

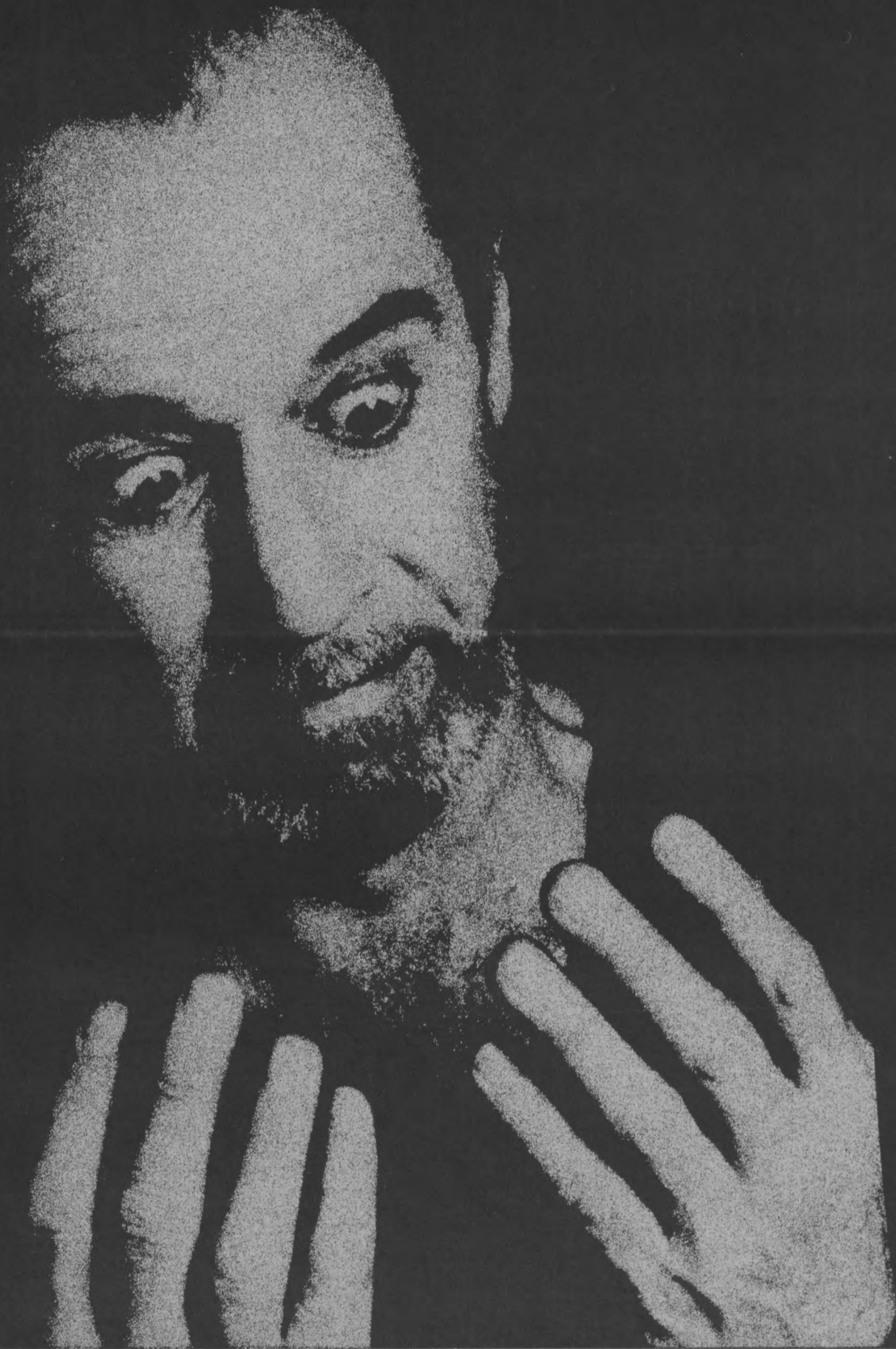
The SB Dance Company's Turning Point.....page 5A



ENCORE

THE ARTS AND
ENTERTAINMENT
SECTION OF THE
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Comic, Philosopher, Or Just Plain Loopy?

An Interview With George Carlin page 4A

Santa Barbara Scene THIS WEEK

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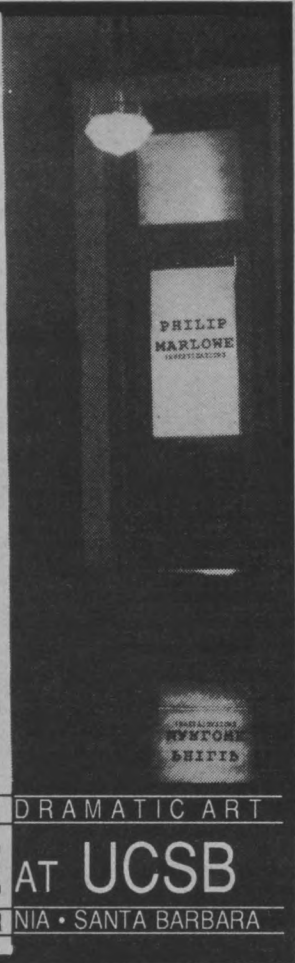
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DEPARTMENT OF DRAMATIC ART

THEATRE AT UCSB

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA • SANTA BARBARA



Talk about a calm before the storm! This is the week before Martin Scorsese's *Cape Fear* opens — and officially kicks off the Winter Film Season — and there is hardly anything new at the box office. While the studios gear up for the Christmastime crunch, we get *People Under the Stairs* and *Highlander 2*. No wonder so many people get depressed around the holidays. In the meantime, here are some other ways to spend money and be entertained at the same time.

