

Friday at The Place

Gritty, sleazy Waits sets two shows

By JERRIL NILSON

A sleazy, cigarette-in-hand arm reaches toward "another beer" while a gravel raspy Satchmo-like voice says, "Frankly I'd rather have a bottle in front of me, than a frontal lobotomy." Tom Waits, you say?

Waits, the balladeer of the seamy side of American Saturday night, comes to The Place Friday for two shows at 8 and 11 p.m.

The 27-year-old Asylum recording artist has five albums to his credit, his latest titled *Foreign Affairs*. His syncopated scat-jazz style of stream of consciousness poetry-in-song will be accompanied by a trio of jazz musicians: Frank Vicari, tenor sax; Chip White, vibes; and Andy Trifan, up-right bass.

Besides his latest album, Waits has taken on a new project, scoring original music for a new Sylvester Stallone movie, *Paradise*

Alley, about Hell's Kitchen in the Forties. "I'm gonna play a character named Mumbles, who plays piano in a bar," says Waits, who won't need to work on acting lessons for appearance — he already looks like a Mumbles who plays piano.

With a four-day-old beard, not acceptable at St. Vincent De Paul suit and a bedraggled beret, Waits sets the mood of a dingy grimy all-night diner by smoking cigarette after cigarette and sloping beer during his renditions. He was a southern California high school dropout and now lives as an adult dropout in flop houses and one-night-stand motels, even on the tour road (while his band stays in Holiday Inns).

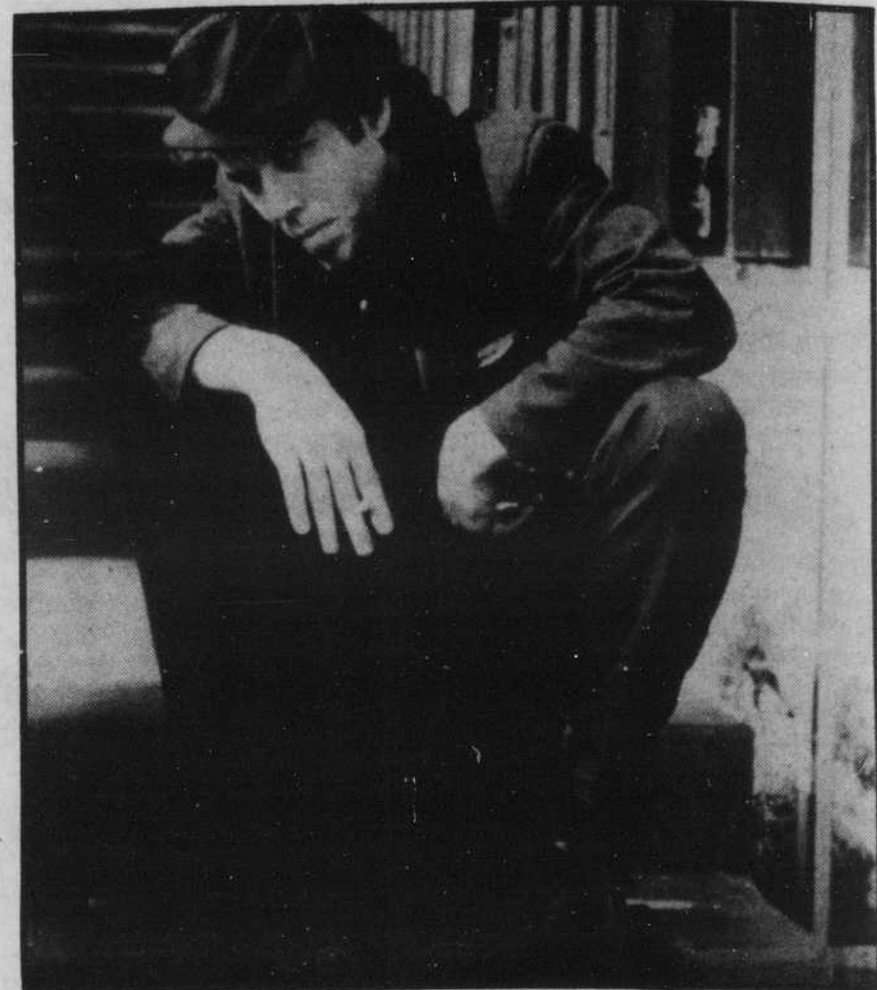
Even a personal description of his early career proves Waits to be a master of the narrative tale: "I was conceived one night in April 1949, at the Crossroads Motel in La Verne, Calif., amidst the

