



# THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

## The poster boy of rock art

KSLX's Flatt creates fliers of Valley's upcoming acts

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With his colorful, 1960s-inspired posters that advertise Phoenix-area rock and roll concerts, KSLX overnight disc jockey Mike Flatt has found a way to combine two of his greatest loves, art and music.

It started in October when Patrick Callinan, promotion director for the Phoenix classic rock radio station, had suggested using posters to advertise the then upcoming REO Speedwagon and Styx concerts.

Flatt said Callinan envisioned that the artwork on the posters would be similar to the bright and occasionally psychedelic-looking fliers used by the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco several decades ago to advertise their shows.

Flatt, 41, who has worked at the station for about eight years and said he grew up doodling pictures of favorite bands like AC/DC, Pink Floyd and Dire Straits on his school folders, told Callinan that he would like to try drawing the posters.

"People at the station knew I did posters and drew," he said. "I've just been drawing all my life. I got to go to a local art college and study graphic design."

Flatt designed the first two posters, and about four to six thousand of each was printed on heavy-stock paper and handed out to the concertgoers.

"I started with those, then I did one for Journey, and I was only supposed to do them through the Rolling Stones show," Flatt said.

The fans' reaction to Flatt's posters was so overwhelmingly positive, said Jim Owen, program director at KSLX, it soon became clear that Flatt would need to create more for future concerts.

"It really developed into something," Owen said. "People were very anxious to get them and would call the day of the show asking for them or once the show was over they would call us at the station."

Flatt said he tries to make each poster match the style of the artist and/or tour. For example, his poster that advertised the March 9 Bon Jovi concert at Glendale Arena contains jagged lettering in bright red and blue surrounding a rather devilish-looking smiley face, nicely complementing the band's "Have a Nice Day" tour.

For this past Monday's Billy Joel concert at US Airways Center in Phoenix, Flatt featured piano keys on the poster's graphics and lettering, a design that he said was well-suited for the artist known best for *The Piano Man*.

Other concert posters contain colorful caricatures of the musicians, like the one Flatt created for the Rolling Stones concert last November.

"I have to say, my favorite one is the Rolling Stones with the cartoon picture of Mick (Jagger) and Keith (Richards) on it," Flatt said. "Mick - that guy is a living cartoon."

Before beginning a poster, Flatt said, he likes to listen to the musician's work for inspiration.

"I sit back and listen to the artist and then usually get an idea of how to do them," he said, adding that he then draws "a thumbnail quick sketch or drawing on paper" and then a larger rough outline.

"Then I scan it into the computer and use the Adobe Illustrator program to trace and color it," he said. "It's all digital and goes to the printer directly."

Flatt said he is already working on posters for future concerts.

"Next is Queen and Paul Rodgers. I have one in the works for Bob Dylan and some of the other shows coming to town, like Heart," he said. "We always have another show coming to town, and I always try to learn from each one and make each one a bit better."

Flatt said he is also busy putting the finishing touches on a poster that will commemorate KSLX's 20th anniversary. The station is at 4343 E. Camelback Road. Modeled after the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album cover, the poster will include caricatures of the Beatles surrounded by rock and roll musicians like Alice Cooper and KISS.

"Mike is a great caricaturist," Owen said. "We're all amazed and very thrilled at the way his stuff turns out."

Owen said that when complete, "thousands and thousands" of copies of Flatt's anniversary poster will be printed and distributed to fans at numerous concerts and other events.

Flatt said he is thrilled to have the chance to do the posters.

"I'm really fortunate to be able to do this for awhile because it's a lot of fun," he said.

For more about Flatt and to see samples of his work, visit [www.mikeflatt.com](http://www.mikeflatt.com).



KSLX