

# Arts & Entertainment

## Glen Silber looks at life from the left

By Stew Magnuson  
Senior Reporter

During the opening scene of "Troupers," documentary on the San Francisco Mime Troupe, a group of actors set up a small stage in a quiet park. Soon a crowd gathers and the mimes come out for their performance. But wait a second, these mimes don't have a half-inch of white makeup on like Shields and Yarnell or Marcell Marceau. And hey, these can't be mimes; they're not only speaking, they're dancing and singing as loud as they can!

The San Francisco Mime Troupe's definition of a mime goes way back to ancient Greece where the mimes weren't silent at all. They used exaggerated expressions and scenes from everyday life to make exacting political and social commentary. "Troupers" is one of five documentaries this weekend at the Sheldon Film Theatre by acclaimed filmmaker Glen Silber, who will be at the evening performances to discuss his works.

"Troupers" is a fascinating look into the 26-year history of the controversial, outspoken theater group. Find out what topics the troupe was performing since 1959, and you'll see just what was on the minds of American liberals over the same period. Nuclear war and nuclear energy, racism, The Vietnam War and the closing of steel mills are among their topics.

"Troupers" just doesn't show the company on stage. Silber has uncovered exciting news footage of when the troupe was kicked out of a San Francisco park by the police for performing without a license. Ronnie Davis, the troupe's founder, loving every min-

ute of it, argued with police, only to be hauled away in a big van along with the rest of the actors. The rock benefit for their legal defense fund brought many of the early San Francisco rock bands and the Haight-Ashbury scene together for the first time.

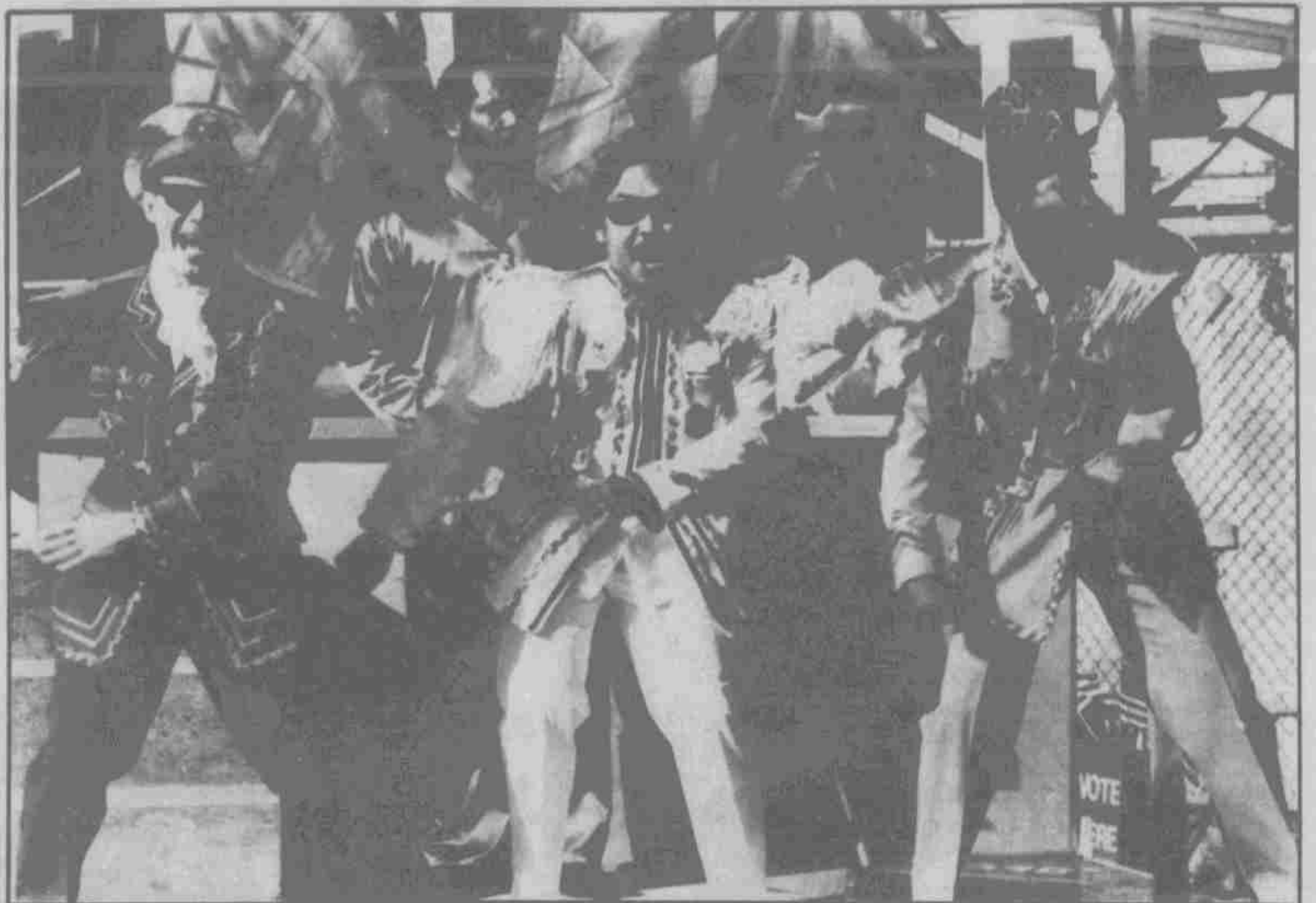
"Troupers" also goes on tour with the group in 1985 to see them perform a play called "Steel Town," a musical about the slow death of the steel industry in America. The troupe performed for hundreds of steel workers in East Chicago, many of whom had never seen such a play.

