

“Talk
About



By Brett A. Mermer
Arts Editor

Cover Photos By
Catherine O'Mara

AS IF WITH R.E.M.

Peter Buck: If this was the first time that people saw us, they probably wouldn't like us. They'd think we were weird.

Some Guy (in mocking imitation of a disappointed fan's voice): They didn't even play the single.

Peter Buck: Yeah, well we just forgot.

The guy is me; Peter Buck is the bitchin' guitarist for R.E.M.; and the band is weird — but that's all beside the point. No matter what fair weather fans might think, R.E.M. played a really cool concert under cold conditions at the Santa Barbara County Bowl last Saturday night. Buck explained that the low temperature on stage added to the “free-for-all” attitude of the band. The audience kept warm by dancing it up. R.E.M. fought off the chill by playing their hearts out.

Guadalcanal Diary started the festivities off right. Like most opening acts, GD had little interaction with the crowd between songs and seemed unresponsive. Unlike most opening acts, however, when the band roared into their material — they were possessed. The sound was something like live Gun Club

The
Passion”

issued through an R.E.M. filter. Their half-hour set was an intense one, surprising (pleasantly) most of the audience who had never heard GD even on record. My only complaint is that I wanted to hear more of this sound and this band.

... What noisy cats are we....

R.E.M. walked on stage un-
(See R.E.M., p.4A)



Bedtime for Democracy

Jello Biafra

Trial in Error



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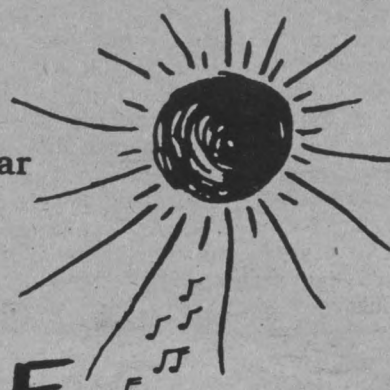
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For the First Time
in America...
A Soviet-American
Musical Spectacular



PEACE CHILD

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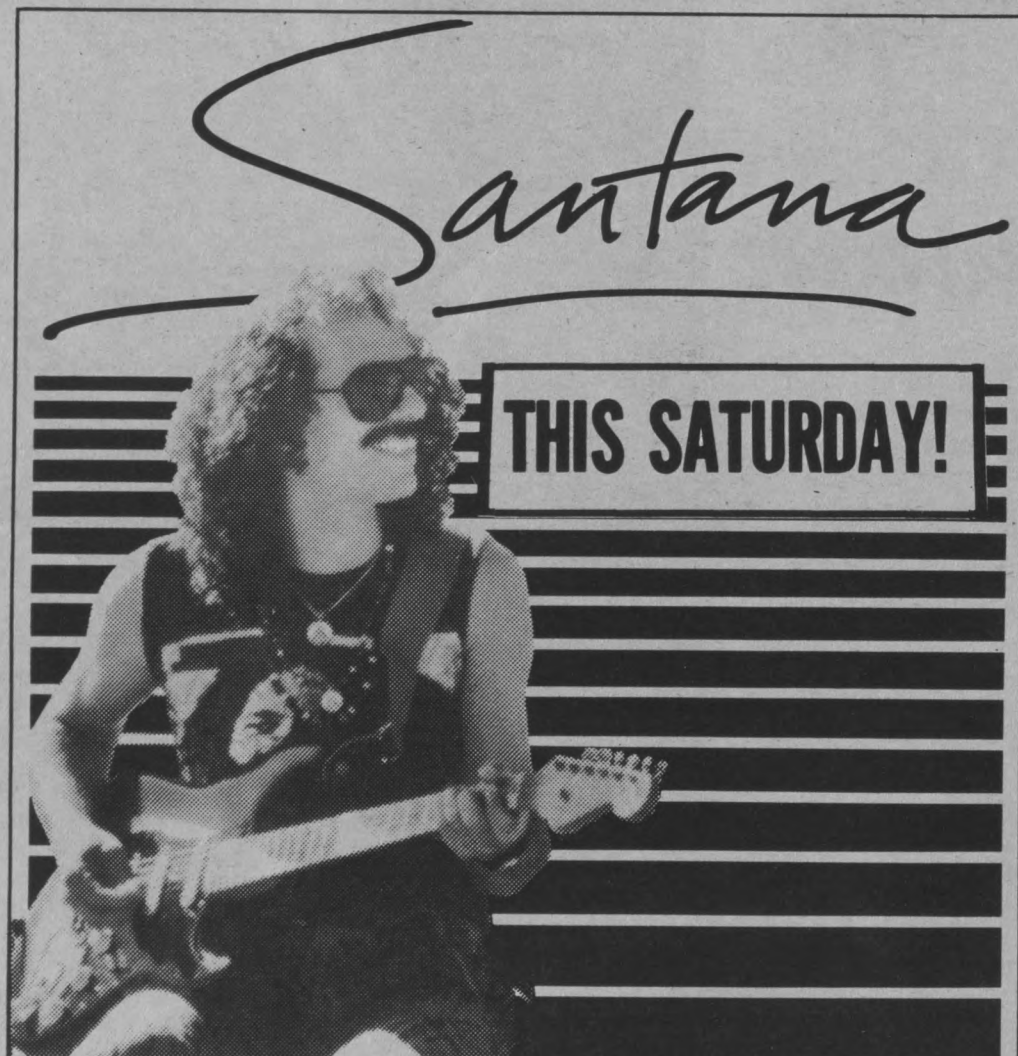
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Bedtime for Democracy

