chance. It's a classic! I am too young to have heard those early radio shows, but when I was a kid, more than anything else, I looked forward to late Saturday night in front of the TV. "Horror Incorporated" and "Creature Feature" had all those great, black and white scary movies. I loved 'em then, and still do now.

MG: Any final thoughts?

DG: It's all about storytelling. Whether I'm painting a picture, portraying an historic character, or performing in this "off-the-air" broadcast, it's all about telling a good story ... or at least telling an over-the-top, cheesy story with as much gusto as possible! It's too much fun.

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