Their productions aren't as fascinating as their turbulent history. "Guerilla" theater, as they call it, usually stirs up some controversy and some fascinating characters, all of which Silber captures perfectly.

Along with "Troupers," Silber will be screening four other films, including the excellent "The War At Home," a documentary on the anti-war movements in the 60's. Focusing on Madison, Wis., "The War At Home," is an intriguing story of how the peaceful demonstrations in one town slowly turned to militarism after the repeated physical harassment by the Madison police and National Guard troops.

Silber is careful to get all sides of the story; but I'm afraid the chief of police rationalizing why he sent his men in swinging their billy clubs at a bunch of harmless protestors sitting in a hallway reading and singing just doesn't quite make sense.

Today at noon, Silber will be at a screening of his latest film, "Who Are The Contras?" which is free to the public. The film was made for Congress and is narrated by Mike Farrell of "M.A.S.H." fame. The film runs 30 minutes and is



Courtesy of Sheldon Film Theater

"Troupers," an in-depth look at the flamboyant and unconventional San Francisco Mime Troupe, is only one of the films by documentary filmmaker Glen Silber that will show this weekend at the Sheldon Film Theatre.

sponsored by LASCO.

Like the mime troupe, Silber's works are undoubtedly liberal. He has been nominated twice for Academy Awards and is on the staff of the program "West 57th Street," a summer CBS news program. He will talk about his work at the noon screening today and the 7:30 p.m. screenings tonight and Saturday. The

schedule for the Sheldon screenings today and Saturday are as follows:

Friday, 1 and 7:30 p.m. "The War At Home." (1979).

3 p.m. "El Salvador: Another Vietnam," (1981) and "Atomic Artist" (1981). "El Salvador" investigates the history of the civil war in El Salvador

and the forces that have embroiled the United States in this conflict. "Atomic Artist" is the story of T.A. Price, who uses scrap metal from a nuclear-weapons testing laboratory to create sculpture.

Saturday, 1 and 7:30 p.m. "Troupers." 3 p.m. "El Salvador: Another Vietnam" and "Atomic Artist."

## Son Seals growls at the Zoo

By Stew Magnuson  
Senior Reporter

Son Seals, "the gentleman from the windy city," the man with the mean, crying guitar and a deep, growling voice, returns to the Zoo Bar this weekend after a long absence. For Seals, the celebrated blues guitarist and singer, the Zoo Bar is like returning to his roots.

### Concert Preview

No, Lincoln, doesn't really look like Osceola, Ark., just west of the delta. No, the Zoo Bar isn't exactly The Dipsy Doodle, the jukejoint owned by Seal's father where he grew up listening to the blues in the '40s and '50s. But it's close.

"The Dipsy Doodle was a country jukejoint. There's places like that all around down south," Seals said from his home in Chicago. "I've played in some pretty fancy places, but I feel more at home in places like the Zoo. It's not where the big money is, but when I play there it's like the place I

grew up in. It's a tighter, better feeling."

Seals started out in small, unknown bands in Arkansas, switching from drums to guitar. In the late '60s he wound up playing drums for fellow Osceola native Albert King. When his father, Jim Seals, died in 1971, he made the move to Chicago, like so many other bluesmen. In a few years, Seals was hailed as a new force on the Chicago blues scene and had two LPs on the Alligator label.

Now it's 1987. The blues seems to be making a small resurgence with MTV videos of Stevie Ray Vaughn and Robert Cray, the first black blues guitarist to be signed to a major label since B.B. King.

"The attention on MTV helps," Seals said. "The guy (Cray) is good, and he deserves the attention. . .every time you turn on the TV, it's all rock. But it's not like the blues is coming to an end. It's been around for a long time, and it's seen all types of music come and go."

Seals recently participated in a Public Broadcasting documentary, as yet unnamed, about contemporary blues musicians. But the producers ran out of money before completion. He plans to return to the studio to record his next

LP in March and hopes to get it released by spring.

Seal's Lincoln stand is tonight and Saturday. He'll be backed by four excellent musicians, including Red Singer (K.C. Red), a Lincoln native on tenor sax. Those wishing to see a true legend, picking and growling in the kind of place he grew up in, should stop by the Zoo and be ready to shake around on the newly varnished floor.

### Correction

The Haymarket story in yesterday's Divisions incorrectly stated that patrons of the Tubbery can have dinner served to them in hot tubs. This is not the case. A package deal is available whereby patrons can eat at Buchanan's restaurant and then soak at the Tubbery.

## Kronos Quartet to play

By Charles Lieurance  
Senior Reporter

If your idea of chamber music consists of four classically-trained musicians in ties and tails unfurling graceful measures of Bach or Vivaldi to an opulent drawing room full of bluebloods, you're in for a big surprise with the Kronos Quartet.

The quartet will perform at Kimball Hall Sunday at 8 p.m.

Started in 1973 by David Harrington, classically-trained musician and a devout experimentalist, the Kronos Quartet has been in the constant act of foiling audience's expectations and preconceived notions of chamber music. The Kronos Quartet is about rejection of stereotypes and what Harrington considers the "complacency" of music.

"Two hundred years of tradition has created certain expectations, and we don't fit those expectations," Harrington said. "We try to not burden our music with cultural trappings."

The quartet, who look like a modern new-wave band and whose performances include exercises in rhythm that would send your average classical purist's nose flying into the air, mix the typical string lineup of chamber music with synthesizer and amplified violins.

### Concert Preview

Implementing Thelonius Monk's jazz compositions, Philip Glass's experimentation and a pop sensibility, the Kronos Quartet may not fit the purist's idea of chamber music, but with their ear for diversity, their unique imaginations and knowledge of musical stylings above and beyond the call of duty, they make the stuffiness normally associated with chamber music look downright atavistic.

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