Jello Biafra and Michael C. Ford, spoken word performances, October 14th, Rockpile Records (5727 Hollister), two shows, 8 and 10:30, \$5.

When Dead Kennedys' vocalist and leader Jello Biafra handed the microphone into the crowd at a concert several years back, he expected, perhaps foolishly, that the audience might have something important or relevant to say. His expectations appeared to be exceedingly generous — the most profound comment to be noted was "Fuck you!"

This is when I first began to suspect (and I think quite rightly) that Biafra had more smarts than most of his following. Biafra's claim that "punk means thinking for yourself" seemed to fall on a lot of deaf ears. But still, the DKs were one of the coolest bands around back then, mainly due to Biafra. Times have changed.

The struggle to survive against oblivion has taken a severe turn for the worse. When I talked with Biafra on the phone during his stay at his parents' house in Colorado, I asked how he was doing. His response was that it was "more than a little warm in Hell."

The heat was turned up last April 15 (tax day) when three police officers from Los Angeles and six from San Francisco (the SFPD pettily claim that there were only four of their men) broke a window through which they entered Biafra's SF apartment and proceeded to seize "evidence." Biafra could only sit back and watch as the police produced a warrant and raided his home in a search for anything incriminating. When they left, the cops took with them copies of *Maximum Rock and Roll* magazine, some personal correspondence of Biafra's, and (the real reason for the whole deal) several copies of the Dead Kennedys album *Frankenchrist*, featuring the insert poster "Penis Landscape" by Swiss artist H.R. Giger.

The impetus for the raids on Biafra's apartment and on the office of the Alternative Tentacles (the DKs record label) came from a phone call made by a San Fernando Valley mother to the LA city attorney's office. The woman's 13-year-old daughter had bought and given the *Frankenchrist* record to her 11-year-old son for Christmas. The woman found Giger's landscape not so beautiful but, in fact, repulsive.

Biafra and four others involved in the album artwork were formally charged with "exhibiting and distributing harmful material to a minor." The "Frankenchrist Five" are facing a potential fine of \$2,000 or a year in jail. Win or lose, legal fees for the trial, which will probably last about six weeks, will run \$20,000 or more, depending on the length and starting date of the proceedings.

"Right now, Alternative Tentacles is alive, although it will probably be bankrupt by Christmas," explained Biafra. "We'll have to wind up diverting all our finances to fighting for our right to exist in court. That's the real punishment."

Biafra is already serving his sentence without having been found guilty. Titled *Bedtime For Democracy*, the DKs' latest album somehow got done, but four months behind schedule and with no hope of a supporting tour. The band is suffering from what Biafra calls "the chill factor" — some record stores are afraid of facing possible legal action if they carry any DKs material. (The only reason the Wherehouse store where the girl purchased the record for her brother escaped prosecution was that it agreed to knuckle under and pull everything of the Dead Kennedys' from the shelves.) Biafra's life has in some ways been put on hold. And he not only faces spending time in prison, but also spending time in prison completely broke. Biafra also said he worries about sitting in jail with no music because "all the cool tapes have been censored."

But Biafra hasn't given up or given in. He will be performing some spoken-word material — what he calls his "mutant form of journalism" — at Rockpile Records in Goleta on October 14. When I asked him if he'll talk about the case in the performance, he

said, "I don't want my own artwork clouded by them. I don't want to wind up spending all my time putting a minus sign in front of everything they say and calling it my own artistic vision. If I did that, those people would have succeeded in amputating my right hand as an artist."

Biafra also recognizes what kind of mess he's in and how vital it is that he and his codefendants try to win in court. "It's very important we fight this," Biafra realizes. "This is a national test case being watched very closely by pro-censorship organizations.... If we lose, they can wave that legal precedent in the air and open the floodgates for prosecution nationwide against everyone from *Maximum Rock & Roll* magazine to Madonna." It is quite likely that the case is the first step to test the waters. Forces like the Parents' Music Resource Center and others have a far greater chance of successfully derailing someone like the Dead Kennedys than Prince or AC/DC. Hopefully, the DKs' barricades will hold in court, financial ruin or not.