Theater:

• The inspirational true story of Flavia Weedn's childhood is told in the world premiere of *Flavia and the Dream Maker*. Flavia Weedn is an author, artist and greeting card creator, so of course her childhood is worthy of a musical. If some little orphan with no eyeballs gets a song-and-dance about her, then Flavia should too. The show opens Friday, Nov. 8, at the Access Theatre. Ticket prices were too confusing to include in the press release.



The Reduced Shakespeare Company will tickle your funny bone this Saturday.

• If you thought you had to read a lot of Shakespeare in English class, imagine what the guys from The Reduced Shakespeare Company went through. They've

packed all 37 of the Bard's plays into two hilarious acts. Their *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)* is at the Lobero Theatre Saturday,

Nov. 9 at 2 and 8 p.m. Tickets are \$17, but only \$15 for anyone who can spell Mummenschanz.

Television:

• If by some freak of nature you happened to miss your favorite local band on Channel 19's "Club Notes," fret not. Channel 21, just a couple of notches to the right, is rerunning the music video show. It's only November and we're already getting reruns! This week's installment features Rogue Cheddar and Joe Hamilton, so you have to ask to yourself, "Can I afford to miss this twice?" If you don't have an answer right away, tune in Tuesday, Nov. 12 at 7 p.m. and watch ... again.

Film:

• You know, we all live in a yellow submarine. Yellow submarine. Yellow submarine. If you do not agree, you'll want to check out the Beatles' animated flick (this was done before Paul died) *Yellow Submarine*. It plays at I.V. Theater on Friday, Nov. 8. Friday, Nov. 8. Friday, Nov. 8.



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Caterwaul, pictured above, performs at the UCen Pub tonight in a benefit for Work, Inc., a disabled citizen workshop.

Not the Cat's Meow

Caterwaul is an artsy alternative band that the critics love. Vocalist Betsy Martin's voice is praised universally, along with the rest of the band's hypnotic and stimulating music. Their lyrics are supposedly deeply meaningful and catchy, while the band has drawn comparisons to ethereal independent-label acts like Lush and Cocteau Twins. The problem is, they suck.

Caterwaul's latest musical accident is a five-song demo which will probably be included on their forthcoming third album. Hopefully, they will get a hold of a talented producer — they've previously worked with Skinny Puppy's David Ogilvie — to

put something remotely attractive into these songs. The demo, like their albums (beloved by critics, naturally), is worthless. The best — which is to say, the only — semi-interesting song here is "Naked Soul." It is catchy, even pretty, until Martin stops singing and starts her usual whining. The other songs are supremely boring and contain lyrical tripe like "I am the poet who is not a poet."

Caterwaul will play The Pub tonight with opening act *Glorious Din*. If you must go, go because it's for a worthy cause — Work, Inc., a disabled citizens workshop.

—Aaron Cappocchi

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KCSB's Annual Membership Drive

From Nov. 12th at 6:00 a.m. until Nov. 19th at midnight, KCSB will raise money to fund the upgrading of station equipment, long-term plans such as the purchase of a satellite dish, and other projects.

Tune in to 91.9 FM, the only non-commercial radio station using the talents of UCSB students and community members

STAGE REVIEWS

Characters On Exhibit

Artful Cliques in *Museum*

Rolling off the frontier of modern theatre's attempt to redefine the theatrical experience, *Museum*, Tina Howe's hilariously probing script, finds its way to UCSB's Main Theatre to pose another variation on the question, "Where does art exist?"

Museum, which originally premiered at the Los Angeles Actor's Theatre in 1976, looks a lot like an improvisational warm-up for actors. It takes place in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, cleverly bringing a comic barrage of stereotypical art enthusiasts into an avante-garde exposition. The exhibit consists of a construction of dummies hanging from a clothesline, three big blank white canvases, some phantasmic Dr. Seussian driftwood sculptures and an imaginary painting hanging on the audience's "fourth wall."

All 13 of the Bachelor of Fine Arts Program seniors pull together for a marathon of sardonic character studies, from snobby self-proclaimed philanthropists to artsy bohemian wayfarers exasperated by their own declarations of love for the arts — very little is missed.

"Actor's Theatre" emphasizes the player's abilities, rather than elaborate sets and costumes. The cast is largely successful with the versatility this style of stagecraft demands, rapidly metamorphosing into extremely varied life forms. Brad Heberlee and Miranda Holmes play two deliciously flamboyant Village bon vivants, flaunting their discriminating tastes through the show.

Strangely enough, the actors that are least convincing are in the more modest roles of the show, the security guards. Though the guards play second-fiddles in this symphony of decadence and absurdity, they need to be hardened into a firmer bedrock for all this noise.

