

# Welcome treat concocted by John Fahey

A new album from John Fahey is almost always a welcome treat, and his most recent release on his own Takoma label, "Old Fashioned Love" is a thing of rare beauty indeed.

Fahey continues in the vein of his last album for Reprise, and works with a select group of solid, professional brass and reedmen who recreate with Fahey the sound and feel of turn-of-the-century dance music. The meeting of master guitarist and mischievous musicians comes off famously, even erupting into an unprecedented (at least in connection with Fahey) vocal interlude that recalls the

infectious chorus of the Tijuana Brass' memorable rendition of "Mame."

The second side of the album is dominated by this early 1900's-style music, but the first side is reserved for the music that Fahey has championed for more than a decade—unaccompanied acoustic guitar. On this side, too, he departs from his usual practice and is accompanied by one Woodrow Mann, who acquits himself with distinction. Of special delight is the creakily dissonant "In a Persian Market," which shines with the glinty, clean-edged guitar tone that is a hallmark of Fahey's work of the last

seven years.

It is interesting to contrast this album with Fahey's past career. Starting around 1960, there began to appear in marginal record stores a new label, whose limited catalog centered around the offerings of John Fahey. Takoma Records, as the label was named, was dedicated to the principle that the finest music let loose upon the ear comes from the acoustic guitar. With Fahey as a cornerstone, the label added slowly to its collection of obscure, sometimes downright obnoxious guitarists plying their trade with an aggravating excellence.

One early addition was Robbie Basho, who did not meet with much save critical success, but resurfaces from time to time, his mysticism and

## dave ware strike up the band

heraldic imagery mystifying audiences as before. Another was Leo Kottke, a Minneapolis musician who played several of Fahey's six-string guitar pieces on a stiff Gibson twelve-string. Fahey referred to Kottke's voice as being "like geese farts

on a muggy day" and signed him to Takoma. This signing resulted in Kottke's first totally instrumental album, an event that met with much critical and popular acclaim and established Kottke as a "name" outside of the Minnesota coffee house circuit.

At the center, though, remained Fahey, constantly refining his technique and building a reputation as perhaps the most innovative folk-blues guitar picker in America. Not one to remain still musically, he also improved the production values of his recordings, rising from the empty-garage resonances of his first albums to a smooth, flawless product that lets nothing distract the listener from the glorious guitar sounds.

## 'Danton's Death' on stage Friday

"Danton's Death," a tragedy by Georg Buechner on the figures and ideas of the French Revolution, will begin its run Friday in Howell Theater. Directed by William Morgan, the play converts what might have been a simply representational case history into a series of brief, episodic fragments that gain in dramatic momentum and emotional impact more than they lose in logical development.

"Danton's Death" was penned by Buechner in 1835, while he was still an undergraduate. A disillusioned radical, he had been sent from his university to a provincial town by his father, who hoped to keep his son out of the hands of the law. Hurt but realizing the necessity of his

father's action, Buechner secretly set out to create a unique play that might earn enough money to allow him to leave the country before being clapped into prison to be forgotten like so many other political prisoners.

Unfortunately, Buechner died a scant two years after the completion of "Danton's Death," leaving this, his masterpiece, and an assortment of lesser work as his legacy. His work has been called the inspiration for the epic style of didactic German playwright Bertolt Brecht.

"Danton's Death" will be staged in Howell Theater at 8:00 p.m. April 25 through May 3. Tickets are \$3, \$2.50 for students, available in the Temple Building box office from 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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