

ANI DiFranco

By Rick Herranen
Emerald Contributor

Ani DiFranco, the headliner at the 1992 Vancouver Folk Festival, will perform Jan. 29 in Cate Auditorium at the University.

DiFranco was born in Buffalo, NY, and moved to New York City at the age of 18. In the following three years she recorded three albums and established herself as a leading draw at clubs, theaters and festivals across the United States and Canada.

With her first two albums, DiFranco demonstrated a biting guitar style and charged lyrics. With her third album, *Imperfectly*, she achieved a level of intensity that folk-rock rarely reaches.

ODE: How did you get your start as an artist?

Ani: Well, when I was a kid, I

was hanging out with these degenerate "folkies" in Buffalo and they started taking me around to the bars and folk clubs and coffeehouses and stuff.

ODE: Was there an established scene there?

Ani: Yeah, you know there's always an established scene of music everywhere that happens sub-commercially, just people out there playing music. I had managed to meet a bunch of them and they just corrupted me completely. (laughter)

ODE: There always seems to be good stuff on the fringes and that's where you find the interesting viewpoints and that's where social issues are addressed more openly.

Ani: Absolutely. I think music has a social basis. And you know, the music business is like any other business — it's just making money off of something. Commoditizing it. But the "real"



Ani DiFranco brings her folk music to Cate Auditorium Jan. 29.

music is out there.

ODE: Yeah. Real is not created to become a product in a consumer society.

Ani: Definitely!

ODE: When did you start playing the guitar?

Ani: When I was, like, nine years old.

ODE: Let's see, can you tell me about the university you attended back in New York City?

Ani: Yeah, the New School For Social Research. I went there for awhile and it was a very cool place to be, but then I got really busy. So I left there like a year ago. But sort of an open university for political studies; very politically and socially oriented. A big

"Leftie" hang-out in New York. (laughter)

ODE: Is that where you began dealing with social issues? And also, discovering your feminism?

Ani: Yeah, that place did a lot for me. There were a lot of issues that were forced everyday. The pressure was really on there. It's great! It's a very, very intense place to be. There's all this emotional investment in learning because the things we talked about, that I talked about, were really important, were everyday life. So yeah, I guess it helped me to learn how to talk about these things. To talk about working for

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DRI

Story by
Freya Horn

An unknown "garage" band 11 years ago in Houston, Texas, the Dirty Rotten Imbeciles lacked a garage. So the four-most practiced their thrash in vocalist Kurt Brecht's bedroom.

Brecht's father didn't appreciate the ear-blasting uproar when he came home from work, but his profanities only added to the general ruckus. Little did he know the band would later adopt one of his epithets and become known worldwide with it.

The Dirty Rotten Imbeciles (translate as contemptible, morally corrupt persons of defective mentality) has added Eugene to the top of its hit list for another one of its "planetary musically sonic attitude assaults." Laundering from its home base in San Francisco, Calif., the band will tour North America and Europe to promote *Definition*, its new release on Rotten Records.

Only the band hopes this time the bus won't go up in flames, as it did on their tour with Ice-T's band Body Count when they were in Los Angeles.

"It was some sort of grease fire,"

Brecht said. "All of a sudden we saw big clouds of smoke billowing out, so we pulled over. Then the fire department came and cut a hole in the bus with a power saw and put out the fire. Our replacement was a Greyhound, so we were sleeping in those narrow isles the rest of the way."

On that tour, Body Count had just released their single "Cop Killer," and everywhere they went people were picketing their concerts.

"Well, we got a lot of publicity for free," Brecht said. But Warner Bros. eventually took the cut off the album.

A zealous poet and lyricist, Brecht tackles a variety of subjects — from serious to playful — on DRI's new album.

"Acid Rain" is all about what we are leaving on Earth for our children," Brecht said. "What will they think of the world and its pollution, radiation, acid rain and what we've left for them? 'Time Out,' which was written by (bassist) John (Menor), has a similar vibe, about how people are screwing up the world."



Courtesy Photo
DRI and Pro-Pain will bring thrash to the WOW Hall Jan. 31.

On "Tone Deaf" Brecht reveals an amusing story that shows the lighter, more comical side of DRI. Guitarist Spike Cassidy has always maintained that Brecht is tone deaf, which turns out to be a well-founded accusation.

"When I was young I had to take a test at school to find out if I should be allowed to take musical classes; to see if I had the pitch and aptitude for music," Brecht said. "I didn't do too well." He

said he finds this ironic, considering he is making a living in music.

The same fervor with which Brecht writes lyrics has also led to four published books of stories and poetry, including "The 30-Day Diarrhea Diet Plan" and "See the Loud Feeling" (which includes DRI lyrics and poems). His books are available through his own publishing company, Dirty Rotten Press.

Thrush Zone was DRI's last release in 1989. Since then they have been touring and then writing and recording *Definition*, their sixth album to date. It is the first original release on their new label.

DRI and Pro-Pain will play at the WOW Hall Sunday, Jan. 31. The show starts at 8 p.m. and tickets are \$8 at the door.

DEMON DRUMMERS

The 13 members of Ondekoza, world-famous "demon" drummers of Japan, will bring their stamina-defying performance to the University Saturday.

The members of Ondekoza play "taiko," an array of traditional Japanese drums ranging in size up to six feet tall and weighing up to 700 pounds.

In addition to percussion, their performance involves many artistic mediums, including wind and string instruments, voice, dance and athletic movement. Their music originates from traditional drum routines and classical Kabuki and Bunraku plays.

