

# ARTS & CULTURE

## In defense of their land: *The Face of a Nation*

Film festival highlights the plight of Tibetans

BY AVI LAMBERT

The sweater, the car, the big fucking TV, the five-star vacation, the dog...that's what makes us happy. The Tibetan Film Festival opened my eyes to the human rights violations Tibetans are facing right now, and what happiness can truly be.

Entitled *The Face of a Nation*, the Tibetan Film festival last weekend showed five movies that depict the Orwellian nightmare of state fear and terrorism in which Tibetans live.

These weren't typical Hollywood movies. They were personal stories of Tibetans. One film tells the story of the 11-year-old refugee, Tenzin, who after completing a perilous 20 day journey through the Himalayas, is threatened by deportation. Also revealed is the story of Ngawang Choepel, a refugee and scholar, arrested by Chinese officials for documenting traditional song and dance in Tibet.

You're on automatic pilot until you see something that tells you this is still happening. It's not like the atrocities end when the films end.

Lhadon Tethong, one of the festival organizers and the president of the King's/Dalhousie-run Students for a Free Tibet (SFT), states that Tibet has no army, no weapons and no countries on their side. All they have is their message. Though

Tethong's family is Tibetan, she says, "It's my duty, it's your choice." Take it personally; it should be everyone's problem.

What's the biggest force in our world? Hollywood.

Everyone knows that Hollywood has influence. The Chinese have put so much pressure on the Walt Disney-owned Buena Vista pictures, that Martin Scorsese's film, *Kundun*, will not open on the east coast. Showing only in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, there are worries that the movie will not come out on video.

According to the vice-president of Buena Vista pictures, *Kundun's* limited release is a result of it being "too artistic", and there not being enough "widespread interest [regarding] Tibet".

This is testimony to the fact that China controls what we see.

The editorial published in the *Chinese Daily* warned Hollywood it "will never be forgiven" for the success of *7 years in Tibet* and the upcoming *Kundun*.

Disney has plans to build a Disneyland in China — not with a Chinese theme, but a ready-for-market western happyland. So the Chinese threat to Hollywood presented an obstacle for Disney's business relations in China.

According to another festival organizer, Tessa Jellowicki, Disney hired the former US secretary-of-state, Henry Kissinger, to smooth relations with China. The line between politics and Disney is now

blurred. This is a piece of the bigger picture, in which human rights and trade have been separated by Bill Clinton. Even after the now infamous Tiananmen square massacre, China only briefly lost its Most Favoured Nation trading status.

As the Dalai Lama says, "China denies its human rights violations, [and] if that is the case, let us in with no restriction."

The logic Canadian business people use in doing business with China is that opening up their market will allow us to influence them...not isolate them.

Yet the separation Clinton has made between human rights and business has made China unaccountable.

Organizations like the Milarepa Foundation and SFT are making a difference. Letter writing is a stand. Look what the few Tibetans in North America have done to make the cause known, Tathong says.

The Dalai Lama, speaking from the government-in-exile in Dharamsala, India, said "we're not fighting for a piece of land, we're fighting for our very survival...the main aim is to return to Tibet."

In 1949 the People's Liberation Army of China invaded Tibet, and has since tried to assimilate Tibetans. In 1975, Tibet was annexed by China.

Tathong says that, last year, China was responsible for 90 per cent of the world's executions: for stealing a pen, for having a picture of the Dalai Lama



and for saying "democracy", or "free Tibet".

Ami Wise, of the over 50 member-

strong Students for a Free Tibet, said, "I can do something before it's history".

Free Tibet. Peu Rungzen.

## Puttin' on the ritz

BY PATRICK SHAUNESSY

Traditionally when one goes to see a jazz show, it is presupposed that there will be at least three or four members in the band. However, I don't think I have ever seen a duo.

Last Saturday night at the Holiday Inn on Robie street, Bill Stewart and Bill Carrothers pulled off one of the most stunning jazz performances I have seen. With Stewart on drums and Carrothers on piano, they managed to play some astounding music in an improv session exploring a healthy range of jazz sounds and styles.

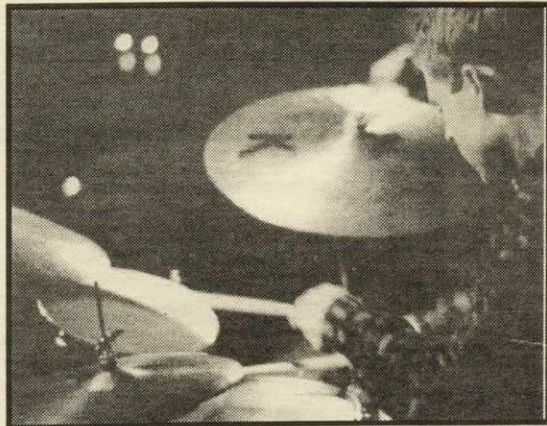
They were performing to promote Bill Stewart's new album, *Telepathy*, on which Bill Carrothers is recorded.

The music is similar to that which was played on Saturday, except that on the disc there is a fuller and richer sound as a full band is used. The album itself is quite good, but it is not as impressive as Saturday night's duet was: Stewart and Carrothers managed to create an equally magnificent musical experience with only two musicians.

Bill Stewart hails from Brooklyn, New York where he has made a lifestyle out of jazz performance.

Stewart was educated at the William Patterson College in jazz and jazz composition. Since then he has enjoyed a successful musical career, having earned a fairly prestigious recording contract under Blue Note records.

Stewart is most often the headliner of the albums on which he is recorded, and he is generally the composer of the music. He himself prefers not to be pigeon-holed with any one style of jazz, so he draws from many different styles to create his own sound. For the most part he prefers the more traditional



styles as opposed to more experimental, atonal styles.

Bill Carrothers' background is almost itself rooted in the spirit of the old jazz performers. He was born of humble beginnings in Woodstock, New York, where he first learned music

playing a church organ. He never received any formal training. At the age of fifteen he started playing at clubs and as his experience grew so did his popularity.

After ten years of "sucking", Carrothers finally began to land some bigger gigs and play with some of the better names in the jazz community. After a while he hooked up with Bill Stewart, and has since recorded on several of his albums.

It is interesting to note that many of the original jazz musicians began of very humble beginnings, often having to play on second hand or damaged instruments. It is because of the poor tuning of instruments (owing to the quality of the instrument and not the musician) that jazz took on such a unique sound: a combination of musical exploration and self expression. In this way, Bill Carrothers' beginnings are in the tradition of some of the great jazz performers.

In the near future, Stewart and Carrothers are re-grouping with the rest of the band on *Telepathy* and travelling to Paris to perform. I was pleased that I got to see such a sensational and unusual act. These are both incredibly talented musicians as diverse in their backgrounds as day and night.



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