

ENTERTAINMENT

Clegg will bring apartheid issues to Eugene



Photo by Courtesy Photo

Johnny Clegg and Savuka, a bi-racial South African band, use music to make anti-apartheid statements.

By Ming Rodrigues  
Emerald Entertainment Reporter

With the ominous injustices of apartheid still looming large, the music of radical South African band Johnny Clegg & Savuka continues to rage against the system with a message and a rhythm that speak powerfully of the South African experience.

This Sunday, students will get a chance to enjoy this dynamic and seductive brand of music and dance when the EMU Cultural Forum, in association with Balladeer Music, presents Johnny Clegg & Savuka at 8 p.m. in the Erb Memorial Union Ballroom.

Weaving traditional Zulu rhythms and sinuous tribal dances with mainstream contemporary rock, the group's performance addresses racial oppression, political defiance and the triumphs of daily survival in a truly innovative and exhilarating style.

"We have a mission, which is to bring a whole collection of songs that are about the South African situation to the world," said Clegg in a press release.

"I'm a cultural activist. I believe that it's through cultural interaction that you change people. But I'm not accountable to any political party. I just feel that I can

accomplish more by raising issues on stage through the universal appeal of music."

A white British-born South African, Clegg had a unique 'patchwork' life. He was born in England to a Lithuanian and Jewish woman. During his childhood, his family moved from England to Zimbabwe to Zambia to South Africa. He took music lessons from a black man and had attended six different schools (some bi-racial and some white-only) by the time he was 12.

At 15, he took his singing and dancing to black clubs. It was here that he had his eyes opened to the political and cultural problems of South Africa. One could say that his diverse cultural experiences while he was growing up made him who he is today.

"The way I came to African forms became a political act by nature of the fact that I wasn't allowed to do them, to experience them," said Clegg. "To me, they were fun things I wanted to be a part of — dancing with Africans at a migrant workers' hostel, playing with them at night on the roofs where they live and things I wasn't allowed to do, because of the apartheid laws."

At 15, he was arrested for the sort of things mentioned above. At first he

wasn't viewed as defiant, but, instead, as someone confused with the natural order. After a while, when the police came to take him, the blacks would stand up for him. And so began the musical pilgrimage of Clegg.

Formed in 1986, Savuka, which in Zulu means "We have arisen", aptly exhibits the trials that Clegg and his six member bi-racial band have had to cope with in a country where it is still illegal for blacks and whites to perform together on stage.

The knack for walking the fine line between musician and social commentator is what bolstered the band to come this far in their musical odyssey.

They've released two internationally successful albums and moviegoers might have heard the song "Scatterlings of Africa" from their Shadow Man album in the soundtrack of the 1988 Academy Award winning film *Rain Man*. Their latest release, "Cruel, Crazy, Beautiful World" remained nine weeks on the number one spot on Billboard's top World Music Album's chart.

Savuka has also toured extensively, including major European tours; the Montreux Jazz Festival; opening for David Bowie in France; with Earth, Wind & Fire

in Germany; and with Steve Winwood in the States.

"Johnny Clegg & Savuka are definitely in the forefront of world beat music today," said Jason Miller, EMU Cultural Forum promoter. "They are not afraid to stand up for what they believe in and are producing honest music with messages that come straight from the heart."

"The bands' focus is on racial relations and their performance will be a great contribution to such a socially and culturally aware community such as Eugene."

Opening for Johnny Clegg & Savuka tonight are Arista recording artists The Samples.

The group, whose eclectic musical mix of reggae, folk and progressive rock conveys their lyrical themes of world issues, actually began their first major tour as special guests for Johnny Clegg and Savuka last Saturday in Ventura, California.

Formed three years ago in Colorado, The Samples have shared billings with the likes of UB40, The Waiters, Jimmy Cliff, The Untouchables and Black Uhuru.

Tickets, which can be purchased at the EMU Main Desk, are \$16 for the public and \$14 for students.



Courtesy Photo

The Samples, who open the show, complement Clegg with their equally message-oriented music.

WOW Hall will hold celebration for John Lennon  
SONG AND DANCE

FRIDAY, OCT. 5  
Women in Blues, a veritable who's who of Oregon woman blues artists, will perform at 9:30 p.m. with doors opening at 9. The show will feature Portland and Eugene blues artists backed by a guitar, bass and sax trio. Benefits will go to a United Way agency and a Portland shelter for women and children who are victims of domestic violence. Tickets are \$10 at the door and \$9 for members of the Cascade Blues Association.

Joel Nascimento and the Brazilian Sextet will perform their native samba music at 7:30 p.m. in the Hult Center's Soreng Theatre. Nascimento and the Sextet are kicking off their new tour in Eugene. Tickets are \$15 and \$10 and can be purchased by calling the Hult Center's box office at 687-5000.

SATURDAY, OCT. 6  
John Lennon's 50th birthday celebration will take place at 8:30 p.m. at the Community Center for the Performing Arts (WOW Hall), 291 W. 8th. This celebration will feature music by the Number 9 Band and The Meaties, an inspirational talk by Reverend J'ai Guru Deva backed by the gospel sounds of the Lennonite Choir, a Phantasmagoria Light Show, and Beatles and Lennon films and memorabilia. Tickets are \$9 at the doors open at 8.

Miriam Witkin, known singer, songwriter, composer and pianist, will perform a benefit concert at 8 p.m. at Temple Beth Israel, 2550 Portland St. The program, entitled "Recapturing Fun," will benefit Food for Lane.

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