Marco Leinhard, the group's only English-speaking member, said the members of Ondekoza wish to "bring this aspect of

Japanese culture to different countries. It allows us to give Japanese culture a human face, as opposed to the stereotypes about Japan that are projected in Western media."

Taiko drumming is more vigorous than Western style drumming, and its stylized motions are similar to those of the martial arts. The performers share a communal lifestyle, and their physical and mental training includes long-distance running.

Ondekoza kicked off its three-year American tour by participating in the 1990 New York marathon, and will conclude the tour by returning to the race.

The performance is at 8 p.m. Jan. 30 in Beall Concert Hall. Tickets, available at the door, are \$5 students, \$7 general.



Life revolves around the salmon in this musical comedy, a production of Feet First from Humboldt County.

SALMON

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salmon itself was also an inspiration, Simpson said.

The play is titled *Queen Salmon* instead of the proper term king salmon, he said, because he observed that the female of the species is always more wary of the traps that are used to do salmon counts. "The female is more cautious and more aware of her mission to ensure the continuation of her kind," he said.

For this reason, the script doesn't limit itself to the human condition, but characterizes scaled and feathered friends as well. Slithery salmon lament how numerous they once were with Shakespearian eloquence while spotted owls have family squabbles and go for therapy to overcome their "hang up" with old growth trees.

Feet First, a Petrolia-based dance and theater troupe, is presenting *Queen Salmon* as part of its Human Nature Series. Company director and choreographer Jane Lapiner worked with the original San Francisco Mime Troupe in the 1960s along with Simpson and Judi Quick, who performs the Spirit of Salmon.

This character intersperses the light-hearted play with a gut-wrenching commentary on the fate of the salmon, whose habitat has been threatened by extensive erosion, industrial pollution and power dams. Her solemn solo is offset by the quarrelsome owl family, which has audiences hooting with laughter. In one scene, for example, the adolescent owl daughter says, "God, I need my own space!" to which her parents respond: "Well, too bad. There's nowhere left to go."

Seth Zuckerman, a forestry restoration worker in the Petrolia area, said the play's humor helped bring his community together. "One logger came up

to me after the show and said, 'I saw myself on that stage,' and he was able to laugh at himself," he said. "Not only do we get a good laugh at the sake of foresters and government officials, but also at the sake of environmentalists."

The play also makes people aware that no one is exempt from a responsibility to the environment. "You can't go there and feel comfortable and say 'Oh, yeah, I'm not to blame,'" he said.

Simpson said he hopes the tour of the play will help "bring about a coalescence of groups," as with its Petrolia performance. *Queen Salmon* encourages people to "come in off the extreme edges and begin to talk," he said.

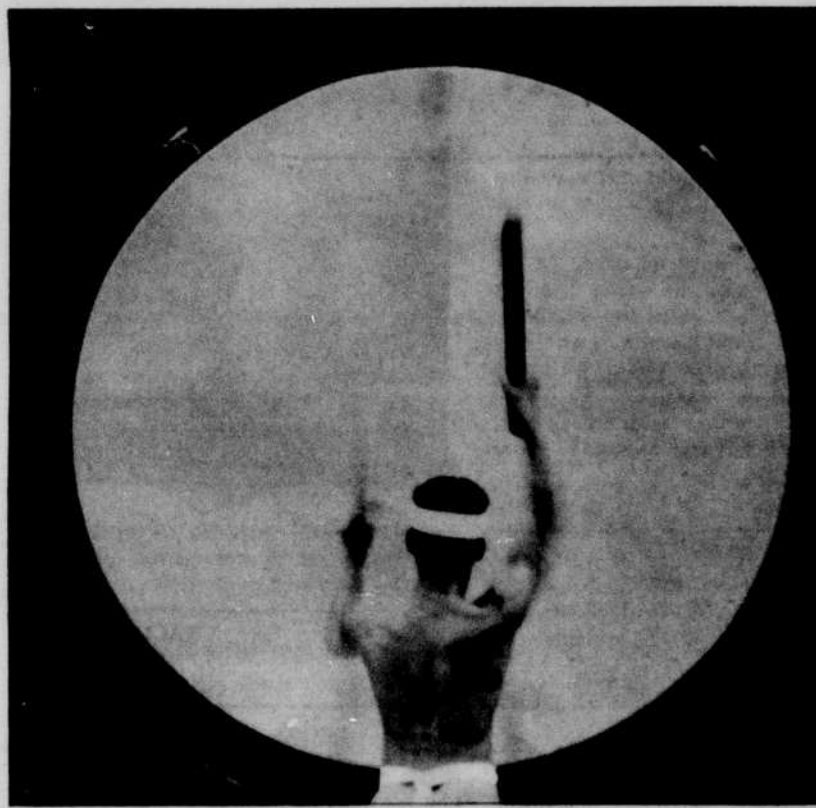
The play has undergone constant revision since its original 1991 California tour to include new developments, such as the devastating 1992 Humboldt County earthquake.

"There were three quakes in one day. It was a leveling experience," said Simpson, whose home was destroyed. "It was a warning of how vulnerable we all are."

"We are at a precipitous moment," Simpson said. "We have moved onto an unstable land and taken away its ecological stability. Then we built a very thin skein of support on top of this damaged system."

"But the power of nature is ultimately going to prevail (with or without us). So we have to find ways for people to locate and bring out that power." To this end, *Queen Salmon* swims progressively.

Queen Salmon will be presented at the Hult Center Jan. 29 and 30. The 1992 tour includes the Humboldt Bay Area, Eugene, Portland, Seattle, Berkeley, Marin County, Sonoma County and Sacramento.



Courtesy Photo

Famous "demon" drummers of Japan, Ondekoza will perform Jan. 30.

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