The case hinges on a three-part proof. Biafra can only be convicted if: 1) the Giger artwork is found to be offensive by a Californian adult of average intelligence, 2) the artwork is deemed harmful to minors (either causing harm directly to them or causing them to cause harm to others), and 3) the artwork appeals only to prurient interests and has no redeeming social or artistic value. Giger, an artist best known for his Academy Award-winning work on the film *Alien*, presented "Penis Landscape" as a view of copulating genitals. The work has been hung in European museums and can be found in art history books. A portfolio of Giger's designs are in this month's *Omni* magazine. Biafra sees in the picture a representation of "consumer culture on parade" and feels it is an integral part of the overall statement made on the *Frankenchrist* record.

No matter what you or I may think of Biafra's interpretation of Giger or think of him as a person, I wouldn't want him to be the victim of what he calls "irresponsible and lazy parenting."

A mother calls the police when she finds offensive material in her kid's hands? She has the artist brought up on criminal charges? "It reeks of McCarthyism," Biafra said to me. And I can't help but agree.

Jello and the Dead Kennedys have always had more to say than just "Fuck you!" I don't particularly like the album *Frankenchrist*, but I'd fight for its right to be presented — in full, including packaging. Don't let democracy get put to bed.

(Contributions for Jello's defense may be sent to the No More Censorship Defense Fund, P.O. Box 11458, San Francisco, CA, 94101.)

More on Jello Biafra, *Bedtime For Democracy*, spoken word performances, plus a visit with poet Michael C. Ford next week.

— Brett A. Mermer



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- PRETTY IN PINK (PG13) MON-THU 8.
3. NOTHING IN COMMON (PG) MON-THU 5:30, 7:45, 10:15.
4. THE BOY WHO COULD FLY (PG) MON-THU 5, 7:15, 9:30.

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(R) MON-THU 7, 9:05.

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TOP GUN (PG) MON-THU 7, 9:10.

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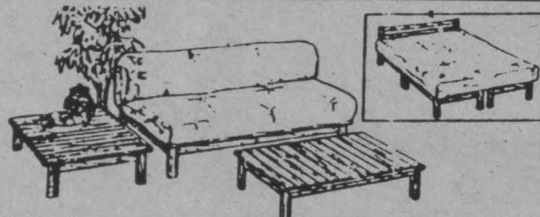
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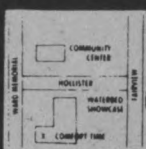
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R.E.M.

(Continued from cover)
ceremoniously about 10 'til nine. The fog had lifted and the threatening rain clouds had left, but it was getting chilly. The band started hot with the churning anthem-of-sorts "These days." They were cranking in high gear with singer Michael Stipe belting out the song like he really meant it. Although he sang this first tune with his back to the audience, the show found Stipe more open with and aware of his audience than on any previous tour. We saw the front of him most of the time. We liked the stories he told between songs. We thrilled to his hip dance moves.

Things stumbled a bit after this rousing beginning. "Harborcoat," from the *Reckoning* record, seemed unintentionally clumsy. "Talk About the Passion," which Stipe introduced as a "chestnut," wandered listlessly. It took R.E.M. a couple of selections more for them to regain their feet, and once they did, things got good and weird. I enjoyed the knowledge that these guys can still have fun even under the critical microscope.

Older material was given new life; "Pretty Persuasion," "Sitting Still," and "1,000,000" were particularly urgent. Songs from their latest, *Life's Rich Pageant*, held sturdy on stage. The live versions of "Swan swan h" and "Begin the begin"

went beyond merely sounding as-good-as-the-album — they sounded challenging. And for good reason, we all went wild when the band blasted "Can't Get There From Here." The high points made up for the occasional dead spots. And more, much much more.

The boys looked as though they were having a real good time. Stipe shot out some spoken word stuff before some of the songs to enhance the mood or context. He detailed a couple of weird stories (one about the healing power of a man who was born six months after his

madman. There was some fun had with a projection screen which occasionally displayed bits of Stipe-directed film, photographs and live silhouettes.

