



peter hicks

When Chalk Circle released their first album, *The Great Lake*, they introduced to the listening audience a fiery new musical style which blended alternative flavor with pop sensibilities. Their follow-up, *The Mending Wall*, elaborated upon this distinctive sound by displaying a maturation of their lyric content with both social and political issues being tackled (listen to "This Mourning" and "NIMBY").

So here comes their third album: *As The Crow Flies*. And how does this outing fare? Great and, well, not so hot. While each song is quite solid by itself, the lot seems to lack the cohesive nature found on the last two albums. Granted, artistic license translates into a freedom to experiment, but the diversity found on this album shows lack of direction if anything. This can be seen in the wide range of musical styles and subject matter incorporated. Don't get me wrong, though, sometimes it works (check out the funk bassline of the title track or the soulful outro of "Sons and Daughters"), but more oft than not the songs come across as Chalk Circle trying to sound like someone else.

Judging from the topics handled (from free trade to televangelists to the Berlin wall), they may be looking to become the Canadian U2, but fall short. The messages in some of the songs get tangled and lost in unrelated segments/phrases which seem placed for no other reason than rhyme scheme. Other tracks, like "Cover Your Eyes", could very well stand on their own lyrically as purpose of the song is clear and remains so throughout.

Chalk Circle has shown their growth. Musically, they seem far more knowledgeable and the arrangements indicate a great amount of thought and effort. Surprisingly, the musical highlights of the album are from guest performers. Saxophonist Moe Koffman lends his talents to "Fairytale and Fiction" and "Lonely Street", while the signature vocal stylings of Jane Siberry helps create the ethereal sounds of "Blue Heaven (Antigua)".

Also included are two short tracks ("Rubber Ducky" and "Ottoman New York") that show the guys can have fun, too--or is it just the release of studio stress?

As the Crow Flies is not a bad album. At times, it's great. The problem lies in inconsistencies from song to song. The Circle has shown their capabilities with their previous albums, and this one is tinged with promises that great things are to come, but only if they find the sound they seem to be searching for here.



AS THE CROW FLIES

CHALK CIRCLE

Chamber Music Festival at the Playhouse

press release

It's an evening of first-class chamber music this Valentine's Day, in a program of music by Mozart, Schumann and Franck offered by the UNB musicians-in-residence and their special guests. This next concert in the UNB/STU Creative Arts Playhouse Series features Arlene Nimmons Pach and Joseph Pach - the Duo Pach - as well as fellow resident musician Paul Campbell in performance with guests Paul Pulford, Jutta Puchhammer and Heather Toews. The concert is set for the Playhouse at 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 14.

The Duo Pach, who have just released a recording of special favorites to mark 25 years as musicians-in-residence at UNB, will be performing sonatas for violin and piano by Mozart and Franck. The Pachs have returned with renewed energy and enthusiastic acclaim to the sonata format which established their international reputation a few short years ago. Their Music at Noon series, currently Fridays at Memorial Hall, has featured Mozart so far this season, and has now turned to favorite sonatas and encore pieces by an impressive variety of composers.

Campbell, Puchhammer, Pulford and Toews will combine their considerable resources in presenting piano quartets by Mozart and Schumann. Violinist Paul Campbell, who continues in this last year of the program as a musician-in-residence at UNB's Memorial Hall, has been busily producing and performing in the Wednesday Noon Recital Series, and has recently accepted the baton of the New Brunswick Youth Orchestra. Paul Pulford, until last year cellist with the Brunswick String Quartet, has also toured with the Orford String Quartet in recent months, and is now on faculty at Sir Wilfred Laurier University. Jutta Puchhammer, an Austrian-born violist now based in Montreal, teaches at the Universite de Quebec a Montreal and is one-third of the highly acclaimed Klegelstatt Trio -- as is pianist Heather Toews, a Charlottetown native with an extremely active concert career who is about to move to New York from her current teaching position at McGill.

Tickets for the Chamber Music Gala -- a celebration of the tradition of chamber music at UNB which is at the same time, at least for now, a kind of farewell -- are available at the Playhouse Box Office and at the UNB Art Centre, Memorial Hall (453-4623). The cost is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors and \$5 for students.

Umzabalazo for Africa Night '90

A South African cultural group, Umzabalazo (the struggle) will be the special guest at this year's Africa Night activities to be held this Saturday night. The group is made up of South African students from the Nova Scotia region and they form the cultural outreach arm of the South African Democratic Student Association in the Maritimes.

Their performance should enhance what promises to be an interesting expose of African Culture at the Sub Cafeteria. The annual event will showcase African life through songs, dance, fashion, an exhibition-cum-bazaar and a wonderful meal prepared by members of the African Student Union. Dinner will be served at 7:30 p.m.

ASU's executive considers this event to be one that combines informative discussions of African affairs with entertainment that is rooted in African traditions. The grand event of the evening will be preceded by a seminar/workshop entitled "The Anti-Apartheid Network in Canada" which will feature speakers from the African Student Union, ANC, and the African Democratic Student Association. This event will begin at 5:00 p.m. in room 103 of the SUB.

Tickets for Africa Nite are \$8.00 each for adults and \$5.00 for children. Tickets are available in the SUB.

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Canadians Welcome!! Santa Cruz Poetry Contest

Santa Cruz, CA -- Poetry prizes worth \$44,000 will be awarded to 608 poets by the American Poetry Association in 1990. The association will sponsor four separate contests this year, doubling its efforts to discover new talent.

"Students win many of our prizes. They are in a creative time of life, and we look forward to reading their work," said Robert Nelson, publisher for the association.

Each contest awards a \$1,000 grand prize, a \$500 first prize, and a total of \$11,000 in prizes to 152 winners. All adults who write poetry are welcome to enter.

For the current contest, poets may send up to 6 poems, each no more than 20 lines, name and address on each page, to American Poetry Association, Dept. CO-30, 250-A Potrero St., P.O. Box 1803, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. Poems must be postmarked by March 31 to meet the deadline. A new contest starts April 1.

Each poem will also be considered for publication in the American Poetry Anthology, a hardcover collection of contemporary verse.

Since 1981 the association has awarded over \$165,000 in contest prizes to 3,100 poets.