

MONDAY

3

A five-part series titled **Getting to Know You: The Soviet Union Today** starts at 5:30 this evening with a talk on **The Soviet Cinema: Its History and Development** at the Public Library Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington. Film producer Robert Estes will present tonight's program, which will include excerpts from a variety of Soviet films. An opening reception for the series will follow, and will feature the University of Illinois Russian Folk Orchestra. Future Monday programs will include talks on Russian literature, tourism and travel, religion, and scientific and industrial development. Free; info from the Chicago Center for US/USSR Relations and Exchanges at 236-3270.

TUESDAY

4

The School of the Art Institute is sponsoring an artistic doubleheader today, starting with a talk by **Beverly Russell**, editor of **Interiors** magazine, on contemporary women in architecture, 3:30 in Fullerton Hall in the Art Institute, Michigan at Adams. Margaret McCurry of Tigerman Fugman McCurry and Diane Legge Lohan of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill will join Russell onstage after the lecture. Free, with details at 443-3700. The school's Fiber Department kicks off a series of seven talks by fiber artists with a talk by installation artist **Christo**, who will talk about wrapping the Pont Neuf in Paris—a two-week display that took ten years to pull together—at 6 PM in Rubloff Auditorium in the Art Institute. This talk is also free, with information at 443-3700.

Anglophiliacs don't have to rely on Masterpiece Theatre, now that the Red Lion Pub, 2446 N. Lincoln, is offering regular slices of life from the Shores of Albion. The pub's latest offering is actor/playwright Mark Grimsich's **Churchill: The Early Years**, which opens at 8 tonight and will be performed Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays through March 16. Tickets are \$6, which includes a snifter of brandy and a sausage roll with which to toast Winnie after the show; reserve at 348-2695.

WEDNESDAY

5

The **Joffrey Ballet** floats into town for a two-week engagement that opens at 7:30 tonight at the Civic Opera House, 20 N. Wacker. Highlights include the first performance of a new production of John Cranko's **Romeo and Juliet**, choreographed for the Stuttgart Ballet in the early 1960s, the world premiere of a new ballet by Gerald Arpino, and the Chicago premieres of pieces by James Kudelka, Laura Dean, Paul Taylor, Jiri Kylian, and Pilobolus. Tickets for the run, which ends March 16, are \$8-\$30; reserve at 902-1500.