But what about "Radio Free Europe" you ask? What about "So. Central Rain (I'm Sorry)" or "(Don't Go Back to) Rockville?" Or even "Fall on me?!" R.E.M. seems to have left most of the hits in their other suits. Surprisingly, as much as I heard people yelling out for the band to play these singles, there was equal noise made for what I thought at the time were some pretty strange

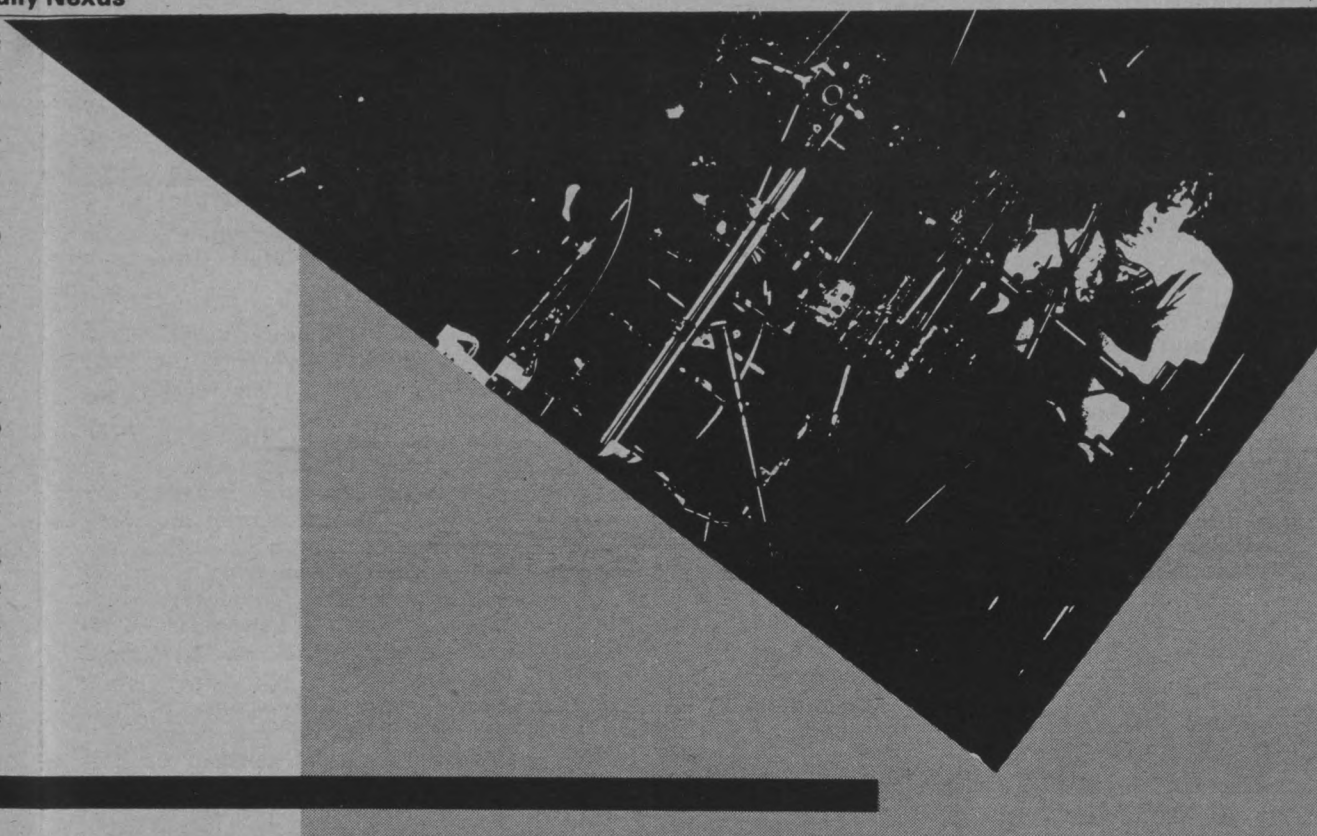


father's death) and persuaded drummer Bill Berry to tell us about his dream in which he loaded a gun with Fruit Loops and tried to kill someone. Bassist Mike Mills provided excellent vocal support and played like a

requests. "Play 'Moon River!'" a girl near me shrieked. "Batman!" screamed another. Though neither of these tunes made the set list, R.E.M. performed some inspired shit ranging from a Cramp's cover to "the



Photo
Catherin



stage; relaxed, confident and unpretentious. They came out to meet friends, fans and photographers rather than have us all cramp into a dressing room. We pretty much just hung out and talked. Although this group garners pages and pages of critical attention and has earned the title of "College Radio Gods," this is not a bunch of prima donnas. R.E.M.'s following is strong and loyal, but still maintains a cult status. I was personally glad to see that, with mainstream acceptance virtually around the corner, there was no sign of rock-star posturing on the part of the band. R.E.M. is a group of four pretty cool people who perform great songs that they believe in, on record and in concert.

Words such as integrity, influence, important, and concerned are thrown around the Athens, Ga. gang with such speed and frequency that their heads must be spinning. Hey, I'm guilty of this as well. But the highest compliment that I think you could pay to R.E.M. after their show would be, "I listened; I watched; I danced — I had some inspired good fun." And there ain't nothing wrong with that.

nastiest blues song ever written." They reached back for renditions of some older stuff like the Everly Brothers' "Dream." When Stipe left the stage for a break (he was about to lose his voice), Buck, Mills and Berry covered with an unannounced surf song. That was the kind of night it was, anything could have happened.

