

**FILM:** WOODY ALLEN'S LATEST IS LIGHT ON LAUGHS [P.14]

**FASHION:** IT'S NOT GRUNGE, MA, IT'S STREET WEAR [P.15]

# PacificSun

MARIN'S BEST EVERY WEEK

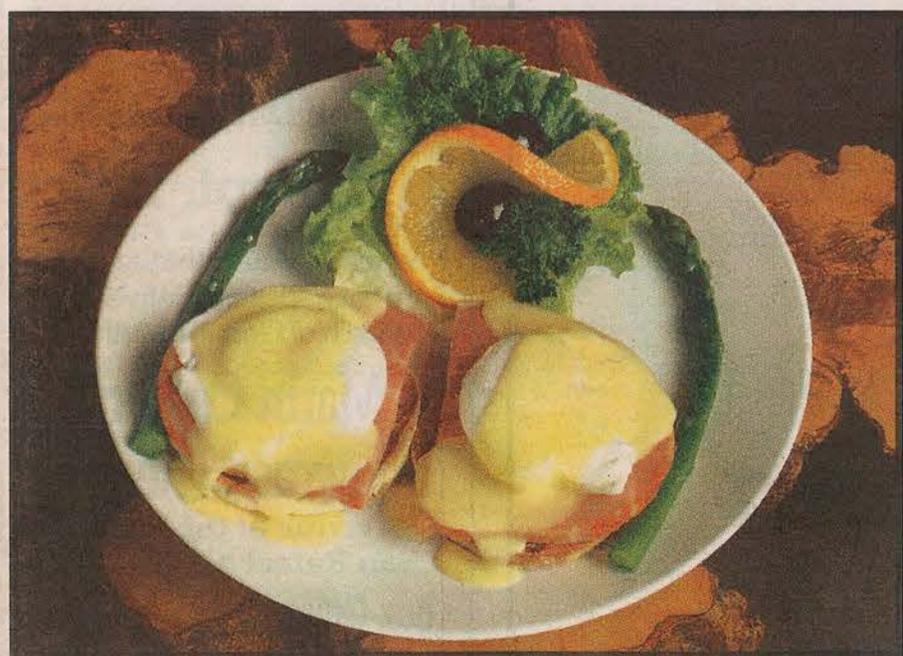
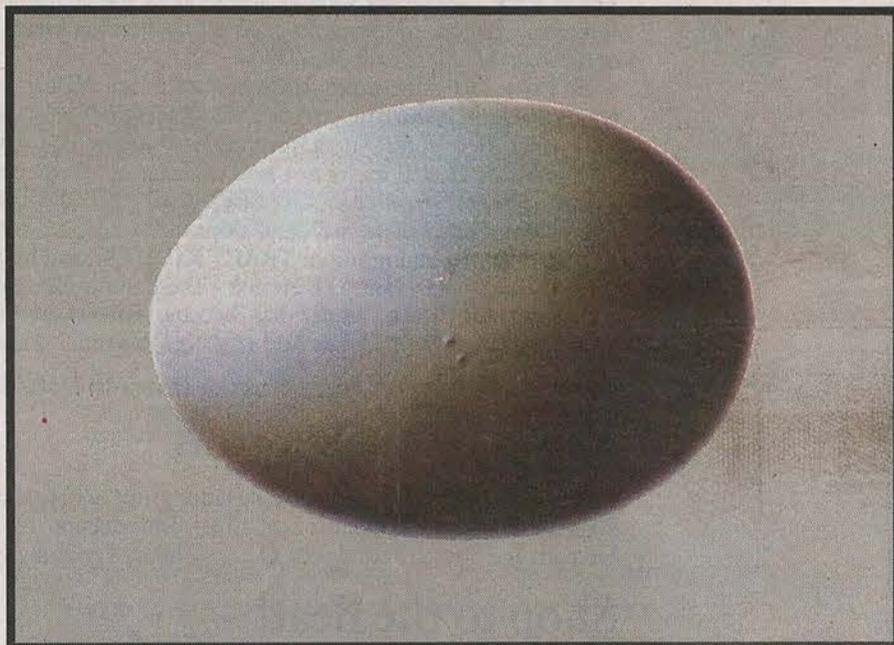
AUGUST 25 - AUGUST 31, 1993

