

Time Out

DINING & ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE



Magician lights up the Cannery
Bill Okal takes his street act indoors

Ancient Future broadens horizons

By Barbara Boughton
Staff writer

SOME CUTS ON Ancient Future's new album, "World without Walls," sound like they're straight from India. Others have infectious Spanish rhythms. Listening to the music makes you feel you've gone around the globe.

That's Michael Montfort's mission. He aims to bring culturally diverse music to American audiences. His group, Ancient Future, coined the term "world fusion," a music that is a combination of Spanish, Indian and African rhythms. It mixes ancient music from around the world with pop, rock and folk.

"I think world music is becoming popular because people are realizing we have to get it together and learn from each other," Montfort said during a phone interview from his home in San Rafael. "People know that we have to be curious about other cultures."

Montfort, 32, will perform with Ancient Future at the Musician's Coffeehouse tonight.

Ancient Future has lasted 12 years, Montfort says, because of perseverance. "We've dedicated our lives to this music," he said.

The band plays many unusual instruments — including the scalloped fretboard, a guitar that can bend notes; the sitar; and African talking drums. Montfort, and other members of the group, have made it their business to study with experts in these instruments.

Montfort's fascination with mu-



Times/Kathy Baker

ANCIENT FUTURE, clockwise from bottom left, Jim Hurley, Ian Dougle, Doug McKeehan and Matthew Monfort.

CONCERT PREVIEW

What: Ancient Future
Where: Musician's Coffeehouse, Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek
When: 8 tonight
How much: \$8 in advance, \$9 at the door
Call: 229-2710

sic from other worlds began when he met a musician who played the tabla, an instrument from northern India. At the time, Montfort was playing the music of Jimi Hendrix and Chick Corea, and trying to find ways to combine jazz and rock. "But I found that I was really turned on by Indian rhythm too."

Montfort eventually went on to study northern Indian classical mu-

sic at the Ali Akbar College of Music in San Rafael. During one summer there his life was changed, he said. "I stopped looking at music in an academic way," he said. "And I became a much better musician."

Montfort also traveled to Indonesia, where he was exposed to Balinese musicians. He was entranced by the gamelan bells, a percussion instrument.

"When Balinese musicians play the gamelan bells, two people make one melody. It's just incredible. They play these interlocking rhythms, very fast notes in alternation. Your timing has to be perfect — and your cooperation infallible. It's hard for Western musicians because they're not used to relying on one another so completely."

Walnut Creek warm-up for Carnegie

By Barbara Boughton
Staff writer

THEY SAID SHE couldn't do it. Yet San Francisco pianist Diane Hidy is playing in Carnegie Hall's huge auditorium this January.

"It's kind of a fluke story," said Hidy. Last year she auditioned for the Van Cliburn competition, a prestigious contest which she participated in two years ago. Though she didn't make it last year, she said she "knocked out" a music critic for the New York Times, who did a story on her.

"He said I was wonderful but that I would never play in Carnegie Hall," she remembers. "So the night the story ran, I got a call from someone who ran a recital series in Carnegie and he asked me if I wanted to play. He was really mad about the story."

"I'm a little terrified but, of course, it's a wonderful opportunity," said Hidy, whose parents live in Concord.

Hidy will perform at the Regional

CONCERT PREVIEW

What: Pianist Diane Hidy in performance
Where: Regional Center for the Arts, Civic Drive at Locust Street, Walnut Creek
When: 8 p.m. Wednesday
How much: \$10
Call: 943-7469

Center Wednesday. She'll play pieces by Beethoven, Ravel, Dutilleu, Mendelssohn and Schumann.

The 31-year-old pianist isn't the type to be scared by challenges. Last year she performed Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto in G minor on 24 hours' notice with the South Coast Symphony. And she got rave reviews from the Los Angeles Times. "I practiced all day but managed to pull it off. I'm pretty good under pressure. I really enjoy the challenge."

Hidy also was the first and only woman to receive a fellowship from The Beethoven Foundation, an

award which included three years of annual grants and concert tours throughout the United States.

Hidy said she's found a definite bias against women in the world of piano competitions. "I've had judges mark me down because they didn't like my hair or my dress — things they wouldn't care about if I were a man. It's interesting. In music school, half the students are female and in preliminary rounds of contests half the contestants are female. But when you get to final rounds, you're lucky if there are 10 percent who are female."

Hidy has stopped competing in contests. She says they take too much of a toll. "It's hard on you emotionally and physically. It's like preparing for a marathon — except that in the end it's all subjective."

Hidy's talent was discovered early — she was banging away at the piano at age 2. When she was 4, her mother, an accomplished pianist, began giving her lessons. Her father was also a musician who played the saxophone, oboe and trumpet.

CONCORD / WALNUT CREEK

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Coming Events

CALIFORNIA SYMPHONY

Beethoven Symphony No. 9
12:30 p.m. Sunday, November 11 (TICKETS AVAILABLE)
8:00 p.m. Sunday, November 11 (SOLD OUT)

DIANE HIDY- PIANO CONCERT

7:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 14

KHADRA INTERNATIONAL FOLK BALLET

10:00, 11:30 a.m. Saturday, November 17

PLEASANT HILL HIGH SCHOOL REUNION JAZZ BAND

Plays a Tribute to Bob Soder
1:00 p.m. Saturday, November 24

COLLECTOR'S FORUM -

Sponsored by the Bedford Gallery
8:00 p.m. November 13, Stage II Theatre \$5.00

Art dealers and collectors discuss how to find and buy local art. Featuring art experts Steven Oliver, Larry Evans, Carl E. Varro and Bonnie Earls Solari, Curator of Bank of America's art collection.

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