Someone asked Peter Buck after the show if the band performed from a set list of songs. He replied

"Yeah, at first." I wanted to know what the deal was with their version of the classic "Fever."

"Michael (Stipe) said he wanted to play it," Buck answered, "but we didn't really know how to do it."

"It showed," I quipped and the guitarist grinned.

... Happy throngs take this joy wherever you go....

The band members backstage were much the same as they were on-



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Mister Ra Mystery

Though Sun Ra truly doesn't belong on this earth, his "adaptation" provided "music of a new age" way before its time. Beaming in on a cosmic soundwave last Wednesday night to the Montecito Music Academy of the West, a diverse selection of 300 Santa Babylonians witnessed a masterful and uplifting three hours of musical experimentation from the man and his expansive Omni-Jazz-Energy-Arkestra.

It seems only fitting that this 72-year-old jazz legend should claim to have been born on Saturn. His eclectic visions and musical insight deserve better than the society he has been given to reside in. It is a view he shares when inviting his earthbound audience to join along as he "travels the spaceways from planet to planet."

Taking the sparsely set stage after a two hour delay in Encino (of all places for an extraterrestrial's vehicle to break down), the stately members of Sun Ra's "Arkestra", suitably attired in futuristic garb and hats, went into an introductory musical presentation of the respective musicians. Each subtly commanded respect, for their position as unheralded "jazz wise men" seemed evident, even to a relatively new jazz enthusiast. Heading this impressive group were Sun Ra's associates of 20 years of touring: John Gilmore (an influential cohort to sax legend John Coltrane), Pat Patrick, Marshall Allen and singer/dancer June Tyson.

Following their melange of kettle drums, tympany bells, saxophone and flute fills, including some sounds I'd never heard from these deceptively basic instruments, the massive "king of the kingdom of mystery" circled the stage with Tyson, alternating lyrics with her sweet and soulful vocals. Adorned in robes reminiscent of the sorcerer's apprentice, Ra soon shuffled his way behind the awaiting piano to conduct the musical escapades.

Just when seemingly normal sounds were filling the room, the ensemble would break out and start in a new direction. Their sets included a versatile mix of styles, ranging from swing to bop to fusion to simple spirit music. Threaded through it all were humorous vocal interjections from the Arkestra, coordinated dances from the horn section, and calls for audience participation (which they heartily received). During Sun Ra's unorthodox synthesizer strokes which opened the second set, the percussionist even went so far as to throw cymbals around the stage for desired effects.

When the ever-present woes of our world weigh me down, I often wish I could join the sojourn down Sun Ra's infectious "strange celestial road." The Santa Barbara-area stopover shot a refreshing and original blast into an often stagnant music scene, and his warm gestures conveyed his feelings even more. Space is indeed the place, Mr. Ra.

— Brent Anderson

Celestial Musings

Harpist Andreas Vollenweider and his merry band of musicians materialized at the County Bowl Sunday night, under an unusually warm, star-drenched autumn sky. With the bowl at only two-thirds capacity, the crowd was treated to an occasionally inspired concert of Vollenweider's trademark celestial musings.

Backed by an extensive percussion section, two keyboard players buried in banks of synthesizers and a lone woodwind player, Vollenweider presented selections from his latest "hit" album, *Down To the Moon*, and also offered favorites from earlier albums.

Early on the concert became rather disjointed as Andreas & Co. rambled from their popular hypnotic, ethereal rhythms into long, aimless jazz funk jams that

emotionally went nowhere.

To his credit Vollenweider is an expressive and original harpist who has taken the instrument beyond its classical and celtic folk element and placed it center stage. Perhaps the highlights of the evening were Vollenweider's solos backed by a chorus of crickets laying down a deep harmonic pulse in the wood around the Bowl. In a group setting, Vollenweider's harp tends to get buried in a percussion heavy sound mix.

Vollenweider must be doing something right. *Down To the Moon* is racing up the charts — this week at No. 20, sandwiched between Bananarama and Simply Red. Perhaps Andreas Vollenweider has inherited the celestial throne vacated by Donovan in the late '60s ... only to return as the New Age Prince of Narnia.

— Robert Gerson

Lesson from Aloes

Athol Fugard's *A Lesson from Aloes* is playing at the Alchemia Theater care of Ensemble Theater Project and I must recommend with all my heart that my best friends go to see it. This is a play about human beings who, just like all others, are trying to survive in their world. Fugard, a South African playwright from whom we might reasonably expect a play with largely political over, under, and inside-out tones, focuses our attentions on what life is like for just three people who must live it within a system of heinous politics. By drawing us in so closely to the characters in his play, Fugard succeeds in humanizing insights that could very easily be lost in generalities.

