

Features

There's Always Room for Jello: Biafra At Guilford



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By Laura Norton
FEATURES COLUMNIST

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the united snakes of captivity and to the corporations for which it stands, one nation under the dollar, with liberty and justice for all . . . who can afford it."

These are the words of modern-day renaissance man-cum-artist Jello Biafra, an individual whose status has remained near-legendary in the underground music scene since the late '70s. Biafra will be speaking in Dana auditorium at 8 p.m. on Thursday, March 30th, courtesy of WQFS 90.9 FM.

The announcement of Biafra's visit has created considerable excitement among a variety of students. "It's amazing to have the chance to see one of my idols speak," said junior Nancy Jacobs. Third-year student Tim Lafollette agreed, adding that "Jello sang for one of my favorite punk bands. But I'm even more excited because, as a speaker, he's been such an influential free-speech advocate."

Jello Biafra first appeared on the scene as singer for the Dead Kennedys, a San Francisco old-school band who released a number of classic punk albums such as *Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables* and *In God We Trust, Inc.* Dead Kennedys broke up, and since then Biafra has remained unapologetically involved in politically-oriented artistic expression.

After the demise of the Dead Kennedys, Jello Biafra continued to immerse himself in the world of underground music. He recorded albums with groups like Mojo Nixon and Pigface, and has worked with Ministry's Al Jourgenson to form an artistically radical band, LARD. In LARD, Biafra has the freedom to explore (and critique) musical genres that the confines of punk wouldn't

have allowed; LARD's songs range from techno-influenced songs to industrial tunes that give Jourgenson space to showcase his considerable musical ability. Biafra's frank, on-target political views are as evident as ever in the lyrics, particularly on LARD'S new album, cleverly entitled *'70s Rock Must Die*.

Biafra has released several spoken word albums in the past decade, all on an independent record label he helped to found—Alternative Tentacles. An outspoken left-wing radical, Biafra's spoken word pieces deal with topics such as environmentalism, the importance of being subversive, and the incredibly corrupt corporate structure that passes for an American government. Jello Biafra continues to throw the United States political system for a loop. He ran for mayor of San Francisco on his eighteenth birthday, and decades later, Jello's at it again; this time, as a presidential candidate for the environmentally-conscious Green Party.

Biafra is an anti-death penalty activist and remains one of political prisoner Mumia Abul-Jamal's staunchest supporters. Alternative Tentacles recently released an album that included several of Jamal's spoken word pieces, and Jello dedicates a good portion of his new triple album, *If Evolution Is Outlawed, Only Outlaws Will Evolve* to Jamal's cause. *If Evolution . . .* isn't just a spoken word recording: it's an all out assault on the golden calves and snake-oil merchants that control contemporary society. Biafra uses his humor—and his

art—as a weapon, without patronizing his audience or hiding behind the comfortable cloak of über-P.C. speak. In short: listening to Jello Biafra speak makes one realize that, perhaps, the country we read about in our history books and see on

Full House

It isn't the same one we live in. Not by a long shot.

Editor's Note: Tickets for the show are free for students and may be picked up at the Info Desk.

All other inquirers should call 316-2352.



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