

John Trudell and his Graffiti Band are on a

By Freya Horn
Oregon Daily Emerald

He calls it "Rant 'n' Roll."
"Those lines are my rant," explains John Trudell, a Santee Sioux whose poetry found a musical companion in 1985 when guitarist Jesse Ed Davis told him, "I can make music for your words."

Himself a Kiowa from Oklahoma, Davis was something of a musical legend, having played with the likes of Jackson Browne, Bob Dylan, Taj Mahal and the Beatles. Davis' innate understanding of blues and rock 'n' roll was just what Trudell had been looking for.

The symbiotic relationship between poet and guitarist bore fruit immediately. One of the most striking things about the collaboration was the juxtaposition of the traditional Native American rhythms and chanting with blues-inflected guitar riffs.

In 1986, Trudell and Davis began performing with a full band and released their first album, *AKA Graffiti Man*. In 1992 this album was remixed with Trudell's seven-piece Graffiti Band (including guest vocals by Kris Kristofferson and Jackson Browne), combined with other Trudell albums and re-released with the same title on Rykodisc records. A new release is planned for this fall.

At first, however, the music industry was hesitant to accept this politically and emotionally charged music.

"The structure of music is fascist ... the rules are set and you can't deviate," Trudell explains. "From the middle 80s, the bosses — the business suits in the boardrooms — would say, 'People aren't ready for this — they don't want to hear it.' And I think that the people themselves should decide what they want to hear, rather than a handful of corporate elite."

Despite limited distribution, the first album gained recognition and support, most notably when Bob

Rant and Roll

Dylan acclaimed the release as "the best album of 1986" in a *Rolling Stone* interview.

Trudell never set out to be a poet; rather, his poetical and political sensibilities were forged by the remarkable, sometimes horrifying circumstances of his life.

Prior to writing poetry, Trudell was the National Spokesman for the occupation force of Indians of All Tribes Occupation of Alcatraz in 1969 and the National Chairman from 1973 to 1979 of the American Indian Movement. He also had appeared in the Native American documentary film *Incident at Ogala* and in the movie *Thunderheart*.

Then, in 1979 his life changed drastically. Only 12 hours after he burned the American flag outside the J. Edgar Hoover Building in Washington, D.C., another fire burned his Shoshone Paiute reservation home, killing his family; the FBI declined to investigate.

Following this tragedy, Trudell began to dissolve all of his political affiliations. For spiritual solace he turned to poetry.

"I went to it out of a compulsion to express myself," he says. "I was pissed off at God, at the Great Spirit, at all of them, because this was a betrayal to me. And then the lines came. And the lines were my bombs, my explosions, my tears — they were my everything. I was just grabbing onto something."

So, while he may lightheartedly refer to his poetry as a "rant," Trudell also acknowledges that it serves as his "hanging on lines."

"It's a way of hanging on to life, to the appreciation of life," he says. "When we have that appreciation, we can deal with our feelings and our problems more coherently." This appreciation is what differentiates really living from merely existing, he adds.

In addition, this personal philosophy has far-reaching implications. "I don't see any separation between the global and the personal. We are all an integral part of the whole. We should never feel overwhelmed, rather we should feel empowered by the immensity of the world," he says.

"I think: appreciate, perpetuate and participate in life," he says.

"We as people, we need to make a peace with Earth. We really need to get it, and understand that Earth is our life-line. How we treat the Earth is interrelated with how we treat each other."

"There is no political solution ... we can't end racism if we can't respect all life. With all of the animals and trees dying, if we don't value them, how can we value each other?"

Saturday, May 8, at 6:30 p.m. in the EMU, John Trudell and the Graffiti Band join folk singer Jim Page and speakers Dino Butler (human rights activist) and Bonnie Black Wolf (national speaker on AIDS) for a concert to benefit the Oregon Native Youth and Elders Gathering later this year. This gathering brings elders and youth together to participate in cultural activities and to address issues such as alcohol and drug abuse prevention, teen suicide prevention and, in general, the future of the earth and humanity.



Courtesy Photo
John Trudell and his Graffiti Band perform Saturday, May 8, at the EMU. The concert will benefit the 1993 Oregon Native Youth and Elders Gathering, an annual Native American event.

Film festival to shine new light on homosexuality

By Daralyn Trappe
Oregon Daily Emerald

For the past several months, a spotlight has been aimed at this country's gays and lesbians. From the local tug-of-war with anti-gay rights groups to the march on Washington, D.C., the politics of being gay or lesbian has been under constant scrutiny.

But a local celebration has been organized to shine the spotlight on gays and lesbians in a non-political way.

Debby Martin, program assistant for the University's Student Activities Resource Center, said the first annual Queer Film Festival is designed to give gays and lesbians what they rarely get from mainstream movies and to offer the heterosexual audience a chance to connect emotions and experiences with the political struggle.

"This is not designed to educate or change people's minds," Martin said. "There's no political agenda. It's just important to experience this kind of culture that's been denied us."

"And it's also unfair for the straight community not to be able to see these kinds of films," she said, "because along with political change, you have to reach people on a human level. That's just as important."

Although there are gay and lesbian film festivals in big cities such as San Francisco, this is the first one in the Eugene-Springfield area.

The University's Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Alliance and the Cultural Forum have been trying for years to organize a film festival, Martin said. Last year, Martin and students Ron Gregg and Julia Wallace got the wheels in motion with a \$2,600 allocation from the Incidental Fee Committee that enabled them to get the films.

"Hopefully, we can break even or maybe make a little money to start a fund so we can keep it going and not have to ask for money," Martin said.

