

ON STAGE

Bragg socks it to right-wingers and falls in love

Billy Bragg

and Hazel Dickens

Saturday, Nov. 4, 8 p.m.
Memorial Hall

Union box office: 962-1449

"Help save the suntanned surfer boys and the California Girls."
— Billy Bragg, from "Help Save the Youth of America."

One could make the argument that Billy Bragg has no right to save the youth of America. Or even care that they are in danger. After all, Bragg is from England. Why should he care?

But as Bragg points out, when the United States elects a president, we're not just messing up our own lives — we're messing up the entire free world. So when Bragg toured the U.S. last year during the rage of a presidential election, he did everything he could to encourage people to vote for anyone but George Bush.

This Saturday he's coming back for more. Bragg and Hazel Dickens, a singer with deep roots in folk and country, will be giving a concert in Memorial Hall to raise money for striking mine workers in West Virginia.

The miners, members of the United Mineworkers of America, have been on strike against Pittston Coal of West Virginia for more than six months. The strike has not received much attention in the national media, possibly because it has been mostly non-violent.

Todd Morman, station manager at WXYC, which is sponsoring the concert along with the Carolina Union Activities Board, said Dickens was planning a benefit concert for the miners when Bragg, a fan of hers, called and asked if she would like to work with him.

While the concert is not a benefit, Dickens and Bragg have agreed to donate proceeds to the striking miners' union.

Bragg's songs can mostly be divided into two categories, the personal and the political — the vulnerable, working class Romeo and the angry young man with the socialist ideals.

This is an overly simplistic division, but it is a good starting point.

While the majority of Bragg's songs are overtly political, including "Help Save the Youth of America" and "Chile, Your Waters Run Red

TOM PARKS

concert

Through Soweto," his sentiments are expressed with intensely personal images. Like his press kit says, with Billy Bragg, "the personal is political."

In "Think Again" he asks, "Do you think that the Russians want war/ these are the sons of the parents who died in the last one. Will the voice of insanity lead you to total destruction?"

It is ironic (but not inappropriate) that Bragg will be raising money for striking miners in North Carolina, a state with notoriously anti-union sentiments. But one would have a hard time convincing most people on Franklin Street (or in Raleigh, for that matter) that Chapel Hill is even in the state, so maybe Bragg's union anthem, *There is Power in a Union*, will go over well.

"There is power in a factory, There is power in the land. Power in the hand of the worker, but it all amounts to nothing if together we don't stand."

When Bragg isn't socking it to the right-wingers, he's falling in love. That's not to say that his love songs are the contrived, derivative, over-produced tunage that gets turned out on the West Coast. They're not.

I'd list a few of his sadder, personal songs, including "Greetings to the New Brunette" and "Levi Stubbs' Tears," but I've just listened to "Walk Away Renee" and I can't see the terminal for all the tears in my eyes.

Well, you have to take the crunchy with the smooth.

I Don't Get It.

OMNIBUS

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with Zen Frisbee
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2:00 pm Public Enemy
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- 11/5 Sunday
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- 11/8 Wednesday
The Producers
- 11/9 Thursday
The Black Girls
- 11/10 Friday
Scruffy the Cat
with Dillon Fence

18 & over admitted

Surreal rockers surf the Cradle

Butthole Surfers

Friday, Nov. 3, 10 p.m.
Cat's Cradle

Tickets \$10

On Friday, November 3, the Butthole Surfers will bring their multi-media nightmare circus to the Cat's Cradle.

The name alone should provide the uninitiated with an inkling of how this band sounds. Then again, anyone familiar with the group knows that even a name such as that cannot begin to convey the sound or approach of the deranged, dark-humored collective of PMRC outlaws.

The Buttholes, as they're affectionately known to friends and fans, have been sharing their twisted version of reality with the world for nearly seven years, their debut album having found its way into

DOUG EDMUNDS

concert

progressive record stores in 1983.

Led by singer Gibby Haynes, champion of shock value weirdness and a leading expert on live cockroach dissection, the band started performing in 1981 in San Antonio, Texas, where Haynes met guitarist Paul Leary at Trinity University.

From the start they were anything but the average college party band. Drawing on a fascination with hallucinogens, punk rock, heavy metal cliches, scatological humor and artistic subversiveness (to name but a few), Gibby and his cohorts crafted a style of music which smashed convention, emphasized the offensive and the absurdly ridiculous, and challenged the listener to do almost anything except just listen.

Early albums such as *Cream Corn From the Socket of Davis* and *Rembrandt Pussyhorse* came across as bizarre mixtures of screeching guitars,

howling voices, sound effects and rhythmic unpredictability. More recent offerings have continued the tradition of lunatic fringe humor and musical mayhem, and the brand new *Widowermaker* is sure to fit the same surreal mode.

Even more potentially disturbing or hysterically funny than its records are the band's live performances. In the past they have included middle-aged topless dancers, rear-screen projection of car wrecks and people having seizures, mutilation of dummies and much more.

Gibby alone is quite a sight to see onstage. Rumor has it that this tour's video projection accompaniment will contain footage from real live sex change operations.

Ah, yes!

What a glorious way to spend a Friday evening! Don't count on running into many parents or professors at this one. There's no doubt the show will beat all the past week's Halloween parties for sheer stomach-churning fun and dream-like madness. The music is only the half of it.

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