Beyond farce, *Museum* offers something positively



As a cast member of UCSB's *Museum*, John Brown is perplexed by the profundity of art.

necessary for art itself — it turns the limelight away from an art exhibit and onto a people exhibit, particularly at a time when art cliques are as engrossing as art is. The big white canvases force an escalation of the subjective experience, and, as the curator patronizingly explains, "allow the viewer's mind full play."

Museum will continue to run Nov. 7-9 at the UCSB Main Theatre. For more information, call 893-3535.

—Christian Lincoln

Modernizing a Bard's Classic

You must lay down the treasures of your body ...

What's this? Another allegedly sexually harassing statement by Clarence Thomas? No, actually it's a line from one of William Shakespeare's lesser-known masterpieces, *Measure For Measure*, presented by the Firebrand Theatre Company at the La Casa De La Raza Theatre in Santa Barbara.

This particular piece of the Bard's works was first performed in 1604, but seems to have just as much relevance today, containing several topical issues such as manipulative politics, teenage pregnancy and sexual harassment.

The story tells how Duke Vincentio, the departing leader of Vienna, places his deputy, Angelo, in control of his politically paralyzed society. The result is a death sentence for Claudio, who has impregnated his girlfriend out of wedlock. Claudio's sister Isabella, about to enter a convent, pleads with Angelo for her brother's life. The only remedy offered would require her to yield to him her virginity.

Director Nancy Keystone's unusual and con-



Jamie Angell (standing) and Hillary Spector deal with contemporary issues in *Measure*.

ceptual approach contains the addition of an omniscient character, Ralph Crane, who in reality was the man who pieced

together the play in the early 17th Century for the *First Folio*. His presence, coupled with a cluttered stage of thousands of sheets

of paper, represents the continuous recording of the play throughout the performance. Joseph Grimm (Angelo) and Michael Neimand (Lucio) each give strong and consistent portrayals of their respective characters. Notable, also, are Jamie Angell (Duke) and Hilary Spector (Isabella). The rest of the cast, however, is at times either too weak or overly dramatic.

Despite a few technical flaws, the production is an enjoyable piece of theatre. If you are open to seeing a new and interesting production of an extraordinary play, the Firebrand Theatre Company may have your ticket.

Measure For Measure will be continuing at the La Casa De La Raza Theatre this weekend. Call 682-2978 for information.

—Eric Kaufman

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George Carlin doesn't like Elvis. He doesn't like Vanilla Ice, authority figures, the television show "Studs" or George Bush, either, but I expected that. It was the fact that the 54-year-old, former disk-jockey hates The King, that first surprised me. Being a Carlin fan and having seen him perform many times, I guess I was almost sure that he was a fellow Elvis fan. The fact that he thought Elvis was "bogus," was one in an array of unexpected truths I learned talking with him from his home earlier this week.

It is also a surprise that Carlin, who uses big words like interloper, and expounds on mankind's missed chance at greatness with the eloquence of a philosopher, never even finished high school. "School never agreed with me," said Carlin, who has never been able to participate in any type of defined, labeled or institutionalized activity in his life. He is, by self-admission, the terminal rebel/outsider — James Dean with a great sense of humor and a bald spot, if you will. This guy even dropped out of the Cub Scouts.

He is a man who has spent his life on the outside, looking in, and usually thinking what he sees is pretty strange. And although he says it's not always

"(I'm) a guy who's really easy to get along with, but I have big attitudes when it comes to the world around me."

easy being George Carlin, he acknowledges that it is his aversion to functioning "normally" that is largely the source of his unmistakable comedy. From dogs to politics, Carlin's comedy has an edge of razor-sharp insight. His fame and distinction have come from his delicate ability to reveal just enough of life's absurdity so that we can still laugh.

Talking with him it becomes apparent that George Carlin doesn't stop with the funny things in his personal assessment of the world. From his former drug use to three heart-attacks, to understanding his own, separate nature, it seems George Carlin has been busy learning during the 30 years he has been making audiences laugh. The resulting philosophies and opinions are funnier, and smarter, than ever.

On Saturday, Carlin, who does over 100 shows a year, will bring his perspective to UCSB. In an interview with ENCORE, Carlin gave a preview of what's been on his mind lately.

ENCORE: Are you a tough white guy?

George Carlin: No, I'm very tough, but not physically. In the midst of a fight I'd probably be described as something like a coward. I had to use my wit and my guile to get by. ... I had a lot of nerve. I was nervous. I would steal, and I would run, and I would lie to the police. But when it came to fighting, I would tell a joke.

ENCORE: What's your favorite Elvis song?

