

Lied crowd pleased by new age jazz of Solstice

Concert review

Old Man Winter rattled his bones and gnashed his teeth Sunday night in honor of the Winter Solstice Concert at the Lied Center — and a few ancients took a break from assembling Christmas gifts for the kids.

Audiences braved increasingly gusty winds to attend the show which featured recording artists from the popular new age Windham Hill label.

The musicians are currently on tour in support of Windham Hill's new release, "A Winter's Solstice — volume IV."

The concert was sponsored by the University Program Council, but brought in a mixed community audience for the Celtic-based new age of Light Noise and the new age and jazz stylings of Liz Story and Alex De Grassi.

The show was a great success with the mid-sized Lincoln crowd, which called for encores with two consecutive standing ovations.

De Grassi, an acoustical guitarist in the tradition of Leo Kottke, brought an intensely personal playing style to the stage, sometimes treating his guitar like a percussion instrument.

One of the first Windham Hill recording artists, he is a staple of new age and light jazz guitar.

Light Noise is a Celtic-based new age quartet from Dublin, Ireland.

They performed with energy and humor the odd blend of Celtic folk and light new age jazz that has made them popular artists for the label.

The songs in Gallie were impressive and moving and showed up their English tune by comparison.

Liz Story on keyboards was joined in this tour by Joel DiBartolo on bass.

DiBartolo played for seventeen years with the Tonight Show Band under Doc Severinsen.

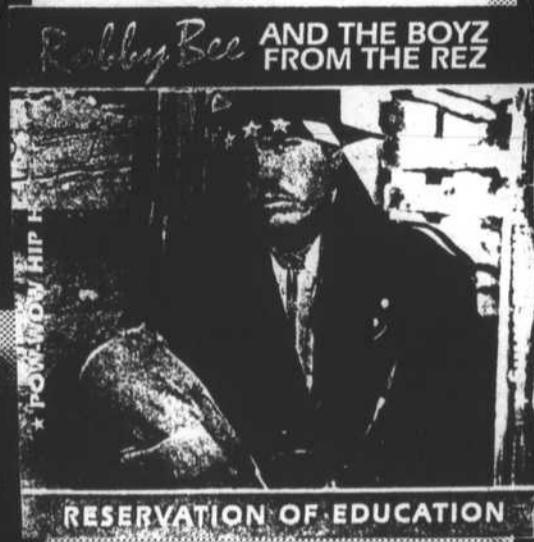
Story's variation on traditional Christmas carols was her strongest piece — though several of her pieces were very engaging. Her between-songs banter, however, was odd and a little confusing.

New age music, like fractal geometries, is more a bitmap of musical terrains than the straightforward expressions of more traditional forms.

It has come to be viewed at times as a kind of near art, something to listen to in dentist's waiting rooms and between board meetings.

And as the theme music of the new age movement it represents for some

See **CONCERT** on 10



Songs of heritage and hope

Contemporary Indian music blends technology with tradition

Editor's Note: This is the first story in a weeklong series exploring the contributions of American and Canadian Indians to the world music scene.



By **Jill O'Brien**
Staff Reporter

The songs of contemporary American and Canadian Indian musicians testify that there is more to the music than chants and drum beats.

It is a music that melds today's electric technology with traditional instruments.

It tells of a history of oppression and resistance.

It delivers a message of hope.

Canadian Cree singer/songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie describes the music of the Indian scene as "powwow rock, powwow jazz and powwow rap."

Sainte-Marie, rock's first aural storyteller to cross powwow sing-

ing with mainstream music, coined the term "powwow rock" in the late 1960s.

She stirred up the music world with her love ballads and protest songs, which incorporated powwow singing with synthesizers and electric guitars.

"I saw amazing people burning out with painful issues, who needed to have a good time, so I brought them upbeat shows, color, fancy clothes, a good band, and songs that helped to focus on Indian issues ...," she said.

