



Lauren Townsend
Reporter

Future Elon record label gives unsigned bands their turn in the 'Limelight'

In the near future, the musically gifted may be able to audition for an Elon University-based record label run by students. Limelight Records is the brainchild of sophomore Neima Abdulahi, who began her project last March.

"I found out that music here in Elon is very sectionalized and wanted to use the label to put together my skills in promotion and merchandising," Abdulahi said.

Abdulahi began by learning about other record labels run by area universities.

"I started doing some research and found out that Chapel Hill had a record label called Vinyl Records," she said.

As she continued to research she found that Duke University and Appalachian

State University also have record labels.

"Looking deeper, I found out that Elon used to have a label called Improvibes," she said. "All the resources were basically there."

She proposed the idea to her music business class and had several students come on board. Senior Jessie Schroeder, junior Mike Margiotta and sophomore Ashley Braun will be serving as vice president, treasurer and secretary, respectively.

"The three kids I have right now are my dream team," Abdulahi said.

When Abdulahi proposed her idea, Margiotta "jumped on the opportunity and signed up," he said. "I let her know that I wanted to be in a leadership position at the label, and after a few meetings and school approval, here we are."

Margiotta hopes to pursue a career in the music industry.

"I worked in a recording studio during summers in high school and had an internship with the Cleveland office of Live Nation Entertainment, so this is the next step in gaining experience in all aspects of the industry," he said.

The next step for Limelight Records is getting approval from Elon administration.

"There have been a lot of speed bumps that would have intimidated someone

else," Abdulahi said. "The process has been beautiful so far. I expect speed bumps."

Abdulahi is looking to sign as many different varieties as possible to introduce people to diverse types of music. The label plans to take three bands each year, starting with a Battle of the Bands style competition to choose artists. She would like to stream the concert online so students can vote electronically and have a say in the bands that the label will work with.

"I just want to reach out (to bands) and let students hear their music," she said.

Abdulahi hopes to go into some form of broadcast media after her time at Elon. "The job I want to have does not exist yet," she said.

Her ideal career would be "a blend between what Barbara Walters did for news and what Russell Simmons did for hip-hop. In a nutshell, hip-hop media mogul."

The idea of this label has allowed Abdulahi to meet new people. "I've been getting e-mails from people that I don't know wanting to help out with the label," she said.

The proposal of Limelight Records has created a lot of buzz around campus and in students interested in the music industry.

"I'm really glad I found something to leave my mark here and to meet new people I wouldn't have met otherwise," Abdulahi said.

HEATHER CASSANO | Staff Photographer
Sophomore Neima Abdulahi is attempting to start an Elon-based record label. She and her staff will audition artists to sign this semester.



HEATHER CASSANO | Staff Photographer
Sophomore Jeffrey Williamson auditioned for 'American Idol' over the summer in Nashville, Tenn. He didn't make the show, but he said he considers his experience an overall good one.

Elon student auditions for 'American Idol'

Edith Veremu
Reporter

While "American Idol" struggles to find judges for its 10th season, auditions around the country were under way during the summer. Performers auditioned in six cities, including Nashville, Tenn., Milwaukee and San Francisco. Elon University sophomore Jeffrey Williamson decided to audition in Nashville after realizing he might have a chance.

He had been thinking about auditioning since he began watching the show in its infancy, he said.

"I figured, 'Hey, I can sing. Why not finally audition?'" Williamson said. "I always wanted to audition. I would check the 'American Idol' website daily."

A native of North Carolina, Williamson began singing at a young age. He began singing solos in his church choir when he was 4 years old. The music technology major also sang at family reunions, weddings, funerals, and other occasions that allowed him to showcase his talent. The first song Williamson sang publicly was "Searching" by gospel group The Canton Spirituals, he said.

On the morning of July 17, after a six and a half hour drive and 14 hours of waiting in line at Nashville's Bridgestone Arena, Williamson got his chance to shine.

