



Photos by Erich Boekelheide

Quilapayun practiced musical witchcraft against the junta at Tuesday's benefit concert in tribute to Latin American folksinger Victor Jara — audience-participation witchcraft that has its roots in Afro-Cuban folklore. The group wanted to write a song about the military government, says Willy Oddo, but one with a sense of humor. "The joke is a weapon against the coup," he says. The Ballroom was more than sold out — people stood in the aisles, singing along and clapping to the jubilant rhythms of traditional and contemporary Chilean folk songs. American actress Tiffany Bolling, jazz singer Josh White, Jr. and

human rights activist Ava Pauling took the stage at various times. Quilapayun and Joan Jara are making a 14-city tour, to end at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in New York City with Peter, Paul and Mary. Since the 1973 coup, Quilapayun has been on an extended international tour. Their music, as are all the songs from the New Chilean Song Movement, is banned from the country. The seven-member group was on a European tour when Allende's government was overthrown, and unlike Victor Jara, they escaped execution.

Chilean exiles raise voices for freedom

Stories by
MELODY WARD
Of the Emerald

Victor Jara has become a symbol for the struggle, culture and hope of the Chilean people, says Quilapayun member Rudolfo Parada.

"This is a very important tour for us," he says. "Every concert is an image of Chilean culture today."

The tour grew out of similar European concert tributes to Victor Jara, says his widow, Joan. "It's a development of this worldwide idea of using Victor as a symbol. The idea was accepted in a very immediate way by American artists," she observes.

"People in this country (the United States) need to be continuously reminded and informed about what's going on in Chile. I believe people have begun to feel this more as a domestic problem."

As a developing country, Chile is ready to join the "concert of nations" Parada says. "We have a voice to give to the world, but to give that voice we need to be free."

The New Chilean Song Movement, for which Quilapayun was a primary force, has become identified with resistance to foreign domination, he explains. After the military junta banned use of traditional Latin American folk music instruments, he says, Chilean musicians adapted

them for performances of baroque music.

"It was hard for the junta to forbid Back and Vivaldi's music," Parada says, explaining that use of the instruments for classical performances retains cultural continuity with the movement before the coup, providing a "new language" for the same kind of expression.

"They can't speak about it (the repression) directly. But human rights and historic themes make an indirect reference," Oddo says. At a recent Chilean music festival, the stage was decorated with a large painting of Victor Jara's face, unidentified as such. "It was a message to the people — it was recognized," Parada says.

Patchwork embroideries depicting the working class daily life have replaced the colorful murals that splashed along as part of the cultural expression under Allende city walls, Joan Jara says. "These patchworks have gone all over the world as messages from the women in Chile."

The military junta permits art that addresses patriotic themes, adds Quilapayun member Willy Oddo. "So songwriters have picked up the heroes who were fighting against Spain for liberty," he says. "You cannot censure a song that has been made for a 'George Washington.'

The message, of fighting against a form of tyranny, speaks through patriotic and baroque veils, Parada explains.

Another quiet demonstration against the junta came in the form of the cueca, Chile's national dance. "It is a dance between a man and a woman," Jara says. "The wives of the disappeared danced it by themselves, with a light to represent their husbands."