The characters into whose lives we glimpse, while only three, expose the vast diversity of those affected by the same circumstances and the diverse methods they use to overcome those circumstances.

Piet Bezuidenhout is an ex-farmer who, we learn, after drought dried up the farm, moved to Port Elizabeth where the play is set and where he became a dried-up bus driver. He was moved enough during a boycott by the people to get out of the bus and listen to what they had to say. As anybody would when they found truth and sincerity is still moving people in the world, Piet dove into the movement completely.

When we meet him, he has again become disillusioned and has taken up a quiet, safe hobby in botany. He collects, identifies, and spends enormous amounts of time with aloes, those prickly succulents so stodgily adapted to harsh, dry climates. Doing what he sees as necessary to survive, Piet takes his lesson from the aloes literally. In its silent stubbornness, the aloes is ultimately resistant to suffering, but it produces no flowers, has no scent; it trades what we are long trained to believe is a beautiful symbol of life for flat durability. Piet too, in his effort to survive the emotional barrenness of a place where people are officially as well as actually considered less than human, and where their struggle to be recognized appears to have been defeated (it takes place in 1963, before Soweto), closes up and hides his formerly infectious faith in the future behind his own silent durability.

His wife, Gladys, is a high-strung, very sensitive woman of English descent who has fallen apart in the face of the political climate. After a police raid of their home, wherein her personal diaries were opened and

(See ALOES, p.7A)

ALOES

(Continued from p. 6A)

read aloud, she breaks down and, when we meet her, has been home from electric shock treatments at an institution for only about six months. Gladys' predicament is not that she is crazy but that her survival techniques don't work well enough to allow her to live. Her vital force, while obviously dwindled by circumstances to almost nothing, makes its last attempts to surface and perhaps make a change for the better in her world before dissolving completely. Gladys claims that, like us all, she lives in her own hell. She proclaims more than once the virtues of roses with sweet fragrances, beautiful colors, and so on in comparison to the ugly aloe and, like a rose which cannot survive in the harsh climate, she has no further defenses.

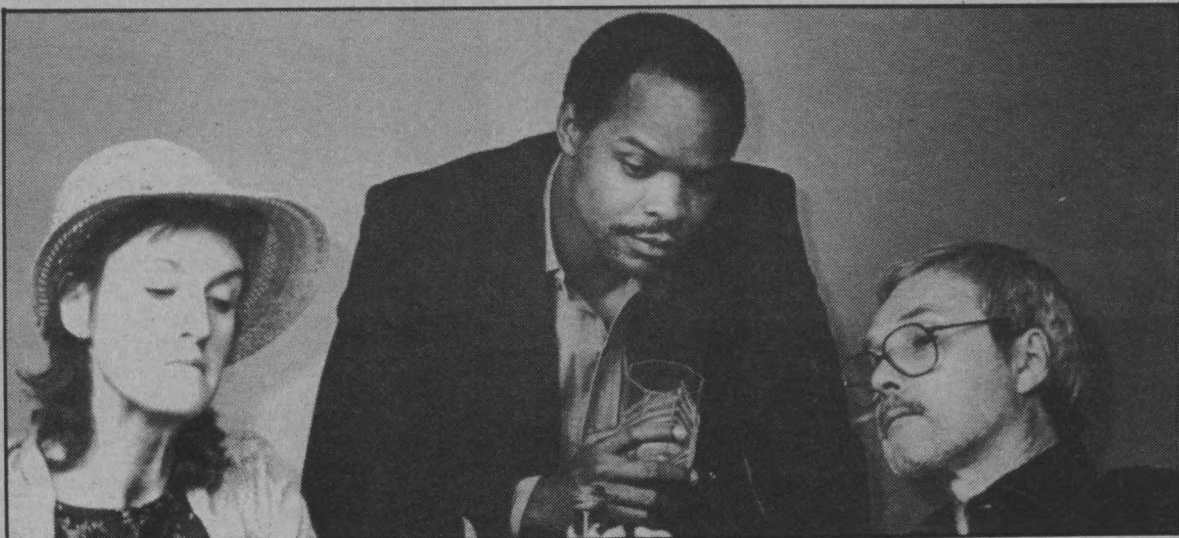
Steve Daniels, the speaker who once moved Piet to leave the bus and listen and became his best friend, is about to leave Port Elizabeth for England at the time of the play. He is forced to leave South Africa permanently to avoid official persecution. While he doesn't want to leave his home of forty years, he has a life and a family to consider and is willing to pay this price in order to do more than just survive. It is with Steve's visit to the Bezuidenhouts that we are able to

understand so much of all three people, of their common goal, and of their tremendously different methods of achieving it.

