

'Three-dimensional' music hits Portland

by Lanita Duke

"My life really means that the songs that I sing are just pieces of a dream that I've been building.

We can make a stand and here I'm reaching out my hand 'cause I know damn well we can, if we are willing."

(Gil Scott-Heron, 1980)

Grassroot News, N.W.—In front of one thousand fans, political bluesologist, Gil-Scott-Heron, showed Portland that he was ready, willing and able to keep his commitment to the struggle and dreams of Afro-Americans. His musical commitment has carved him a unique position in record collections across America.

Portland State's Black Cultural Affairs Board chose Scott-Heron's music and message to celebrate Black History Month. The celebration lingers with the everlasting truth of the lyrics he incorporates in his songs and a beat that keeps you on your feet.

Since 1970, Scott-Heron has kept the blues alive by singing about something other than, "My baby has left me".

His first social-musical tune was *The Revolution will not be Televised*, an original rap that said when the struggle reaches its peak, "You will not be able to plug in, turn-on and cop-out."

In 1974, when America was in shock over the Watergate Break-ins and the resignation and pardon of Richard Nixon, Scott-Heron sang, "We beg your pardon America, because the pardon you gave was not yours to give."

In 1980, he sang, "You can depend on politicians cause they always got a point of view. You can depend on a bad position from them; changes that you have to go through. But don't depend on the train from Washington, it's 100



GIL SCOTT-HERON

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

years overdue."

In an exclusive interview following Thursday's concert, Scott-Heron, thin and worn from traveling and performing, said, "I don't do happy or sad songs. I do tunes that go together like pieces of a puzzle. The albums are like chapters in a book. The book goes on and on because the story goes on and on."

He also stated that the ideas he sings about are ideas that "Black people already know about. When I sing, it gives the idea a certain amount of justice."

Scott-Heron has used his music to address concerns that are not

predominant issues in the Black community, such as nuclear power.

"Nuclear energy is an equal opportunity destroyer. We didn't need to wait until Three Mile Island to see that it was coming. Nuclear energy is a further threat to our survival," he added.

At Portland State, Scott-Heron started the concert with a 45-minute monologue where he defined his music, roots and message. This was followed by a set with his band, *Amnesia Express*. Ron Holloway, tenor sax, Larry MacDonald, percussion and Robert Gordan, bass, reminded the audience of what is missing from today's super-

synthesized, artificial music. And that is good quality sound. It was nice to hear a pure sax blow with the deep, mellow voice of Scott-Heron not distorted beyond recognition.

He guided the audience into a number of songs such as *Washington D.C., Winter in America, Not needed Anymore* and *Hold on to Your Dreams*.

"We play three dimensional music. It's physical because you can move. It's mental because we give you ideas and it is spiritual because we make you feel better."

Scott-Heron continued. "I defy most Black American artists to come in here and get the kind of feelings we get from the audience. They may get the same kind of applause, but the feelings we create are not counterfeit."

He wants his fans to question the music that is being played on the airwaves. "I hope Black people know that what they get for free is not worth having. The things that are valuable are things you have to look for and struggle for."

The Gil Scott-Heron concert was not brought to Portland by an established promoter but by a student organization whose members had to promote the concert while studying for their mid-term exams. The Black and white community should commend Ronnie Walker and the BCAB who displayed composure well beyond their years.

Scott-Heron has made his keyboard available to the campaign of Rev. Jesse Jackson. "Anytime we see something or someone trying to do something positive for Black people, we go in and play. We do not have to concur with their philosophy. If you say you want to do something for Black People in America, you just risked your life. If you believe in it that strongly, then I'll be there."

What's all the smoke about the backyard burning ban?

Backyard burning is not a problem in Portland and I do not support the proposed ban. My opponent, however, has not stood up to the state's Environmental Quality Commission to stop their illegal action. Instead, he introduced a resolution to form yet another study group to find means to comply with the EQC demand.

According to the DEQ, only 1.2% of our airshed's particulate problem is caused by backyard burning. In other words, the present system is working. As City Commissioner, I'd keep it that way."

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South Africa embargo violated

Philadelphia—The U.S. government has quietly licensed the commercial export of more than 28.3 million worth of military technology to South Africa during the last three years, despite the mandatory arms embargo passed by the United Nations, according to a report issued jointly today by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the Washington Office on Africa, (WOA).