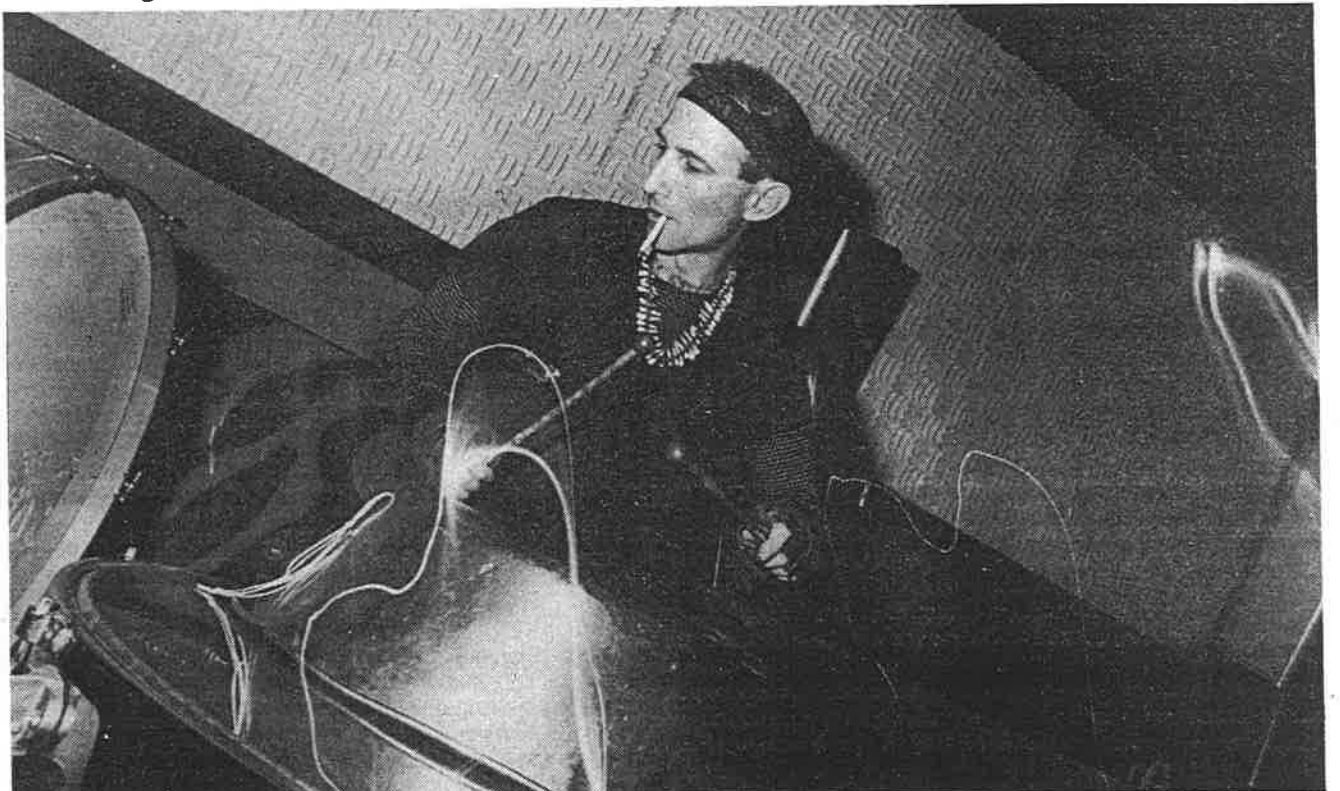
THURSDAY

6

Jayne Lybrand, described as a "nationally renowned communications specialist, motivator, and humorist," will give a demonstration of **Body Language Plus** at 7:30 tonight in the Student Resource Center of the College of Du Page, 22nd and Lambert Road in Glen Ellyn. At the end of the program, you will be able to arrange your body to convey honesty and sincerity through 18 different gestures, along with 13 ways to express devious intent (although why you would want to do this is beyond me, unless you're trying to qualify for false arrests), 22 ways to intimidate, 10 tricks for handling anxiety during a job interview, and a dozen ways to communicate your innermost being to (and, presumably, entice that of) members of the opposite sex. Free; info at 858-2800, ext. 2243.

Body language of a more serious nature will be discussed when Dr. Jacob Moise expounds on **common causes of infertility** from 7 to 8:30 tonight at Illinois Masonic Medical Center, 836 W. Wellington. Moise will also elaborate on the latest techniques for helping couples conceive. \$5 per person, with advance registration required; 883-7006.

Gallery Tripping: music for metal, mallets, and violence



Z'ev

When Chicago hosted the New Music America festival in 1982, Z'ev was the musician who **almost** came. No one doubted that he would be an exciting and colorful addition to the festival: an obsessive and violently physical percussionist with a growing underground reputation and ideas about performance that contradicted Western expectations. It was his violence that was the drawback. Legend had it that his tendency to throw large sheets of metal around the stage to produce sound posed a danger not only to himself but to the first few rows of the audience. Would you want to handle the insurance coverage for a gig like that? Neither did the Museum of Contemporary Art and the City of Chicago, which cosponsored the festival. At the last minute, the programmers reluctantly decided not to invite Z'ev.

Listening to recordings of Z'ev's music, it's difficult to tell how his wide variety of metallic sounds are produced, but it's easy to imagine the tremendous amount of physical activity involved. At times, slowly changing rhythmic patterns, beat out on huge sheets of steel or titanium, repeat with an incessant intensity that would drive many a robustly healthy musician to physical exhaustion. At other times, the sound is a gritty chaos of metal against metal, a richly tactile texture whose origins one can only guess at. To the average concertgoer, Z'ev's music probably sounds as monotonous as it does harsh, but to a growing audience in Europe and on America's east and west coasts, there is an engaging resonance to the music that invites meditative participation by the listener.

This unconventional percussionist who calls himself Z'ev (Hebrew for "wolf") has performed under many names: Uns, Sha'ul, Magneet Bond, Element L, Rax Werx, Yoel, and the name he was born with, Stefan Weisser. Each of these denoted a persona that Z'ev created for himself, and was associated with a different kind of music. While Yoel played only percussion, for example, Sha'ul performed music for organ and tape. "When I was Uns, I was a very different person," Z'ev (the only name he will answer to) explained from his home in Amsterdam. "Uns would use vocals in his performing, while Z'ev is very nonverbal. In fact, Z'ev can't even talk very well just before or after a performance. Stefan Weisser was a writer, very introverted. He'd never even think of going onstage." The creation of these names, Z'ev continues, was in itself a conceptual art piece, a kind of research into the effect of names on audience expectations.