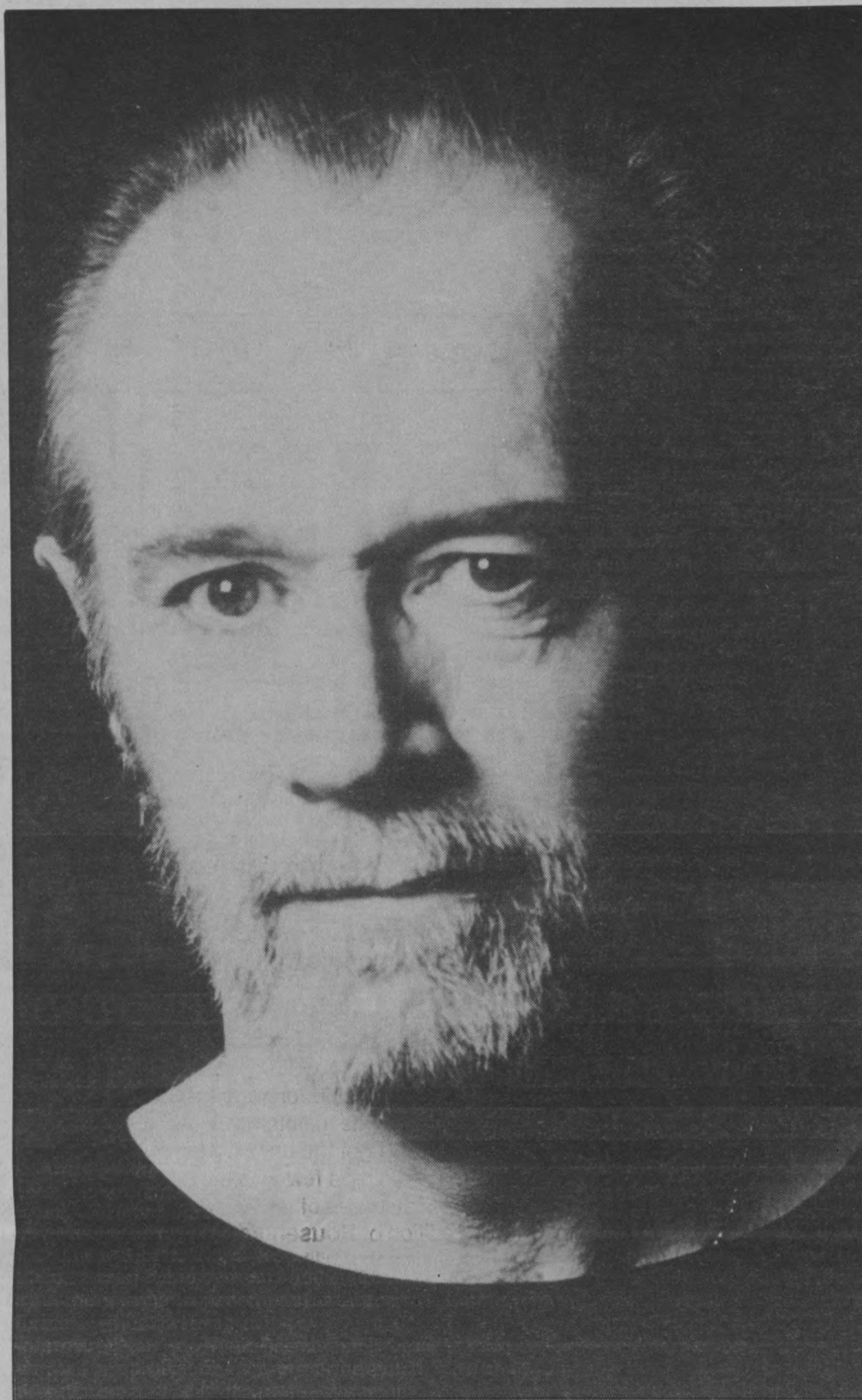
Carlin: "Heartbreak Hotel." But, I don't care for Elvis at all. I always thought he was bogus and that he was a white interloper into Black music. It never meant anything. ... You know what I say? White people ought to not fuck with music at all. Don't even touch it. If they want to play that European classical stuff, fine, that's rigid and it's discipline and very anal compulsive.

ENCORE: What did you think of the last *Bill and Ted* film?

Carlin: I didn't see the second one yet. I'm waiting for it to come out on video.

ENCORE: Are you a movie fan?

Carlin: I love movies but I don't live the kinda life that allows me to see them a lot. ... I love Mafia movies. I love movies about



GEORGE CARLIN: ON THE Outside, WITH A Whim

Interview by Dylan Callaghan

real violence and death. I'm very at home with it. There's something wonderful about that. I think a lot of people got this thing about, "Oh, isn't that awful!" when they actually mean, "Isn't that wonderful, but I'm not supposed to feel this way." (There's a noise, like a crying baby on Carlin's end.)

Carlin: By the way, that sound you're hearing in the background is my mother. We keep her in the corner.

ENCORE: Good, I just wanted to make sure.

Carlin: Yeah, that is a green and yellow amazon parrot. See, that's Loopy. Loopy imitates a baby. We think Loopy must have grown up with a baby in the house, because Loopy does these great imitations of a baby. (to Loopy) Loopy be quite now! We're talking here, this gentleman and I. Loopy's looking at me and saying, "Fuck you."

ENCORE: Is George Bush Satan?

Carlin: George Bush is probably the last of those privileged Eastern people who will get the job of president. From now on were going to have a very colorful array of presidents. ...

