

# Eugene Chadbourne erupts at Coco Bean

Plus: Tribute to Mary Mardirosian, jazz at the Front Page

By Chet Williamson

Dada is the revolutionary school of visual art based on irrationality and the overthrow of traditional artistic values. It sprang from the streets of pre-World War I Europe. Dada artists used found objects known as "throw-aways" to make their creations. Picasso's bull's head is a classic example. He used a bicycle seat to represent the head, and the handlebars, turned upward, for the horns.

Guitarist Eugene Chadbourne is the Picasso of today's modem music. He has that same playful spirit that finds art everywhere and music in everything. Many may recall his riotous 1970s performance at the old New

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England Repertory Theatre where he performed with a not-so-traditional trumpeter who blew into a 6-foot garden hose with a funnel attached to its end. All the while he swung it over and around his head as if he was about to lasso a small tomato plant. Meanwhile, Chadbourne was busy rubbing a fat pink balloon across the strings of his acoustic guitar. Squeaks, squeals and meows mixed with flat dull

clinks, plinks and clangs from a small rake attached to the bridge of his guitar, whose spokes were bent and curled upward.

Chadbourne once remarked he wanted to be remembered as the inventor of the electric rake and the dogskull harmonica. Needless to say, this is not music for the harmonically challenged.

Chadbourne returns to town for a rare performance of his most recent concert piece "Crude Gene Manipulapalachians" at 9 p.m. Friday, Dec. 9, at the Coco Bean, 264 Park Ave. joining Chadbourne, who performs on banjo and guitar, will be Bob Jordan and Chuck Rosina, who play homemade instruments and provide preprogrammed electronic tapes, and mandolinist Barry Mitterhoff, best known for his work in Tony Trischka's Skyline.

"It is not your typical bar band by any means," Chadbourne cracked in a recent phone interview. "It is quite unusual." The performance is sponsored by the Worcester Artist Group and funded by the Mass. Cultural Council. Acoustic Planet, a quartet that orbits the solar system inhabited by the New Grass Revival, David Grisman and Bela Fleck, opens the show.

"It's a commissioned piece," Chadbourne said of his new work, speaking by phone from his home in



Eugene Chadbourne

Greensboro, N.C. "It was commissioned last year by a very big avant-garde music festival in France. We are doing three performances in the United States - one in Worcester, one in New York and one in Middletown, Conn."

A guitarist known for his unusual collaborations with such seemingly disparate artists as Evan Johns and the H-Bombs, John Zorn and Camper Van Beethoven, Chadbourne is a flaming revolutionary who scrambles his technical prowess into good time musical omelets that might include nuts and bolts as well as fruits and vegetables. His most recent pairing is with Jimmy Carl Black of the old Zappa band.

Born in Mount Vernon, N.Y., in 1954, Chadbourne was the third kid on his block to be given a guitar after the Beatles' appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show*. It may also be noted that he was the first of the three to actually play the guitar. Seventy albums later, Chadbourne's curiosity has led him into a host of musical backyards. His wanderings have taken him into the New York jazz avant garde with Frank Lowe and Billy Bang to a punk/hillbilly act called Shockabilly with John Zorn and Tom Cora. The collision of country and Western music with the avant garde is Chadbourne's dish of soup.

"This is a combination of two styles of music: Appalachian music and musique concrete, or avant-garde electronic music with tape sound effects," he said of "Crude Gene Manipulapalachians." "Musique concrete? It was a kind of music of the 1920s or so. It was invented when they invented the first tape recorders, and people started recording machine sounds. Classical composers were using them in the earliest electronic music.

"A complete evening of bizarre music is what we promise. Plus some nice tasty picking of string instruments," Chadbourne said. "That's another aspect of this piece. There is a lot of interplay you get going between a banjo and a mandolin with two guys who are really into playing. It is not just a weird, pretentious, avant-garde music piece.

"We are also planning on presenting some other compositions of mine. One is a solo piece called 'Communist Shoes.' This all on homemade instruments made out of shoes manufactured in the former

Eastern bloc."

**JAZZ QUEEN HONORED:** Worcester's First Lady of jazz Mary Mardirosian was honored by friends, family and fans last week at a testimonial dinner at the El Morocco, 100 Wall St. A capacity crowd filled the El Morocco room. A testament to Mardirosian's stature in the jazz community could be measured by the number of musicians who also appeared to pay tribute - Rebecca Parris, Donna Byrne, Linda Dagnello, Jane Miller, Toni Ballard, Gray Sargent, Marshall Wood, Mike Turk, Paul Broadnax, Jim Porcella, Joe Brindisi, Herb Pomeroy and the list goes on.... Emil Haddad and Dick Odgren were the scheduled performers. As you can imagine, some serious jamming filled the misty night. And talk about being in the right place at the right time! Pianist par excellence Dave McKenna, who just happened to be in town to play a Mechanics Hall concert, stopped by the El for dinner and wound up at Mary's testimonial.

**JINGLE JAZZ:** Tridekduonoto, an acoustic jazz duo featuring guitarist Troy Nielsen and bassist Charlie Gabriel, will perform at noon, Saturday, Dec. 10 at Vuona's Front Page, 540 Main St. The duo plays a wide variety of jazz and related music - bebop, blues, swing and ballads. For this particular engagement they will also present a variety of Christmas songs and holiday favorites. Admission is free. Vuona's Front Page is a combination newsroom and cafe. Store owner Al Vuona said he hopes people will stop by for their favorite espresso, cappuccino or gourmet coffee and listen to a little jazz. He also hopes this will be the start of a regular series of live musical offerings.

**ELENI'S RESOUNDS:** Eleni's Midnite Cafe, 631 Franklin St., offers a tasty alternative schedule for the month of December. Guava Train's Stu Esty performs Thursday, Dec. 8; Worcester cult hero Jon Svetkey, Friday, Dec. 9; poet/singer-songwriter Pamela Means, Saturday, Dec. 10; Kill RockStars recording artist Juliana Luecking, Sunday, Dec. 11. Also appearing this month are former End Construction songwriter Brian Doser Dec. 16 and She's Busy sisters Lisa and Selena Wilson as the Dames Dec. 30. Jazz pianist Barry Perlmutter plays New Year's Eve.