Robert Weiss, who more than effectively directed the play, portrays Bezuidenhout as the subtly ironic man he has to be; completely cynical but not harsh, entirely disillusioned but not really angry, and silent but bursting with desire to speak. Kathleen Hoffman is excellent as Gladys, wholly maladjusted and also craving the ability to thrive, having knowledge of properness but exploding with emotion at her situation. And Henry Brown, whose appearance as Steve Daniels is unfortunately brief, brings to the stage a man whose life is complex and ordinary and profound. Through the abilities of these three actors and the thoughts of Athol Fugard, in "A Lesson from Aloes," we can see the plight of people in, to us, an extraordinary situation facing and trying to manage the ordinary problem of living peacefully and happily, while maintaining their integrity as well.

"A Lesson from Aloes" runs through November 1 and, as a great introduction to the work of Athol Fugard and to the fact that we all face the same questions in life, should not be missed. Please call 963-0761 for reservations and information about how to support Ensemble Theater Project in their endeavor to bring high-quality local theater to Santa Barbara, because they are succeeding.

— Judith Smith-Meyer



John Goulet at the the UCen Gallery

It is good to see androgyny once again raise its dubious face, as it periodically does in art and pop music, and also in the UCen gallery.

But this is only one aspect of the work of John Goulet, and probably not the most important.

John Goulet has an exhibition of paintings (running through the Oct. 10) featuring bright colors reminiscent of the Fauve (a derogatory term meaning "wild animal") painting of the '20s. Like Matisse, Goulet uses patterns which merge from the clothes of the figures to the materials of the room. The room in which the figures sit is turned into a flowing series of patterns; the figures are distorted in shape to give the impression of rhythm.

In paintings such as that of the dancing couples, there is an echo of Edvard Munch. In others, the dabs of Van Gogh have become a pattern.

Goulet says in a brief statement that he is in search of feeling and truth. Munch and Van Gogh also sought for truth in an inward suffering. They suffered, I think, more from their own desire to suffer than from society's disdain.

It is interesting, and perhaps not totally contradictory, that a search for inward truth should be combined with its opposite (i.e. the use of bright colors and patterns which are usual methods to conceal the truth as with makeup or pure decoration). Bright colors are usually gaudy and unfeeling and used predominantly in the less-refined arts, as at a fairground or by prostitutes.

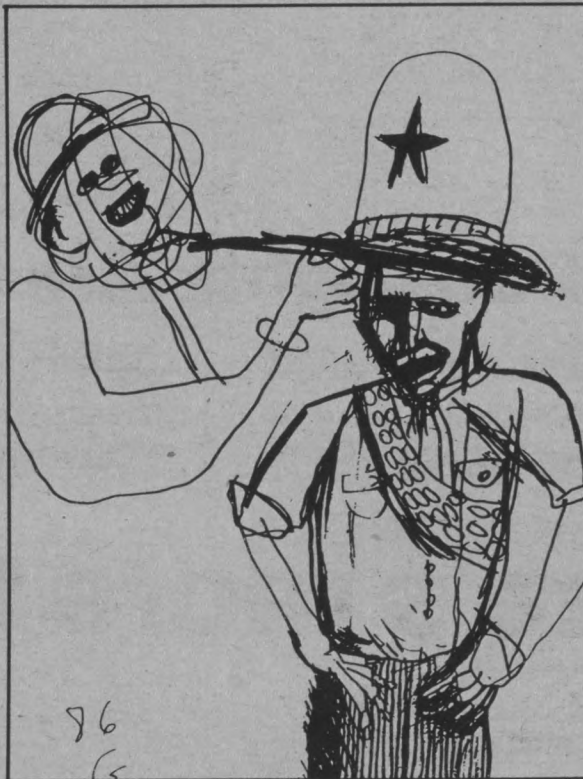
Each painting is strong and striking. The feeling the artist observes is, for me, mostly confined to fear or shock. Perhaps in the attitude of society, we don't see into these figures. They wear masks. We see them as they are, in shock, or in pain.

Munch was of a relatively rich, middle class, Norwegian 19th century family. He found its attitudes and conventions intolerable. His paintings exhibit a fear and hatred of those restrictive moral, religious and personal attitudes.

The alienation of Munch also exists in Goulet's paintings. The faces are masklike and we don't see into what the people are thinking and feeling. We only see their withdrawal from outward experience. Diamonds on clothes merge into diamonds in the background.

"The Dancers" is a painting of two figures dancing, both presumably men wearing women's clothes. There is a strong feeling of shock, the shock of their alienation from us and withdrawal into themselves. They, as though startled by the bright lights of a camera, stand staring at us.