Ah, by the way, I was thinking it would have been terrific if those five guys were standing there yesterday at the dedication of the Reagan Library and — now this is

how my mind works — if somebody with a submachine gun had killed all of them, that would have been very exciting television footage. I don't care about those five people. They've done everything they can to destroy this country and to make the wealthy more wealthy, and to make everybody else's life difficult and if those five people were killed, first of all it wouldn't bother me at all, in theory. Secondly, it would have been terrific television. Now, is there someone standing around reading this newspaper who would disagree with that? If so, I would say that person isn't functioning and there are no synapses occurring.

ENCORE: I read an article in the press packet and the theme of it was that you're a mad guy. Are you an angry guy in general?

Carlin: Well that's an overgeneralization. I believe that anybody who has a good brain and anything resembling a heart would have to be somewhat angry when they look around this planet and see what's happened to people. The anger I feel is based on my belief that this species blew it. I really feel this species had a chance to soar, and I think we missed it.

ENCORE: What kind of guy is George Carlin?

Carlin: My taste and my living style are very plain. I don't socialize a lot. I'm very

content with my family and my small circle of friends. I don't drink, I don't smoke, I don't gamble, I'm not a womanizer, I've been successfully and happily married to the same woman for 31 years, I have a grown, well-adjusted daughter and I have paid about \$6,000,000 in taxes in the past 10 years.

I love individuals. As I meet people one by one, I see the potential in each of them that this whole species had. All of the wonder, all of the magic, all of the imagination. But it's when people get into groups that trouble starts. People change when they're in the company of others. And as soon as there's three, four, five, 10 of them, now suddenly there are little hats, and they have little arm bands, suddenly there's a fight song, a secret pass word, a secret hand shake and they have an agenda and they have a list of other people they don't like. It's groups that are killing us.

So, the answer to the question is, "George Carlin is a guy who's really easy to get along with, but I have big attitudes when it comes to the world around me."

ENCORE: So, I guess you're kind of a lone-wolf, given your view on groups.

Carlin: Yes. I've always functioned as an outsider. And it's lonesome out here, I gotta tell you, because there's a need for each of us to belong. There's this dichotomy in me. Part of me wants to be appreciated, understood and accepted, but another part of me will not do it on their terms. And that's fine. I am happy with my circle of friends and it's not like I'm unloved or unappreciated. But I would like, somehow, to have fit in better. But there's too much cost. First you gotta go to their house, then they gotta go to your house, then you gotta talk about what they want to talk about ... I don't want to do that. I just want to be floating out here taking potshots.

"I like the fact that there are so many comedians today, but it has watered down some of the quality."

ENCORE: What do you think of today's comics?

Carlin: I rarely see a comedian on television who doesn't have something — a couple of lines to offer me that I enjoy. I like the fact that there are so many comedians today, but it has watered down some of the quality. When it comes to standup, a lot of people haven't really leapt through lately, you know, someone that makes me eager to see them again.

ENCORE: When was the last time you did any drugs?

Carlin: I don't have a date that I can give. ... I gave up each of my things — and I count them back from beer, tobacco, pot and cocaine. I just stopped using things as they began being more trouble than fun ... One day I had a half a roach and I smoked it and I got a buzz, and I thought, "Hey, now I'm stuck feeling like this for a couple hours." I realized that it was less fun than it used to be.

ENCORE: Is Vanilla Ice the new James Dean?

Carlin: (Laughter) Let's go to the next question. The answer to that question is in the question.

ENCORE: Who's afraid of Virginia Wolf?

Carlin: James Dean.

ENCORE: Have you ever watched the show *Studs*?

Carlin: Just long enough to realize that women still have a long way to go before they're taken seriously.

ENCORE: What is your favorite sound?

Carlin: The sound of people screaming.

ENCORE: At you?

Carlin: No, no. Just the sound of screaming.



A Fall Toward Grace

The Newly-Formed Santa Barbara Dance Company Kicks Off the Autumn Season With a Spectacular Debut

By Traci Rossman

A amazing grace — how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now am found; I was blind but now I see.

— From S.B. Dance Theatre's "Maze of Grace" Not just see, but understand and believe. That's the effect Santa Barbara's new dance repertory company is bound to have on any audience they perform for.

Formerly Repertory West, a UCSB-based "pick-up" company that worked on a performance-to-performance basis, Santa Barbara Dance Theatre is doing amazingly well after only a short stint as a full-time professional company — especially considering the obstacles it had to overcome.

First, there was funding. "To try (to start up a company) with the economy like it is now," said Beth Burleson, a company member and UCSB dance instructor, "I think it's a major miracle that (Jerry Pearson, the company's artistic director) has been able to do what he's done by himself."

Secondly, and by far the most traumatic issue facing the

company, has been the sudden illness of dancer Krysta Kennedy, who was diagnosed with a serious illness that has prohibited her from dancing. Whether or not the performance has been officially dedicated to Kennedy, fellow dancer Peter McCorkle affirmed that the energies of each piece have been directed towards her.

"When you've worked with someone intimately for five weeks and all the sudden, they're not there ... Emotionally, it really set us on a tailspin," Burleson said.