Her son Dakota Starblanket Wolfchild, a high school senior, often accompanies her on tour and backs her on keyboards when he's not composing powwow raps.

Besides rock and rap, another category not to be overlooked is powwow blues.

Since 1964, A. Paul Ortega, a Mescalero Apache and nationally known blues guitarist and singer, has played songs based on traditional chants.

Another recording artist, John Trudell, a Sioux native from Nebraska, served as the national chairman for AIM, the American Indian Movement, during the 1970s. He turned to poetry after an arsonist's

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— Sainte-Marie
singer/songwriter

blaze killed his wife, their three children and his mother-in-law, he said.

Later, Trudell linked up with Kiowan blues guitarist Jesse Ed Davis, who put music to the poet's words.

But music to these artists means more than mixing traditional and contemporary sounds.

"It is time for us to speak our truth," Trudell said.

That truth is reflected in Trudell's writings, which document the discrimination, persecution, abuse, love, joy and grief endured by the human spirit.

"Today, the safest place for indigenous people and non-Indian people to express their truths is through art and culture," he said.

"In the way that I approach it now, I can speak my truth."

Seventh Generation, a South Dakota Rosebud Reservation quintet, mixes Lakota philosophy with mainstream heavy metal.

The band takes its name from the prophecy of Sioux leader Black Elk, who predicted the Lakota Nation would be in decline for seven generations. According to the prophecy, Black Elk said in the seventh generation there would be but my songs are for everyone. I call it a new style of music — ethnic metal."

Though his music may not convey Indian issues, he actively sup-

See **OVERVIEW** on 10

December Collage' dancers shine despite costumes



The "December Dance Collage" dancers who performed Saturday displayed an eclectic composition of five dance ensembles from traditional to new age. Their performance at the Johnny Carson Theatre was part four of five performances that ran Thursday through Sunday.

The first selection, "Lethe: The River of Forgetfulness," choreographed by Lisa Thurrell, was based on the tale of Hermes and spirits of the underworld.

James Hickey, as Hermes, executed a pow-

erful performance of strong emotional movement. The other dancers probably had a great deal of talent as well, but it was hard to tell because their costumes were too distracting.

More suited to a circus, the costuming was visibly restrictive. It did not allow the dancers to exhibit fluidity and freedom of movement.

There was a similar problem with the second selection, "Luminescence," choreographed by Lisa Fusillo, although it was not as obvious. The dancers were fluid in their movements and worked well as a group. It was a traditional dance, with symphonic music and rhythm.

"Black Angels" was by far the most exciting and diverse arrangement. It displayed new age and modern dance influences through the use of sharp and severely broken body movements.

Fallen, an angel portrayed by dancer Angela Robidoux, was amazing upon her entrance to the stage. She moved with incredible strength

and her power of intimidation over the other angels was visible.

The collection of dancers called Blackness were very chaotic and morbid in their movements. With the industrial hollow music, this gave the entire selection a foreboding atmosphere.

In "Black Angels" the costuming was symbolically superior. Fallen's emerald full-length dress gave a serpent-like grace to her portrayal. The angels were veiled in gossamer white dresses. Blackness dancers had costumes of tattered and earth-toned leotards, almost in the design of a collage.

The use of special lighting techniques and a thick fog bank added to the mystique of the selection. The music was frightening and it relayed a feeling of severe isolation.

"Demonstration" the next selection, featured two very talented dancers, Amy Ernst and

Lisa Thurrell. The dancers displayed a wide range of difficult ballet maneuvers for an exceedingly long period of time. It was amazing to see them maintain such a high level of stamina for an entire performance.

The last selection, "Ceremony of Carols" was a festive holiday compilation of 10 dance selections. The entire company of dancers was incorporated into many of the selections. While the individual experience of the dancers was obviously varied, their talents blended during the selection.

Overall, the dancers were excellent in their response to the demands of the costumes and the movements incorporated in their roles. It wasn't just dancing. In many cases, it also was acting.

— Paula Lavigne