Based, in part, on material released to the FSC under the Freedom of Information Act, the publication, entitled, "Military Exports to South Africa—A Research Report on the Arms Embargo," charges that government-approved exports of arms technology on the State Department's "Munitions List" are a grave violation of the United Nations arms embargo. The embargo, which became mandatory with U.S. support, by a vote of the U.N. Security Council in 1977, bars the sale of "arms or related

material" to the white-ruled country.

"The U.S. is sabotaging the international arms embargo by winking at U.S. companies' military exports to South Africa. The volume of this trade is much greater than has ever been reported," said Thomas Conrad of NARMIC (National Action/Research on the Military Industrial Complex), the Quaker organization's research team.

"Rather than outright sales of large weapons systems, exports by U.S. corporations consist to a great extent of the building blocks of modern weaponry—components, unfinished sub-assemblies and other technology that can be easily submerged in large wholesale transactions," according to the report.

"The U.S. government claims that these exports are for civilian use. But this equipment has military applications and the State Department has acknowledged that the products are on the Munitions List.

Once this technology reaches South Africa, it will be impossible to prevent it from being used for military purposes," explained Thomas Conrad.

According to the report, the State Department has authorized shipments of encoding devices, navigation gear, image intensifiers and technical data to South Africa.

The other types of sensitive exports to South Africa "underscore the fact that Pretoria has a friend in the White House," according to the Quaker organization's report, which cites government disclosures showing that the U.S. has also shipped over half a million dollars worth of "non-military arms and ammunition" and \$556 million in aircraft and related parts to South Africa.

"By loosening controls on exports to South Africa, the Reagan Administration is cozying up to the white-minority government in Pretoria," said Jean Sindab, Direc-

tor of the Washington Office on Africa. "The arms embargo isn't working because the Administration doesn't want it to," she added.

The report cites a number of violations involving technology from U.S. and European companies. Among them: the diversion of U.S.-origin counterinsurgency aircraft and engines to military forces in two South African homelands; the shipment of U.S.-made shock batons to South Africa; the reported use of U.S. electronics in the new South African G5 155mm howitzer and naval fast attack craft; the use of West German technology in South African missile systems and military communications gear; the award of several South African military patents to Swiss, Italian and French companies, and the British and French governments. The patents cover a range of European inventions in the fields of weapons design, ordnance and military vehicles.

Don't overlook neighborhood energy champs

Overlook residents deserve a pat on the back for their efforts to weatherize. According to Portland's Energy Saving Center, Overlook residents lead all North Portland neighborhoods in the number of homes weatherized through the Center's energy loan program. At the next meeting of the neighborhood association, a representative from The Energy Saving Center will present an award to Jimmy Walker, the neighborhood chairman, in recognition of the neighborhood's effort.

Recently, the James Canyon

home on Willamette Blvd. was added to Overlook's roster of weatherized homes. James and Gertrude Kanyon had insulation as well as storm windows installed in February, and are now expecting a warmer home and smaller heating bills.

The 4 1/4% loan is available city-wide to all income eligible homeowners—regardless of heating type. Typically, a family of four can earn up to \$31,680 annually and still be eligible for this program. The Center also administers the State's

new weatherization rebate for oil heated dwellings. This is a 50% cash rebate up to \$1,218, and is available to income eligible renters and homeowners. The rebate can be

combined with either the 4 1/4% loan or the state's 6 1/2% loan, making weatherization very inexpensive. For information call The Energy Saving Center at 248-4636.



Installing insulation in the James Canyon residence; part of Overlook neighborhood's weatherization drive.

PCC scholarships open up

Portland Community College announces the availability of 35 scholarships, with one to be awarded to a graduating senior in each of the high schools in the PCC district.

Each scholarship entitles the recipient to one year full tuition at any of the six PCC campuses and centers located throughout the district. This is the third year the awards have been made.

Last year, 30 such scholarships were given to graduating seniors in the area, with five schools not responding, according to William T.

Dobson, PCC coordinator of high school relations. "We're hoping for full participation this year, since all 35 schools have graduates attending PCC," Dobson said.

Dobson said that district seniors interested in applying for the scholarships should contact their high school counselors during spring term.

Winners are determined by high school scholarship committees at the individual high schools, based upon general guidelines suggested by PCC.

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