Among the untitled paintings, one that I shall call (perhaps incorrectly) "Skater" seems particularly



strong. Each painting has a strong identity. "The Cowboy" is interesting because more appears than one figure's knowledge of another. They do not simply look at us, nor are we simply voyeurs who look at them. There is an aggressiveness to these figures; they seem to be saying "look at me," while at the same time being shocked or afraid that you are doing so. At other times we are the voyeur of perhaps intimate moments of two people alone together. But the figures merge into the pattern and their faces become masks. They refuse to face us completely or shy away from direct contact.

It is good to see the UCen Gallery utilized in the first exhibition of the year as a means of showing the work of a student on campus, as this work is no way inferior to those of imported professional artists. It is also good that students can see the work of their contemporaries. It is difficult for most students to know what their fellows are doing until they are about to leave and have a final show. Thus, it is possible for one student to be influenced by another. There exists at present not enough facility for students, undergraduate and graduate (formally and, especially, informally) to present their work to the public.

Whether you favor androgyny or a macho aesthetic, the show is worth a visit.

— Anthony Emerton



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PUB SHOWCASE

Tomorrow Night - "Dream Syndicate"

Don't have any plans for Friday night? Then come join everyone at the Pub Showcase to hear the sounds of "Dream Syndicate" and "Prime Movers." This special Pub Showcase

will start at 7:30 p.m. and should keep you dancing for most of the evening. Tickets will be available at the door for \$2.00 so come early and don't be left out.

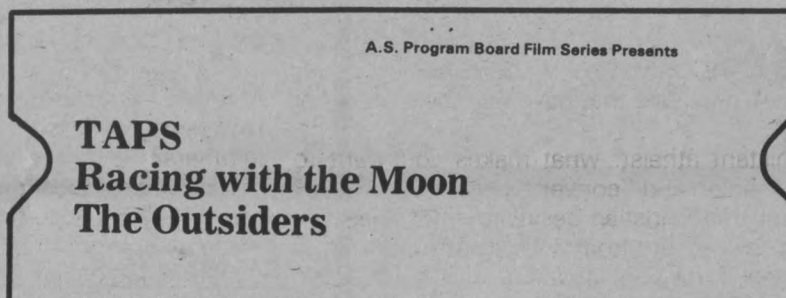
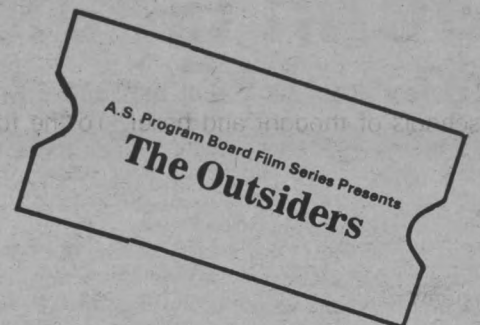
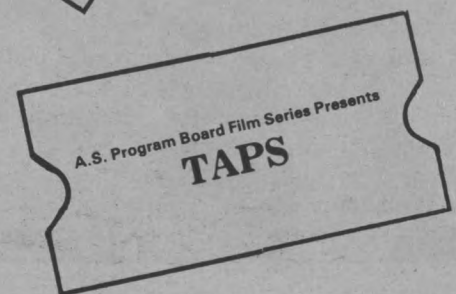
The "Brat Pack" Film Series

Three award winning movies for the price of \$4.50 is the special "Brat Pack" package that A.S. Program Board is offering to UCSB students who purchase tickets to see the movies "Taps," "Racing With The Moon," and "The Outsiders." Individually the movies will cost \$2.00 at the door, however a film series pass can be purchased for all three movies.

For three consecutive Tuesdays, the films will be shown, starting with "Taps" on October 7, and 7, 9,

and 11 p.m. On October 14 "Racing With The Moon" will play at 7, 9 and 11 p.m. And "The Outsiders" will be shown on October 21, also at 7, 9, and 11 p.m. All three of the movies will be playing at I.V. Theatre.

Come see some of the most popular young stars of today in the movies that made them famous, A.S. Program Board brings them to you for only \$4.50. Tickets available at the Program Board office as of today.



Thursday Pub Nights Are Back!!!

Start this quarter off right by being at the first Pub Night this Thursday October 2 at 8:00 p.m. Drink and dance to the sounds of

SKIN TRADE as you meet both old and new friends. The admission is free, so be a part of UCSBs tradition and come to Pub Night.

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Do you want to be involved behind the scenes with famous rock groups, meet world renown speakers, and get to know many of your peers. Then join an A.S. Program committee and get involved. This years committees are being formed now, so come by the Program Board office in the third floor of the UCen or call 961-3536. And sign up to usher at concerts, help plan upcoming events, or even write for this page.

Tuesday, October 7th will be the first meeting for the advertising and publicity committee at 3:30 p.m. in the Program Board office. For more information call 961-3536 and ask for Judy or Liz.



A.S. PROGRAM BOARD