How would the six-dancer company continue to function with one large role unfilled and only few weeks left before their debut performance? Luckily, Kristianna Bertelsen, former Rep West member, was available. "A lot was thrown at her in a two-week period," Burleson said. "She's also young and smart and bright and quick. She's doing a wonderful job of it."

Not only will the show go on tonight at the Lobero Theatre at 8 p.m., it will be spectacular. With six diverse pieces, five of which are brand-new to Santa Barbara, Burleson promises "two hours of dynamite dancing."

One of Pearson's new pieces, "Maze of Grace," includes powerful jazz, funk and modern moves, with variable pacing. Often violent and confused, the dancers, while being continually bombarded by slide projections of words like "Mom" and "bad," clearly take on the stance of adolescents. Pearson said the dance is about the vitality of both the positive and negative aspects of one's life. "They're being pushed through these verbal and mental images of what it is to be successful, what it is to find your home. The reason I'm trying to have so much going on is because it's confusing when you're being driven through life at high momentum."

In short, Pearson said, this is a perception piece from which the viewer may conclude that "these forces which



Kristianna Bertelsen and Steve Lovelace (above), Tony Coray and Beth Burleson (left), during rehearsals for the Santa Barbara Dance Theatre's new season.

HILLARY KAPLOWITZ/Daily News



propel us through life are controlled by a totally different system of judgment than just good and bad. You can't do your Reagan slogans and expect to touch people's hearts."

The piece is in perfect contrast to the first, "In Our Own Image," which has no message per se, but is truly a moving work of art. Its inventive use of sticks and big green balls makes it sculptural, a far cry from commentary on human relationships.

On the other hand, choreographer Christopher Pilafian's "In the Ellasphere" is just plain fun. Well, actually, rather intricate fun, but one would never know it from how smoothly the dancers pull it off. "It's an exploration of mood that's inspired by Ella Fitzgerald singing from the Rodgers and Hart songbook. It's not a story piece — it does have a progression of atmospherics, and it's rich with rhythms. I was born in the '50s and I looked for echoes of that period in feeling," Pilafian said. "Ellasphere" has a musical theatre flair and includes romantic duets which can only be described as divine.

Another piece, "Necessary Losses," presents a view of the loss of human life, making the observer ponder the word "necessary" and whether it matters when dealing with people's emotional attachments.

Pearson has 20 years of professional dancing to his credit, including the formation of his own Pearson Dance Company. "When I became director (of SBDT), the first thing I did was try to set up a salaried company so that I could focus their energy more clearly," he said. "With pick-up companies, you don't get that real glue that holds it all together, which is the studio time. ... It's not that you just share one dance together, it's that you get a larger body of understanding of emotional and musical material."

Pearson has carefully selected the very best local talents to found the only professional repertory company on the Central Coast. With adequate support, their potential is limitless; Pearson hopes to tour the U.S. with SBDT as early as next year. In the meantime, dancer Tony Coray

looks to the legendary Alfred Adler's quote, "Trust only movement," adding that "movement never lies." This performance surely won't.

The Santa Barbara Dance Theatre gives its debut performance at 8 p.m. tonight in the Lobero Theatre. For more information, call 963-0761.

The repertory company, founded by Artistic Director Jerry Pearson, makes its debut tonight at the Lobero Theatre at 8:00 p.m.

HILLARY KAPLOWITZ/Daily News



Animated Flesh

The Meat Puppets Unite Body and Spirit With Their Pseudo-Country Punk n' Rumble

Interview by T.A. Csicsman

The Meat Puppets, a rough and tumble trio from Phoenix, are coming to town this weekend to show off songs from their new album *Forbidden Places*. Harking back to the SST days of alternative rock and roll, the Puppets play hard and fast with a pseudo-country aroma that will be sure to get you hopping like a toad on hot asphalt. **ENCORE** spoke with drummer Derrick Bostrom in a phone interview from New York City.

ENCORE: Well, you're playing this Saturday, the 9th of November, at the Anaconda in Isla Vista.

Derrick: I'm not sure where that is, I haven't been in S.B. for years.

ENCORE: Well, let me clear something up right away here ... my band is opening up for you guys.

Derrick: Ohhhh! You dog! Which band is that?

ENCORE: Rogue Cheddar. We've been around for a bit. Darryl, our guitarist, and I went to see you play a year ago at the Ventura Theater. It was a great show — and now we get to play with you guys. So we're really excited about the show — we have all your CDs and everything! So what have you been up to? Did you just play in New York or something?

Derrick: We just closed a music awards ceremony last night. We threw our instruments around and turned the volume up to 10 and tried to make a mess and shambles of

everything. I think we succeeded. We played with a bunch of bands like The Family Stand, Julian Cope, Monie Love, Soul Asylum and we were last, so we just figured, well ...

ENCORE: What a show to close on!

Derrick: We figured (we'd) leave the people who were cleaning up something to look at after everybody leaves.

ENCORE: How does it feel to be the fastest, tightest, melodic ...

Derrick: We could be tighter. There's always room for improvement.

ENCORE: Really? You were incredibly fast at the Ventura show last year. You have your recordings which are fast, like "Sam" on your new release, *Forbidden Places*.