Born in Los Angeles, Z'ev developed some of his views of performance while studying with two Ewe master drummers from Ghana, Seth and Alfred Cadzekpo, at the California Institute for the Arts. They taught him not only techniques of playing

African rhythms, but the entire social aspect of African music, to look at music as "not just the notes on a page, or even as individual expression, but as a communal activity within the life of the earth. It's how a musician participates in making life go more smoothly."

For his early performances, Z'ev used to rummage through industrial scrap yards looking for large pieces of metal he could steal, examining the acoustic properties of each piece. "I'd count how many pieces I wanted to steal, then I'd go in and buy some drill bits, as many bits as there were pieces I wanted to take. That way I'd still have some exchange with the person I was stealing from, but I'd only spend \$10 instead of \$1,000. But I've changed the way I steal. Now I go in and people charge me the wrong price. I bought some titanium recently, which is usually \$30 a pound, and the guy mistakenly charged me only \$1.50."

The teenage Stefan Weisser played in rock, blues, and country bands, but his changing attitudes about performance have forced him to become a primarily solo musician. A 1980 collaboration with minimalist guitarist Glenn Branca in the latter's Second Symphony, Z'ev reports, was not a fulfilling experience. "Branca sees himself as a classical musician, which means that you can't work **with** him, only **for** him. Whatever my contribution to the piece was, he still saw it as **his** piece. That wasn't revealed to me until the project was well under way, but I went through with the performances and chalked it up as a learning experience."

Like many of the more interesting musicians around today, Z'ev has trouble describing what kind of music he actually does; the English language really has no precise terminology for music that is not susceptible to notation, and whose performance is more of a spiritual than a recreative or interpretive activity. Improvisation, Z'ev agreed, with its connotations of a performing subject embellishing a musical object, is not an appropriate word, despite the fact that his performances are not planned ahead of time. "I read once where (New York composer) Robert Ashley was asked the same question, and he used the phrase 'spontaneous composition.' I'm not satisfied with that phrase. That makes it sound like there's an 'I' that is 'doing' something."

"I make a sound, and I hear what it sounds like, always relative to the space I'm playing in. Then I accompany myself... but it's not really myself. It's as though the path were already laid out, and all you have to do is make the right decisions. You turn yourself on like a radio, and what's already there is what comes out. If you're inspired, someone else will pick up on that inspiration." Within a few moments after beginning to play, Z'ev claims,

he goes into a trancelike state, reminiscent of Eastern disciplines such as Zen, unselfconscious and not experiencing the subject/object duality that characterizes the Western conception of music. He insists, though, that he's not interested in "religion per se. Faith and belief are interesting concepts, but not religion."

At long last, Z'ev will make his first Chicago appearance Saturday night, courtesy of N.A.M.E. Gallery and its director Lanny Silverman, who thought that Z'ev's ritualistic performances would perfectly complement the gallery's present "Artist as Alchemist" exhibition. Z'ev will perform **Lightning Music**, a piece that he has presented with much success both in European festivals and as a weekly, repeating concert in Amsterdam. **Lightning Music** takes place in total darkness, in order to absorb the listener as much as possible into the spiritual process of playing.

"What I've found happens is that a certain quantum of energy is reached, and then people start to have visions. Sometimes several people will start to see the same things, and then I eventually start to see those same images myself; then I play for those images. What people don't realize is that, when it's dark and you have your eyes open, it looks dark, but when you close your eyelids, suddenly there's light. If you focus on that light, the pictures begin to come. It's like a dream. I hope N.A.M.E. has comfortable seats, by the way."

In 1984, Z'ev goes on to say, he lost his interest in "abstract" music, and started wanting to make music that could be played immediately following the Schubert Quintet with no substantial change in mood. **Lightning Music**, though he admits he shouldn't say it himself, he describes as "very beautiful," and he's been very gratified by excellent audience reactions all over Europe. If violent, Schubertian, meditative percussion music is your cup of tea, or if it just sounds weird enough to be intriguing, show up at N.A.M.E. Gallery, 361 W. Superior, third floor, Saturday night at 8:30. General admission is \$7, students and seniors (if any), \$5. For reservations call 642-2776.

Z'ev is working with mallets these days rather than throwing sheets of metal, and he downplays the danger involved in his early performances. "It's an archaic issue. I never really hurt myself, only cut myself a few times. I never had any trouble with the insurance. It's nice to know after all these years, though, that the festival almost asked me."

So don't worry about sitting in the first few rows. I've sat in N.A.M.E. Gallery's chairs before, though, and some of them are more comfortable than others. Get there early.

— Kyle Gann