

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Rural background enhances musical prowess

**Jim Serediak**  
*Drifting Through High Grass*  
 Chinook Theater, April 8

by Molly Smith

The gentle vibrancy of a Jim Serediak song probes all our privacies and refutes the old tales telling of woman as the sole custodian of human tenderness. His songs savour friendship, love, family and nature's lessons of loveliness. Jim grew up in a small farming community near Andrew, Alberta and now divides his time between farming with his parents and playing and teaching music in Edmonton. There is a strong, almost tenacious beat in his music that one could anticipate coming from a lean, hardworking Ukrainian farmer. But when he sings, it is poetry enhanced by torrential instrumentals, adventurous rhythms and sudden silences - a place to pause: to see and to hear one's life in comparison to another's:

*Another day of spending time  
 Searching - for some meaning in this  
 meaningless  
 Searching - for some logic which I might  
 have missed*

from "Another Day - Spending Time", 1981

From Jim's background of Junior High School trumpet, folk, rock and blues bands, classical guitar and a composition degree from Edmonton's Grant MacEwan Community College, a fusion of rock, folk and multi-ethnic sounds has made his music. Whether alone or in a band, whether playing his own or other types of music, Jim Serediak's broad interests are evidenced by the instruments he plays: guitar, dulcimer and as he puts it, "tries to play": sitar, bondura, bowed psaltery, banjo, recorder, Japanese Sho and hammered dulcimer. He also composes electronic music, of which some songs were part of a recent concert, "Themes for Diverse Instruments," a combined performance of mime, modern dance and electronic music.

Jim Serediak is a quiet man with a voice of tremendous warmth. Underlying his Christian faith is a personal, deeply satisfying relationship with the land he works: "I've always gone back to the land to figure things out, to find renewal and consolation." With his faith is a veneration for Indian traditions, especially their ritual communion with the spirits of nature:

*mystic chant - beat on sticks  
 mystic chant - beat on sticks  
 I want to go passion mad  
 want to burn alive - alive in this song*

from "Burning Alive," 1981

In a song like "Burning Alive" a ritual intensity becomes a brilliant contrast for the urban intensity:

*city - city wrapped  
 in this shroud of tension - encased in a  
 living gloom  
 steel towers rip into the red-ash sky  
 here half a million - half a million people  
 on the edge - of madness - on the edge of  
 sin*

Most of his songs are intimate experience of the immense, sometimes austere, sometimes awesome, urban and rural expanse he knows and loves:

*northern lights come by sweeping  
 away the colour day left*

from "High Grass", 1981

*sidewalk vapours leaching into the  
 sulphur-air-night  
 the lash of consequences...*

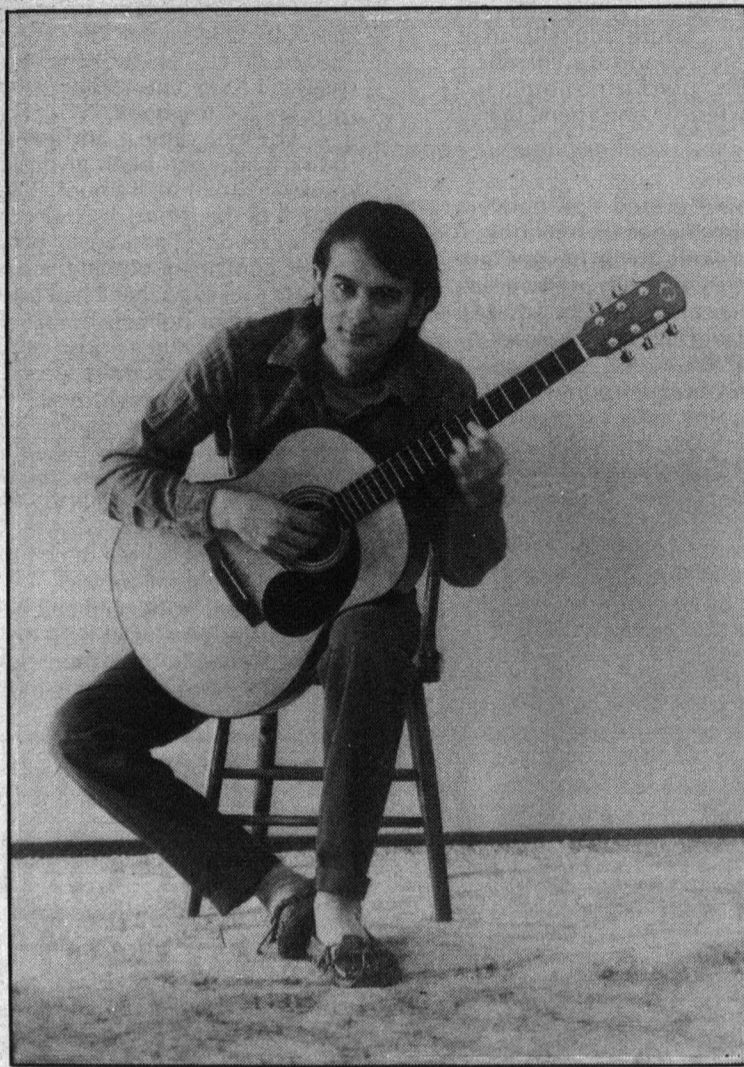
from "Another Night Alone (Outside the  
 Paramount)", 1982