## **NIMBY Standoff**

*Ten years later  
this Innovative  
Housing project  
is still in limbo  
[P.6]*

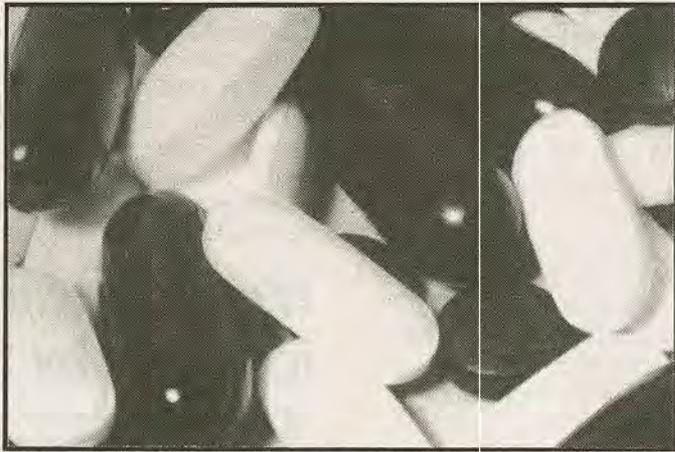
# Get Smart!

*If this is your brain...*



*...is this your brain  
on smart drugs?  
[P.8]*

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Smart drugs promise to up your potential.

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Get Smart: A pill-strewn route to a better brain  
By David Steinman

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# Music

## World fusion

### East meets West with Ancient Future

BY GREG CAHILL

"I wish the Sleeping Lady Cafe was still opened," says Matthew Montfort, referring to the bygone Fairfax relic where Ancient Future played its first gig 15 years ago. "These days, there just aren't any venues for this kind of music in Marin."

The music in question is Ancient Future's unique blend of Western jazz, reggae, blues, folk and pop combined with the sounds of Asia, India, South America and Africa. Their evocative world-fusion has earned this trendsetting Marin band critical acclaim and the respect of leading musicians around the globe. The band has recorded with the likes of Indian tabla master Zakir Hussain and Indonesian percussionist Jai Uttal. Their sixth and most recent album, *Asian Fusion* (Narada Equinox), features Zhao Hui, China's pre-eminent master of the zitherlike *gu zheng*, and Bui Huu Khan of Vietnam, a leading performer of the one-string *dan bao*.

"We had a good talent pool to work with

in terms of guest artists," says Montfort, 35, a University of Colorado music graduate who co-founded Ancient Future in 1978 while studying Indian music at the Ali Akbar College in San Rafael. "It's like a smorgasbord." The material on *Asian Fusion* ranges from "Dusk Song of the Fisherman," an ancient Chinese composition from the Ching Dynasty, to a Vietnamese folk song set to a contemporary reggae beat.

For Montfort, the album is the culmination of a 20-year fascination with the exotic sounds of the world. Born in Denver and raised in Boulder, Colorado, he started playing guitar at age 12. "I was really into Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page and all the rock 'n' roll heroes," he recalls. "After a year of that, I could do a fairly good job of imitating them and figured there must be more to music than what I knew."

He began studying jazz and classical guitar, fusing the various elements with rock music. When he heard fusion pioneer John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra, with its Indian music styling, Montfort realized that he could incorporate the disparate styles that had captured his imagination.

"I figured there had to be some new



Ancient Future blends jazz and reggae with music of Asia and Africa.

ground to break there," he says.

Ancient Future, co-founded with fellow Ali Akbar student Benji Wertheimer, recorded a prescient album of Indian and gamelan-influenced music that anticipated the world music explosion of the mid-eighties. The band has gone through several personnel changes over the years, while harboring a diverse roster of top-flight musicians. The current lineup includes violinist and guitarist Jim Hurley, who has toured with the Peking Opera and also plays with Dan Hicks and his Acoustic Warriors; keyboardist Doug McKeehan, an Indian music aficionado and co-founder of the New Age-jazz group Art Craft; and percussionist Ian Dogole, who plays everything from the bongos to Burmese temple drums.