Derrick: We can play that faster, of course.

ENCORE: I know!

Derrick: Well, we get bored and keyed-up while waiting to do the show, so by the time we get up there, we're like, 'Fuck it! Let's blast through this shit!' Especially if it's like the other night, and we want to lend some craziness to the proceedings — Cris (Kurtwood, bass player) ended it all by jumping through the drum kit like he does sometimes. And then we got our soundman, who throws a bunch of effects on our voices when we 'space' so it starts to sound weird and stuff.

ENCORE: So your sound guy gets to play around a bit too?

Derrick: When he gets the signal, he starts to put effects on everything and it starts to sound like madness.

ENCORE: In reference to your new album, *Forbidden Places*, it seems like you guys are changing and growing from album to album.

Derrick: That was always our intention. We're not looking to do the same thing over and over again. This new album's a conglomeration of everything that we do. It's also our hardest rocking album.

ENCORE: Well, how about the name question? That's one that we always get when people are asking us about our band, so I've wanted to try it on somebody else.

Derrick: Ah yes, when we all got together and started the Meat Puppets, we were really into the idea of the flesh animated by the spirit and music being a separate spirit playing itself through musicians and taking a life of its own.

ENCORE: Well, I think a lot of people are going to be animated on Saturday.

Derrick: That's good. Are you guys going to practice all week for it? So it's going to be a real battle of the bands?

ENCORE: Well, gosh, um, we've got practice tonight, but maybe we'll practice Wednesday also, and Thursday, and maybe Friday.

The Meat Puppets will be performing at the Anaconda Theatre on Saturday, Nov. 9. Also appearing will be Cracker, fronted by David Lowery of Camper Van Beethoven fame, and those Isla Vista fellows, Rogue Cheddar.

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Urban Dance Squad (left) and Sons of Freedom serve up two albums that successfully unite musical styles. With their recent releases, the bands should leap into national attention.



MUSIC REVIEWS

Two for Freedom

New Albums Break Genre Barriers

Life 'N Perspectives of a Genuine Crossover

Urban Dance Squad
Arista Records

Urban Dance Squad's new album, *Life 'N Perspectives of a Genuine Crossover*, is their second journey into the land of experimental skate-rap-ska. And it's good.

The new record is not as garbled as their last studio LP, the there-is-so-much-stuff-going-on-at-once-it's-almost-surreal *Mental Floss for the Globe*. (Which, by the way, I took back to the record store because the songs sounded so warped that I thought my disk was messed up. It wasn't. I felt stupid.)

This album still has the groovy combination of scratching, sampling, rapping, guitar riffing and the occasional slide whistling as the last, but it is more straightforward and more cynical. And it even has a slow song.

Yes, "Routine" is the musical Urban Dance Squad equivalent of Debbie Boone's "You Light Up My Life," which could be an interesting twist if the lyrics weren't about being so depressed as to want to take a "bath with the toaster." Oh well.

About the title, there are four versions of a song called "Life n' Perspectives" on the disc, so it must mean something, I just don't know what because I couldn't fully catch all of the lyrics. And the lyrics are only available by mail-order. And mail-order takes time, you know.

Anyway, the 17-song album is a good display of Urban Dance Squad's eccentric blend of rock and rap that makes you want to bob your head up and down and bounce around, arms and legs flailing, happy-like. And it comes with a trippy sticker. What more could you want?

—Bonnie Bills

Gump

Sons of Freedom
Chrysalis Records

Vancouver's Sons of Freedom, originally formed in 1986, released a critically acclaimed 1988 debut album on the independent Slash label. With a new record company, Chrysalis, and a new album, *Gump*, Sons of Freedom are poised — if not completely prepared — to leap into the eyes of national attention.

SOF has always been a hard band to pin down — they're not metal, not soul, not pop, but all of these and more. When a band dares to walk the lines between musical styles, their strengths and weaknesses are readily apparent to their listeners. All too often, multi-styled musicians come up lacking. Thankfully, this is not the case with Sons of Freedom — they're an extremely skillful and well-rounded band.

Gump is a wandering, varied 10-song disc with its own interesting appeal. The jumpy, catchy basslines on songs like "Dreamgirl" and "I Don't Care Anymore" will pull you in and get you moving, while the fascinatingly layered spoken-screamed chorus of "USA Long Distance" is both disconcerting and appealing.

Lead singer James Jerome Kingston's vocals are neither pretty nor expressive, but the topics they ramble over run the scale from deeply emotional to severely twisted. "I Can See" is a supremely slow and tender moment while "I Don't Care Anymore" snarls pessimistically throughout ("Given the chance I'd crawl back up the womb"). Overall, "Gump" is an excellent album that avoids the dreaded music industry "sophomore slump." A couple of its songs fall flat, but by and large they are enjoyable and well done.