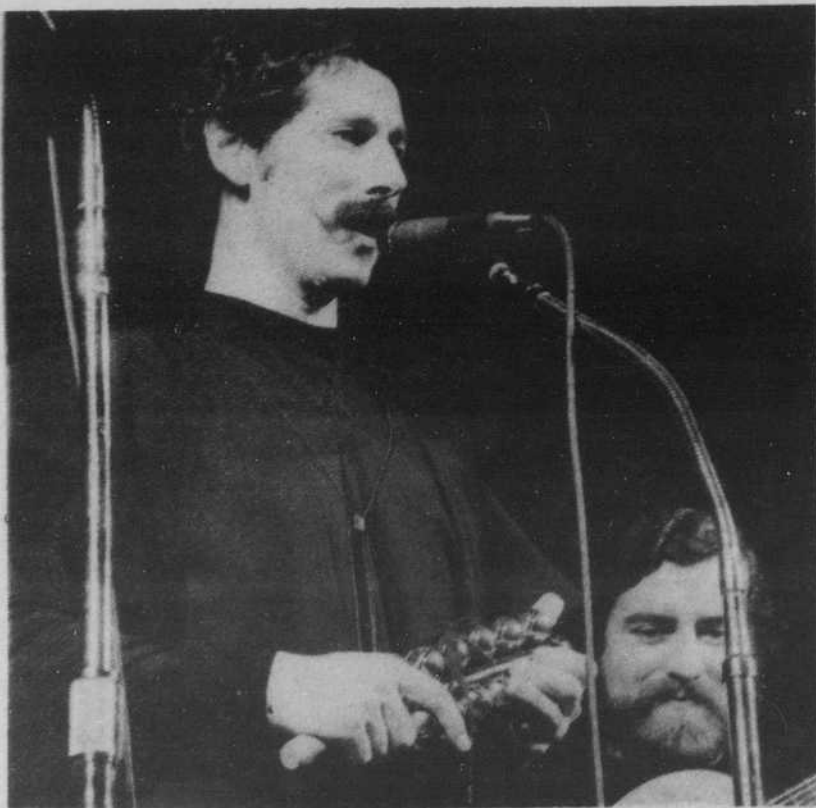
Unlike Iran, Chile has no single leader outside the country to spark a unified movement of Chilean citizens.

"Our Khomeini is the international solidarity movement, which is very strong all over the world," Parada says. "This mass force is ours."

"It's true that we don't have a Khomeini, but you know that 10 percent of the Chilean people live abroad (since the coup.)"

Oddo says Khomeini was not the single agent unifying the Iranian people. "Our Islam is the consciousness in our history of the struggle of the working class — the habit of democracy in Chile," he says. "This movement inside the country is the most decisive thing."

"We don't forget the people who have been killed by the junta, but our spirit is that we are full of hope," Parada says. "What we expect (from the concerts) is to maintain always alive the spirit of Chile. The interest of American artists to show together with us this life and work of Victor Jara keeps the eyes of this country on the flight to be liberated."



Willy Odo and Rudolfo Parada

Victor Jara's singing survives, his life still echoes his ideals

Though Victor Jara is an internationally known folksinger and his impact in Chile is similar to that of Woody Guthrie in the United States, he was not a trained musician. Folksinging was something he picked up from his folksinging mother at an early age, says his widow, Joan Jara.

And though his name is most often linked with the Chilean New Song Movement, he was also a respected producer in theater and a drama professor at the University of Chile.

"It was very unusual for someone from his background to make that step to the university," says Joan Jara. "It was a very unlikely chance. After his mother died, a priest took Victor under his wing."

After receiving a seminary education, Victor Jara was accepted

by the University of Chile drama school and graduated as a producer.

"Theater in Chile was fairly elite and very much oriented toward Europe," Joan Jara says. "Victor was one of the young directors who started producing Chilean plays."

"Folk expression was a very personal thing, yet at the same time he was a professional producer. But in 1969, he left the theater. At that given moment it was more important to be singing."

On the day of the military overthrow of Chilean Pres. Salvador Allende's government, Victor Jara was scheduled to sing at the Technical University in Santiago. He had been taking his music directly to miners, factory workers,

(Continued on Page 7A)

My guitar is not for the rich nor for those who conspire with them
my song is of the scaffolding we are building to reach the stars.
For a song has a meaning when it beats strong in the veins
of a man who will die singing truthfully singing real songs.
My song is not for fleeting praise nor to gain foreign fame it is for this narrow country to the very depths of the earth. There where everything comes to rest and where everything begins songs which has been a brave song will be forever new.

Victor Jara
from the song "Manifiesto"