More than 16,000 candidates showed up at the Nashville auditions, according to the American Idol website. About 200 performers were allowed to perform, Williamson said. "Talk about a slim chance," he added.

He said that the process of getting to the judges went smoothly. "I was expecting one of those long lines during registration," he said. "However ... it only took five minutes to get my registration ticket and wristband."

The auditioning process is different from the one shown on television, Williamson said. Performers must make it past the first three rounds before auditioning for the judges and the camera, according to the 'Idol' website.

"I was nervous at first," he said. "But when I got on the audition floor, I was like 'I can do this.'"

Williamson said his audition went better than he expected. He first belted out "Ain't Too Proud to Beg" by the Temptations and was given a chance to sing two more songs.

"I thought I would be cut off after 15 seconds into the first song, but the judge allowed me to sing almost two verses and the chorus," he said. "I assumed he liked it and asked me to sing another song, which surprised me. Then I was asked to sing one more song and I chose 'Bubbly' by Colbie Caillat."

Despite not passing the first round of judging, Williamson said he doesn't regret auditioning.

"I was a bit disappointed, but I made new friends," he said. "I walked away knowing that on that day, I threw my heart and soul on that arena ground. I was super proud of myself and my friends and family were also proud of me. I have tons of memories — pictures, cards and new friends. I wouldn't trade that experience for the world."



BRIAN ALLENBY | Staff Photographer
Senior co-captain Jordan McNeill practices a move with the Fire of the Carolinas colorguard during band camp.

Spinning flags for fun: The Fire of the Carolinas colorguard marches on

Lauren Ramsdell
Arts and Entertainment Editor

During a football game, halftime is typically considered the time to stretch legs and buy a hot dog. Far from it — halftime exists to give the players a break and to entertain the audience, not drive them away. The primary visual component of the halftime show is the colorguard.

Part of the Fire of the Carolinas marching band, the colorguard this year has eight girls on flag and one majorette. Though the group has fewer members from previous years, they still make a big visual impact in Rhodes Stadium.

Those familiar with high school marching bands may wonder at the differences between high school and colorguard — and there is a difference. In high school, competitive colorguards may have coaches that only teach colorguard and are selective with who makes the cut. Not so in most colleges.

"It's so much more about the crowd," said senior co-captain Jordan McNeill. In high school, the objective of the colorguard at halftime is to practice for competitions, in college colorguard only performs at halftime. "It's more about looking good," McNeill said.

McNeill and fellow senior and co-captain Christine Tompkins must choreograph dance and flag routines to the marching band's music. This year's first theme is "Fire" in honor of the tenth anniversary of the Fire of the Carolinas. The music includes arrangements of "We Didn't Start the Fire" by Billy Joel, "Fire" by Jimi Hendrix and "Through the Fire and

Flames" by DragonForce.

"We just listen to (the music) again and again and again and see which moves fit," said Tompkins. They also have help from a former majorette who attends practices on evenings and weekends.

Of the eight girls doing flag work, only one is new to colorguard and there are no freshmen. McNeill and Tompkins don't look at this as a bad thing, though they would like to see more people join the team.

"We know their starting skill level," McNeill said, "So we know where to start."

Both captains did not start out in colorguard originally. In high school, McNeill was a trumpet player and Tompkins marched piccolo. But, they decided to change things up in college by doing colorguard.

"It's nice to go from knowing the music to being a part of the visual ensemble," McNeill said.

Tompkins has not put down the music for good. As a music education major, she still spends a lot of her time in the Center for the Arts. Both are members of Tau Beta Sigma, the music sorority.

"(Marching band) is a good social and bonding time," said McNeill. "You'll meet the best friends you'll ever have in band."

Tompkins and McNeill also said that being in colorguard has nurtured them into being leaders. Neither expected to be named captain, because they didn't have over four years of experience spinning flags.

At the first home football game on Sept. 11, don't leave the stands during halftime. The colorguard will be on the field performing exclusively for the audience — so don't walk away.