

# Sentinel-Tribune

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Bowling Green, Ohio

## Vocal jazz duo graces BG stage

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It starts with a male vocal vibration, the mixing of notes sung in different octaves, electronically entangled within themselves to produce a didgeridoo effect. Then the cloud-like vocal humming of the female accompaniment slowly fades in and out.

The subtle chording of a keyboard replaces the male vocal effects in the background as a silky feminine voice sings a soft chorus. What once was a pulsating vocal tour-de-force becomes a touching harmonious duo between musical partners.

The song is called "Broken" but that title certainly that doesn't apply to the endless musical possibilities of the alternative jazz vocal and instrumental duo, Dissonant Grace who will be making their local debut at Squeaker's Café this Friday 6 to 8 p.m.

If one was asked to take the music of Dissonant Grace, currently based out of Tiffin, and attempt describe what they heard in words, two paragraphs would barely make a dent.

Harmonious male and female vocal work from husband and wife of Theo and Morgen Stiegler, come together with beat-boxing percussion recorded live on loops, a cello, a guitar, a bass and a keyboard to produce a delicate palate of sounds and textures.

"Usually people say our stuff sounds like an alternative jazz or an indie jazz, but people really don't know how to describe it," Morgen Stiegler said in a recent telephone interview.

While it may be difficult to believe that two people could produce so many types of sounds in a live setting, and even more difficult to pin this music down, a brief introduction to their musical backgrounds may help.

Dissonant Grace was created a little more than a year ago after the pair concluded four years of performing in the Tiffin University a cappella jazz group, Up in the Air.

Classically trained musicians from a young age, she on piano and he on cello and guitar, both artist were looking for a new outlet to combine their musical studies with their cultural heritages.

Theo Stiegler is originally from East Germany, coming to the United States to study in college, while Morgen Stiegler brings a Native American background to the group. This project is a culmination of their diverse cultures, musical influences and professional training.

"When you come down to it, music is ultimately something that is part of every culture," Theo Stiegler said. "We are trying not to stay in some kind of box, but to take all of those things and let them come out."

"We were partially inspired by our a cappella background and singing together, but also partially inspired by the different cultures that we come from," Morgen Stiegler added.

Their time spent in the a cappella group enabled both musicians to find creative ways to put vocal and instrumental sounds together to create layers of texture according to Morgen, who has also studied jazz singing as well as ethnomusicology.

Currently Morgen Stiegler provides the lyrical content of most of their original repertoire, that also includes jazz standards, classical pieces, a cappella singing and a few off-beat covers like Cindy Lauper's, "Time After Time" just for fun.

Theo acts as the musical backbone to her song writing, mixing live vocal percussion on electronic loops with bass singing, guitar playing and just about everything else with strings.

The group is currently working on their debut CD release, tentatively scheduled for release this summer, which will be entirely devoted to their original and very unique music.

"We started out as a way to continue our journey with a cappella and to do what we want for fun," Morgen Stiegler said. "It is very different and it doesn't really have a genre, but is really strange that all different ages of people have found something in it they like."