broken bottle of Four Roses, the smouldering Lucky Strike, half a tuna salad sandwich, and the Old Spice and the One-eyed Jacks across the railroad tracks, the drapes hung like trousers between the drizzle-lit abandoned parking lot, and the wilted corsage on the night stand; Mr. and Mrs. Private First Class J. Frank Waits gave me my first big break."

If Waits' growly voice doesn't ring a bell, his songs have been recorded by several noted talents including the Eagles ("Ol' 55"), Bette Midler ("Shiver. Me Timber"), Jerry Jeff Walker, and Keith Carradine (on his new album, "San Diego Serenade").

Waits' appearance at The Place follows in his tradition of the "Club show" tour. "I'd rather play a club with vomit all around me," he rasps, "than a clean little college with sassy little girls and guys with razor-cut hair and coke spoons around their necks."

However, that means approximately 350 persons per show will be able to view this paragon of



Tom Waits

talent. So, if there are any left by press time, tickets may be purchased in advance for \$4.50 at Everybody's Records, the Sun

Shop, The Place, For What It's Worth Records, and Odyssey Records. Tickets are \$5.50 the day of the show.

At Open Gallery benefit

Film depicts Christo's Fence

By CHERYL RUDERT

"... it will give shape to the wind. It will go over the hills and into the sea, like a ribbon of light."

So spoke Christo Javacheff of his *Running Fence*, a controversial wall of white nylon that stretched 24 miles long and 18 feet high over the hills and valleys of Sonoma and Marin counties, California. For two weeks it stood, shockingly fluid and monumental conducting sunlight with a glisten-

ing almost-transparency and swelling the air with gusty ripples, while all around and preceding it, a quagmire of government and environmentalist voices had tried to hinder its creation.

In *Christo's Running Fence*, the Maysles Brothers' documentary on the creation, construction and installation of Christo's art work, this conflict, between artist, people and legal structure, is a key element. Not only does it spike the film with the rhythm of suspense, but it provides Christo's art with a backdrop for definition. Speaking before one of the many court hearings that began in January, 1975 and continued well into the *Fence's* construction during the

summer of 1976, Christo refers to his art as the process, however it happens.

"Twentieth century art is no longer an individualistic experience," he asserts in a broken English that has the advantages of simplifying his concepts to layman's vocabulary. Instead, as the camera draws the viewer into the web of complexities created by the project (running the gamut from supplying the student workers with water to gaining the trust of the farmers whose land the *Fence* would traverse) the film's point becomes clearer — that the hassling with planning commissions, permit-granters and sheep ranchers, the acquisition of the 2,200 steel posts and 165,000 yards of white nylon, the wrangling with contractors and the sweat-and-muscle-mingling with the actual builders of the fence — all this is Process, as vital and necessary to the art work itself as the very personal and one-handed brushstroke on a canvas.

Christo's Running Fence can be seen in a benefit viewing for Open Gallery tonight and Sunday afternoon. And it is a very meaningful event, capable of analogy to this recent addition to the Eugene art scene. For while the *Running Fence* was given form by the friendly and opposing forces of the community around it (much like the white nylon giving shape to the wind) Open Gallery is a result of the process of interaction — of government support, community awareness and just plain mingling. But lest this sounds like it's excessively stretching this point, let's take a look at the Gallery's history.

Begun one and a half years ago by Flora Rudolph and Richard Haller, Open Gallery was conceived as a place for local artists to show their works. Located in a tiny space at 25th Avenue and Hilyard Street, the Gallery took to presenting works of experimental artists. On a cooperative basis by a council of nine artists, the Gallery quickly became known around Eugene and just as quickly outgrew its space. The image of starving artist became a little too close to reality, however, and it

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