

A & E Briefs

Combo Uno featured in workshop

The Las Vegas Jazz Society and the Whitney Library will hold a jazz workshop, featuring the talented Combo Uno, which is comprised of UNLV students and faculty.

The event, held in the concert hall of the Whitney Library, 5175 E. Tropicana (one block east of Nellis Blvd), starts at 7:30 p.m. Admission is only \$7 for general, \$5 for students and seniors.

The group will feature both standards and an offering of great originals. Come and enjoy an excellent night of jazz.

St. Matthew Passion to be performed

The Southern Nevada Musical Arts Choral Society will perform J.S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in March. Rehearsals are every Sunday night from 7 to 9:30 p.m. in Room 147 of the Alta Ham Fine Arts Building on the university campus.

Interested singers from the student body, faculty or community are invited to participate. To schedule an audition, please call Douglas Peterson, musical director, at 451-6672.

Playwriting contest offers \$1,000 prize

The Dept. of Theatre Arts and the Senior Theatre announced a playwriting contest will be held, offering \$1,000 for the winning play.

Plays must be based on themes that reflect older adults in America today; they should be full-length, nonmusical, with the script written in English. The winning play will be read at the National Senior Adult Theatre Festival, scheduled for January, 1997.

The Dramatic Publishing Co. is the contest sponsor. Interested playwrights should send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with a written request for an official rule and entry blank to: UNLV Department of Theatre Arts, Senior Theatre/Dramatic Publishing Playwriting Contest, 4505 S. Maryland Pkwy, Las Vegas, NV, 89154-5036.

BY JAN WILLIAMS
A & E EDITOR

A very insightful and soulful Tracy Chapman appears in her current release, *New Beginning*. From the first strains of her contralto voice in the excellently uplifting "Heaven's Here on Earth," to the final echo of the guitar in the spiritual "I'm Ready," this is a work that not only entertains, but promotes inner thought and uplifts the spirits.

Chapman chose her material carefully, according to the artist. "Some of the songs are dealing with issues we are facing in the world right now like the degradation of the natural environment." This is evident in "The Rape of the World."

Here, the singer charges that, due to "rape," in the form of mining, bombs exploding underground and being dumped on, we have committed "the most heinous of crimes; this the deadliest of sins; the greatest violation of all times."

"If you look," Chapman vocalizes, "you'll see it with your own eyes. If you listen you will hear her cries. If you care you will stand and testify, and stop the rape of the world."

The lack of freedom, justice and honesty are issues also addressed by the singer. In the title cut from the CD, it is clear she is troubled by the state our world is in. "There's too much fighting, too little understanding. It's time to stop and start all over; make a new beginning."

As most artists do, Chapman sings songs of love, what it is, where it fits in her life, and why she should keep there.

In the mournful "Smoke and Ashes," the songstress deals with love and deception. She reflects back at the rumors, the cool, calm denials, and



Chapman writes and sings songs of "New Beginnings," the title of her latest release.

New Beginning

the realization that love blinded her to the lies she took for the truth.

"It was just a smoldering fire I mistook for a blaze," she sings, "only smoke and ashes baby, I've got a red hot heart and your heart's as blue as the blood in your veins." The song that struck me most, both lyrically and musically, was the first track, "Heaven's Here on Earth." Chapman talks of our existence on this world and what she has experienced. "I've seen spirits, I've met angels, I've touched creations beautiful and wondrous, I've been places where I question all I know."

I couldn't help but be touched by her optimism for this planet and its troubled people. She encourages us to "look around, believe in what you see," and suggests that "we can and will become what we aspire to be."

Chapman recorded, utilizing musicians from her home in the San Francisco Bay area. She felt the need to stay close

to home, seeking both a recording and touring band.

She felt this approach would give her the space she needed to "grow musically in a comfortable setting to develop arrangements for the songs and a working relationship with the musicians."

A novelty included in the packaging of the new release is an offer for fans to get a free packet of seeds if they bring the coupon to a Chapman concert. The cover art, which is printed on a scanned image of Tracy's handmade paper, is a shot at an organic farm in California.

"Many of the songs share the themes of change, growth and renewal," Chapman explained. She used the photo to extend the metaphor for growth.

"I thought it would be perfect to be where all these life affirming things are growing."

Chapman also chose the natural motif to get people thinking in a different way. "I wanted to incorporate these images as a way of getting people to think about the potential and possibilities that exist even in something as small as a seed."

So anyone who appreciates quality music, quality lyrics and a quality artist, this is a CD worth picking up. Whether an old fan or a new inquirer, you won't be disappointed. After all, most of us can relate to wanting a new beginning at some point in our lives.

Angels

From pg. 4

chronicles his life spent both in New York and California.

Jeff Koep, Dean of UNLV's College of the Fine and Performing Arts and the musical's producer, has arranged for the production to be showcased in the Los Angeles Market. It opens Feb. 7 at the Odyssey Theatre. Performance times are 8 p.m.

through the 10th, culminating with a 2 p.m. matinee on Feb. 11.

The performance is the first in the "Family Affair" series, quality entertainment for patrons of all ages to enjoy.

Performance times for "Angels" is 8 p.m. through Saturday, with a 2 p.m. matinee on Sunday. Tickets are \$8 for general admission and \$6 for students, seniors and military. For more information, please call the box office at 895-3801.

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