The festival began Thursday with the showing of some of the winning entries in the film/video competition. Martin said about 30 filmmakers from around the country sent in their work. A jury of six faculty and student members voted on the



Courtesy Photo
Together Alone, a film detailing a conversation between two men together for one night, is a featured film in the Queer Film Festival.

Ron Brew's documentary on Measure 9, last year's defeated statewide anti-gay rights initiative, was the only local entry to win an award. Brew's film will be shown Sunday along with other winners.

Tonight's presentations begin at 7 p.m. in Room 180 PLC with the showing of four short films by Sadie Benning, a young Milwaukee-based woman who as a teenager began making films about the complexities of being a lesbian. Benning has received national and international attention for her efforts, Martin said.

The feature film *Together Alone* follows. Directed by P.J. Castellana, it details a conversation between two men together for a one-night stand. Shot in black-and-white, the film touches on topics ranging from AIDS to abortion.

Three short films by lesbians will be shown Saturday at 7 p.m. in 180 PLC. *Mala Noche*, the first feature film by Portland-based director Gus Van Sant, will then be shown. Van Sant, known for *Drugstore Cow-*

boy and My Own Private Idaho, made this black-and-white film about a gay man's obsession with a young Mexican immigrant.

Gregg will present a talk/discussion titled "Pansies, Dykes and other 'Sexual Perverts' in 30s Hollywood" at 1 p.m. Sunday in the EMU Ben Linder Room.

At 3 p.m., more winning entries from the film/video competition will be shown in 180 PLC.

Admission is \$4 for University students and \$5 for the general public at the door for the film showings. Festival passes are available at the EMU Main Desk and at Mother Kali's Bookstore for \$9 (students) and \$15 (general public). Gregg's presentation is free.

Claire of the Moon, a feature film made by women in Oregon, wraps up the festival next weekend. The movie, about one woman's discovery of her lesbianism, will be shown at Springfield's McKenzie Theater from May 14 to 17.

Chant and Poetry of the Andes

A bilingual poetry reading with Cecilia Vicuna

By Ming Rodrigues
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

An exile from her homeland since Chile's political coup of 1973, Cecilia Vicuna did her first ritual performance on a Chilean beach in 1966 using abandoned ephemera from the natural world.

As a poet and artist, Vicuna said she tries to keep alive some remnant of reverence for the earth.

"I try to look at things backwards, as they are going to look when I am

gone," Vicuna once told an interviewer. "I have a very intense feeling that what we do is already the remains of what we are doing."

Calling her works "Basuritas," or "little garbage," Vicuna's outdoor pieces include modest offerings of sticks and feathers, tracings in the sand, a length of twine cast into a river, a few candles crowning a fire hydrant or some tiny makeshift structure that floated for a while in a city puddle.

She weaves these bits of nature's

debris into a cosmology of scraps encompassing personal history and mythic Andean lore. In her web of poetic associations, architecture is an offering while weaving is a linguistic endeavor and literally the fabric of Andean society.

"The thread of fiber and the thread of life are one," Vicuna once remarked. "In the Andes, dress is language. It's coded according to the use and the purpose."

Hailed as "one of the most vivid and creative personalities of the Latin

American scene," Vicuna has followed an unusual path within the possible directions of Latin American modernity.

Only now, and always individually, she may be part of what the poets Gonzalo Millan and Javier Campos call "the new Chilean lyricism," an emerging neo-romantic alternative to imperialistic post-modernity.

Working in the tradition of the oral poetry of the High Andes, Vicuna brings to life a poetic universe of

ancient resonance and new forms. Sacred wordplay practiced in the pre-Columbian Americas meets modern linguistics, and the wisdom of the Andean women shamans is used to confront the contemporary realities of ecological disaster.

That voice is evident in her latest book and first extensive collection in English, *Unravelling Words & the Weaving of Water*. With poetry rich in tradition, photographs of her "performance" pieces, favorite quotations and exploration into word roots and

metaphor linkage, this very contemporary book is much like a book of meditations.

"Chant and Poetry of the Andes — A Contemporary Reflection" will be presented by Vicuna Monday, May 10, at 3:30 p.m. in the EMU Ben Linder Room. "An Andean Autobiography in Art" follows Tuesday, May 11, at 3:30 p.m. in the Walnut Room. Admission is free. The event is presented by the Department of Romance Languages.

ADMISSION FREE TO ALL EVENTS

MON., MAY 10TH 7-9 P.M.
Gumwood Room
Spanish Muslims

A film on Muslim contributions to Spain and Europe and their oppression there.

WED., MAY 12TH 1-3 P.M.
Cedar A
Muslims in India

This documentary film displays the Muslims' sacrifice, contribution, accomplishment and struggle in India.

THURS., MAY 13TH 3-5 P.M.
Cedar E
Women in Islam

Film on issues on women in Islam, which is the most misunderstood to the western people. Islamic point of view on the issue of women, their role in human endeavor and their rights and obligations.

FRI., MAY 14TH 12-12:30 P.M.
Cedar A
Timeless Time

A film on Islamic interpretation of the Quran on the subjects of time and space. It uses modern knowledge of space sciences and discoveries along with an extensive use of film footage from NASA.

11:30 A.M.-2:30 P.M. EMU Lobby
Videos and literature available on Bosnian war crimes at a lobby table in EMU. Stop by and obtain relevant

Upcoming events sponsored by MSA

There will be a guest speaker, Professor Sami Al-Arian, who will speak on Palestinian issues. Professor Al-Arian teaches at the University of South Florida and is currently the president of the Islamic Committee of Palestine. He is also the editor of "Inquiry."

ALSO NEXT WEEK: Berry Turulija (Native Bosnian) who recently came from Bosnia will give a lecture about the current situation there. Time and place TBA.

Muslim Student Association



Islamic Film Festival

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