"Obviously when you mix styles of music, some of it's going to work really well and some of it isn't," says Montfort, addressing the challenge of working with musicians from other lands. "You've got to be able to figure out what's what. That's

always a challenge. But to me, the process is a lot of fun. I think, historically, great music happens either by expanding a set of traditions or when two traditions collide. Then great things can happen."

Ancient Future hasn't escaped the criticism, also levied at David Byrne and Paul Simon, that their use of ethnic music amounts to cultural imperialism. "I understand some people are squeamish about that," Montfort says. "There are two things to consider. Western popular music has permeated all the cultures of the world. It's very enticing and there is a danger of the traditional music of those areas becoming extinct, especially since there's no longer as much time for the traditional ways of life to even support it."

"So a lot of these kinds of music are endangered species."

"That's led a lot of folks to take a purist point of view because they don't want to see the traditional music disappear. That's good, because we need to preserve the heritage. However if that's all you do, then you'll kill the music. It takes that creative person on the edge of things, pushing the boundaries, to keep it alive. While we need people to hold down the fort, we also need people out in the forefront. If all you do is preserve the tradition, then you get a museum replication and not a living thing."

"I don't think that's healthy."  
Ancient Future members Matthew Montfort and Jim Hurley perform together from 7 to 8 p.m. Friday, August 27, at Larkspur Landing's Center Plaza. The concert is free.

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*Special  
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# Now at The Landing

## Rainforest Awareness Month

Through the month of August, Ethnic Arts and other Larkspur Landing merchants have planned activities to support the Rainforest Action Network (RAN). Watch for special rainforest exhibits, merchandise & informational events.

- Thursday Evening Video Series at Ethnic Arts: Aug.5 - *Can the Rainforests Be Saved?*, Aug.12 - *The Penan: A Disappearing Civilization of Borneo*, Aug.19 - *Mitsubishi: The Forest Destroyer*, Aug.26 - *New Guinea: Land of the Unexpected*. Videos are shown every hour, 5-8pm.
- Photography Exhibit: *Indigenous Peoples of the Rainforest* focuses on cultures of the rainforest at A Clean Well-Lighted Place Cafe, through August 31.

**Protect An Acre Program:** Proceeds from the following activities will be donated to RAN for the purchase and protection of rainforest land.

- 10% of sales of rainforest products at Ethnic Arts
- 50% of sales of Rainforest Cookies at The Good Earth Restaurant
- Purchase leaves on the "Protect An Acre Tree" in the name of your family
- Quilt Raffle — Your chance to win a delightful rainforest quilt
- *Rainforest Action Guide* and other literature available at Ethnic Arts



## A Clean Well-Lighted Place for Books

• The first book from *Michael Meade*, a pioneering teacher and powerful storyteller, *Men and the Water of Life: Initiation and the Tempering of Men*, is a mythic celebration and multi-generational exploration of what it means to be a man. Wed., August 4, 7:30pm.

### Just for Kids

- *Jeannette Baumgardner* helps children build a tropical rainforest collage for Rainforest Awareness Month. Please bring cut out pictures that depict rainforest plants & animals. Sunday, August 1, 1-3pm.
- Marin storyteller *Anita Jones* shares her original stories as well as traditional and modern folklore. Sunday, August 8, 1pm.

## 14th Annual Couples Relay

• Women run two miles and tag their male partners, who then run two miles in this enjoyable foot race. Couple entry fee: \$15 in advance, \$18 on race day. \$7 for T-shirt. Lots of great prizes. Sun., Aug.8, 9am. For information, call: 454-2769.



ANCIENT FUTURE DUET

## Shop to the Beat!

The popular Larkspur Landing Summer Music Series continues every Friday, 7-8pm.

- August 6 The guitar duo, *Passion and Grace*, performs sultry Latin jazz.
- August 13 *Jules Broussard* brings his popular jazz saxophone to the Landing after playing on board the 6pm Larkspur Ferry from San Francisco.
- August 20 Swing to Dixieland in the traditional New Orleans style with the *New Revival Jazzmen*.
- August 27 **The Ancient Future duet plays an infectious blend of world music.**
- Sept. 3 A trio from the *Marin Symphony* adds a classical touch to the series.
- Sept. 10 *Jules Broussard* returns for the series finale.

  
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