

Blues power  
rocks  
See Page 11B



# THE Friday EDITION

oregon daily emerald

arts and entertainment

friday, november 1, 1985

## Chile's new folk minstrels sing of struggle, hope



Chilean folksinger Isabel Aldunate, who recently appeared in concert at Beall Hall, stands before a Peace Mural designed by Chilean artist Francisco etelier assisted by Nicaraguan Alejandro Caneles. The mural is located at the Wesley

Center on Kincaid Street, home of the Council for Human Rights in Latin America who co-sponsored Aldunate's appearance along with the Latin Amareica Support Committee.

Art is a weapon as old as time, and today there are guitar-wielding warriors in Chile.

A new generation of Chilean singers and songwriters has placed itself at the forefront of opposition to the military dictatorship now ruling their nation. These people sing their songs in churches, schools, factories and union halls, offering workers and students a cultural alternative to the government-controlled mass media of Chile. By giving voice to the social and political concerns of the poor, they run the risk of harassment, imprisonment — and even death.

Isabel Aldunate is considered one of the most prominent representatives of the New Chilean Song Movement, as it is called. Although she is a lawyer and a 36-year old mother of three, Aldunate is devoting more and more of her time to singing. Currently touring the United States and Canada, she recently gave a concert at Beall Hall, co-sponsored by the Council for Human Rights in Latin America and the Latin America Support Committee.

At a pre-concert press conference, Aldunate explained her preference for singing over legal work.

"One of the greatest aspirations I have as a woman is to communicate with other human beings," she said. "Folksinging is a medium which enables me to do this in the most complete way possible. Sitting behind a desk, I can do certain work which does put me in contact with people, but never to the extent

that is possible when I am in front of an audience as a folksinger."

In concert, Aldunate sings with a big, beautiful voice that expresses a wide range of emotional intensities: love to outrage to sorrow. Her emotional communica-

Story by Kevin Harrington  
Photos by Steven Wall

tion is strong enough to transfix listeners who don't speak a word of Spanish. It's easy to see why she considers singing a more powerful means of communication than doing legal work.

Expressing dissent in Chile has been rather dangerous ever since a bloody US-financed military coup by Gen. Augusto Pinochet overthrew Salvador Allende's popularly-elected Socialist government in September 1973. The Pinochet government has arrested thousands of Chileans for exercising their right to protest. Aldunate admitted that this tempers the activities of Chilean dissidents somewhat.

"Nowadays in Chile, one always has to be careful," she said. "The different means of persecu-

tion are varied and often subtle. One can list a number of things including economic strangulation. People who are involved in any kind of art are practically starving to death. There is no such thing as state subsidies for the arts in Chile.

"On the other hand, there is censorship," she added. "Many artists have been blacklisted from appearing on radio and television, including myself."

Aldunate said there are also more direct forms of repression in use — including assassination. The New Song Movement has produced its share of martyrs, including Victor Jara, the legendary folksinger and theatre director who was one of thousands of Chileans tortured and murdered by the military during the weeks and months following the coup.

Aldunate is actually part of the second generation of the New Chilean Song Movement. Before the coup, folksingers and other artists expressing populist sentiments operated with considerably greater freedom than their recent counterparts. The first phase of the New Song Movement began in the 1960s and encompassed all of Latin America.

Juan Epple, a University assistant professor of

Continued on Page 6B