

# Arts

## Chadbourne speaks

### Electric rake virtuoso . . .

'Avantgarde' at its most playful, or perhaps, playfulness at its most 'avant-garde, best describes the performance of guitarist Eugene Chadbourne last Tuesday in the Vanier Junior Common Room. Chadbourne, ex-member of psycho-country *Shockabilly*, has been referred to as everything from a "weirdo commie punk," to "one of America's most adept guitarists." He has released over 30 albums and 45 cassette-only recordings and includes among his repertoire or instruments an electric rake, bird cage, baby carriage, and toilet plunger.

Unfortunately, a fan expecting Chadbourne to do, for instance, a very noisy parody of Buffy St. Marie's "Universal Soldier" while wearing a bird cage over his head and rubbing a balloon over his electric rake until it bursts, could only have been disappointed by this short acoustic performance. However, Chadbourne and Jon Rose, Chadbourne's partner, cannot be faulted for beginning without the amps and microphone which arrive half an hour after the concert was supposed to begin.

Before the concert, Rose and Chadbourne spoke about their work and careers with *Excalibur's* Robert Pryer.

Jon Rose: J.R.  
Eugene Chadbourne: E.C.

**EXCALIBUR:** You did cross the picket line.

J.R.: We noticed.

E.C.: I've got my scab right here.

**EXCALIBUR:** What made you start collaborating?

E.C.: Money.

J.R.: He came to Australia first.

E.C.: Ya, it was my fault.

J.R.: It was his fault, and then after that we decided to do a tour in every continent and so far we've done that except this time we repeated because we're in Canada which is till North America.

**EXCALIBUR:** Really.

E.C.: I think we should go to India.

J.R.: India's next.

**EXCALIBUR:** You haven't done South America.

J.R.: (to E.C.) Ya, well do you remember our South American tour? I mean that was heavy. That was heavy shit, you know, we got seriously involved with the neo-Nazi movement there. They were sponsoring the whole tour. Actually, we only discovered it late, at the end of the tour after three weeks.

E.C.: Forty-seven gigs in three days. It was a little hectic.

J.R.: The flying was a bit extreme you know sometimes. Always crossing the same bit of jungle all the time.

**EXCALIBUR:** Are the oranges really the size of beachballs?

E.C.: They pay you in bananas down there. They ran a show up the Amazon where they had to run the cable down the Amazon in

boats. I wanted to play acoustic but they wouldn't have any of that.

J.R.: It was like a sort of world show, really, raising money for the banana farmers.

**EXCALIBUR:** Do you think you'll be able to play without your amps?

E.C.: It's better that way.

**EXCALIBUR:** What about the toilet plunger?

E.C.: You can't play the toilet plunger without electricity.

**EXCALIBUR:** In a pinch would it work in its original purpose?

E.C.: NO! You don't take a sophisticated piece of musical technology and jam it down the toilet.

**EXCALIBUR:** Does it make a kind of amplified suction sound?

E.C.: It sounds like the second Moody Blues album.

**EXCALIBUR:** (to E.C.) You spoke in your NOW magazine interview of becoming a yuppie. Does that mean you want more mainstream success and comforts for your wife Jenny and daughter Emmy?

E.C.: Don't forget Molly. Ah, you know, that was a joke. I was actually changing a shitty diaper when that guy called, so I made a lot of sarcastic remarks and he printed everything, exactly what I said. I said all of that.

**EXCALIBUR:** Advertising is not something you're keen on.

E.C.: You mean like big magazine advertisements? That's cheesy—brainwashing.

**EXCALIBUR:** (to J.R.) Do you have the same philosophy concerning advertising and publicity?

J.R.: No. Traveling with Gene is like traveling with a door-to-door salesman, so I tend to be more European than that, I think.

**EXCALIBUR:** More cosmopolitan and making less money?

J.R.: I work in different areas than Gene. I work more in jazz clubs than Gene does, and I play more art galleries. I work with my own films too which I've made, things like that. I work with dancers sometimes, different sort of thing than Eugene.

**EXCALIBUR:** (to E.C.) Did you just evolve into using humour or did you consciously think it would be more effective?

E.C.: It just sort of did, you know. It's like when you get up in the morning and there's a new freckle on your face or something like that. I don't have much control. I'm an outlet for creative energy.

**EXCALIBUR:** You called it an incurable disease.

E.C.: Ya.

**EXCALIBUR:** You think you're less damaging to society.



BABAK AMIRFEIZ

**ALL SMILES:** Avant-garde guitarist Eugene Chadbourne gave an acoustic performance as part of lunch-time Jazz Series.

E.C.: I was quoted as saying that, ya, so I have to live with it now.

**EXCALIBUR:** You once said you liked Eddie Van Halen and thought he transcended his genre. What genre have you transcended?

E.C.: I'm not in a genre. I'm a *Eugenre*. *Eugenre Chadbourne*. I'm genre transcending, definitely. It would be hard to say what genre I was coming from, you'd have to say several. The first records I bought were stuff like Herman's Hermits, the Rolling Stones, the Beatles, and all that kind of stuff and then I started listening to blues and jazz, avant-garde jazz, and ethnic music, and European improvisation, and different types of noises and country and western and blue grass, punk, rock, and you know, Musak.

J.R.: I'd like to plug the new album too. It's a dual album coming up, which is mostly instrumental.

E.C.: I'd say it's 27% vocal.

**EXCALIBUR:** Will we be able to get it here?

E.C.: Ya.

**EXCALIBUR:** What's it going to be called?

E.C.: *The Art of Cultural Terrorism*.

J.R.: It's coming out in about a month. It's on Dossier, which is a Berlin label. It's available in New York and it'll probably come here.

**EXCALIBUR:** On your *Country Protest* album a lot of the songs are just straight parody and really very funny, like a "White Shade of Pale," and then they're political like the racist parody of Senator Jesse Helms. How active are you politically in North Carolina?

E.C.: Well, Jesse Helms is most active in Washington that's where he does most of his dirty deeds. I voted against Jesse Helms, but I'm not that involved. You know it's hard to be involved. It's hard to figure out what to do. I sent him a package of cat litter.

**EXCALIBUR:** Would you like to be a Democratic candidate?

E.C.: I'm going to be running for the Birthday Party.

**EXCALIBUR:** You wanted to do a completely political album. Have you done a completely political album?

E.C.: Ya, *Corpses of Foreign Wars*.

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