—Aaron Cappocchi

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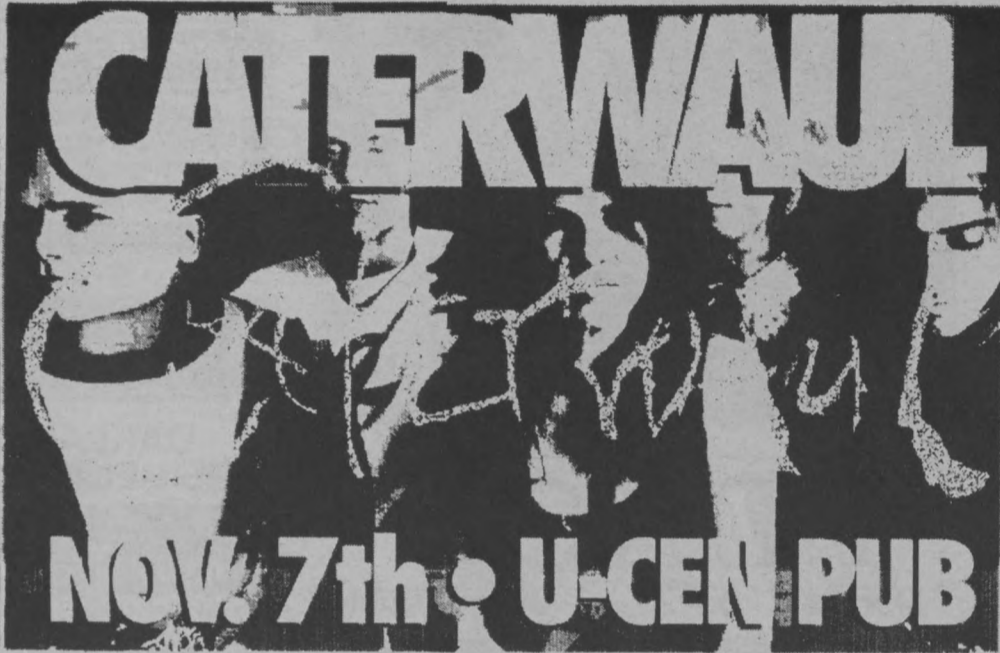
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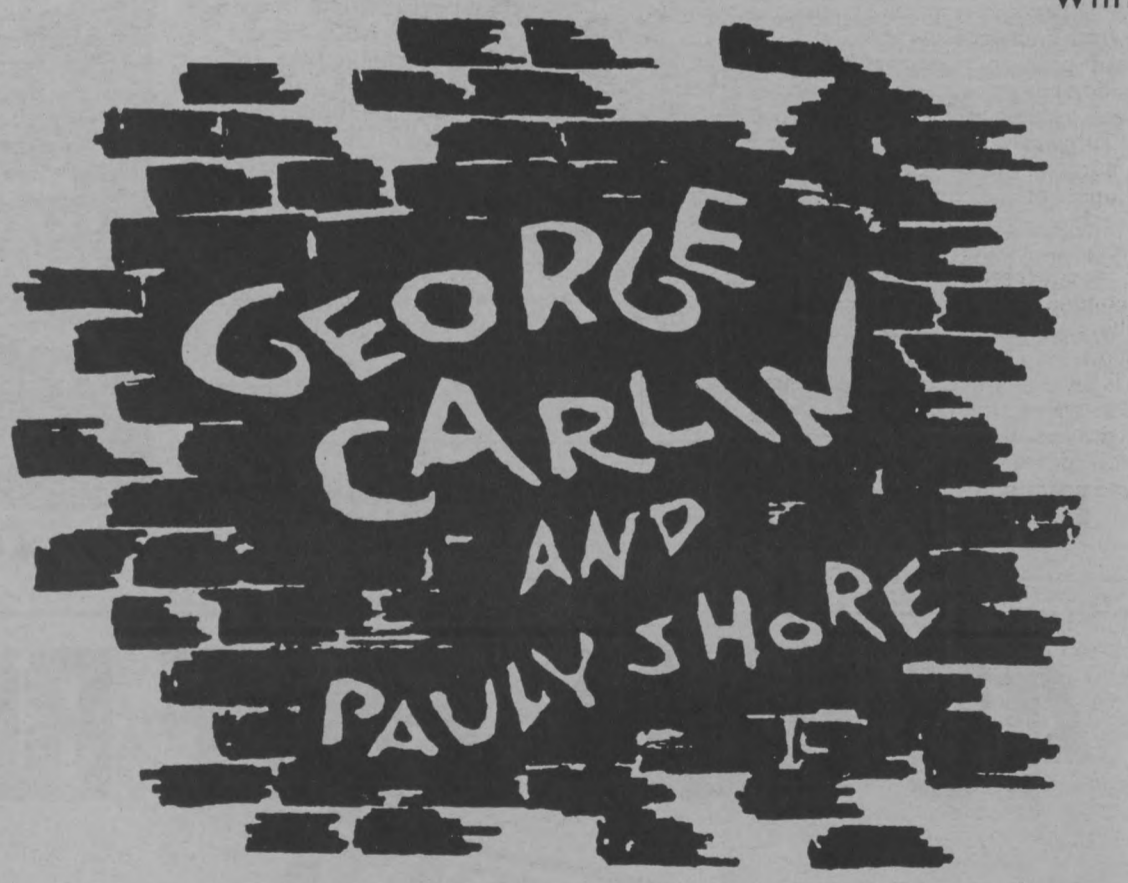


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