Jim Serediak has reached a point in his life where he wants to do more public performances and share the sounds that have joined vision and voice. There will be a cassette tape for sale in late autumn, more radio shows and maybe an appearance at this year's summer Fringe Festival.

His passion for life is the passion of his music: "I can't imagine not writing music. For me, it's part of meaning in life." His love songs are a delicate encounter: dazzlingly sudden and fragmented, yet quiveringly restrained and piercing. It is the past fondly present:

*Light on her doorstep glimmers like  
 heartbeat  
 borne of a window that cares to share part  
 of the sun*

from "The One in a Thousand Goodbyes,"  
 1981



Jim Serediak

*But I still want to lie down with you  
 lying wrapped like the meadow in a field of  
 green - to renew me*

from "Hand Seeking Hand," 1980

*bell - quake tolled bell  
 I'm a quake tolled bell*

from "Alone Against the Dark Fall Sky,"  
 1980

As Jim explains, "I deal with my immediate surroundings. I want to try and understand why we do what we do." In the dramatically impulsive rock and roll of "Strains of a Friday Night," he recreates the powerful lure of the pulsating downtown core:

*I'm tempted - come rhythm be mine...  
 see the women and their men  
 haven't felt such desire since I don't know  
 when...  
 the City writhes in tight, blue jeans...*

The human condition does not fundamentally change: what remains is the desire to experience and the desire to express that experience. Jim Serediak's expression is a music complex and alone: sometimes a plaintive chant yet withal sharing hope, love and the joy of celebra-

tion. Is this not still the continuing drama of humanity and is not each man's voice lifted to a part? While perhaps not as compelling as Jim's lifting incantation of "Somewhere, Someone," still, each man's voice strives to echo shared experience, which is after all perhaps the happiest consummation of our greatest moments.

For music is a great sharing of private passions: the passion to be heard, and the passion to hear. Who has not been sometime haunted by a subtle yearning for the romance - as if the slight, graceful figure on the stage had not turned to you alone, those dark, serious eyes flashing a sudden, boyish innocence and humour as he discerns our restless night.

*hear those evening shower cymbals -  
 we should all be dancing naked outside  
 life is really far too short  
 to miss such magic.*

*so I'm midnight - midnight walking  
 I'm twilight - twilight stalking*

from "In Restless Wonder", 1982

Jim Serediak and band will be appearing in "Drifting Through High Grass", a concert at Chinook Theatre (10329 - 83 Avenue) at 8:00 PM, Sunday, April 8.

## CABARETS

Tickets are available from the SUB Box Office (2nd Floor SUB) and various club members.  
 NOTE: These events are open only to U of A students, staff, and guests.

**DINWOODIE**  
 2nd Floor SUB  
 Proof of age required.  
**Doors 8 PM**

### Delta Upsilon Fraternity presents



## ROUGH TRADE

with guests:

**Wednesday, April 11**



Humidified Woman Smelling her Knees or I Never Promised you a Rose Garden, by Debra Shymoniak. BFA '84, at Ring House Gallery.