

# Historian presents politics set to music

By Cathy Saathoff

Battalion Staff

A small group of music fans/politicians took a musical journey through political issues of the past two decades Monday night.

Dr. Terry Anderson, assistant professor of history at Texas A&M University, conducted the tour with music and commentary reflecting social concerns of the times.

"A Musical Journey Through American Politics" was sponsored by MSC Political Forum. A small audience listened attentively as Anderson played songs ranging from "Where Did Our Love Go" by the Supremes, to "Imagine," by John Lennon.

Anderson uses the presentation as part of his classes in survey of American history and recent American history. Right now, he is traveling as an oral historian.

"I think that the music of the '50s and '60s, especially rock music, is the most important music this country has ever heard," Anderson said. "Music reflects culture, the way art reflects it, and of course the movies."

In the program introduction, Anderson said that just as songs like "Dixie" and "Yankee Doodle" expressed the mood of the American people at different times throughout history, today's music is commentary on the situation of the country.

Anderson said he thought the 50s and the music they produced were dull. The Eisenhower administration promised no great changes, he said, only "return to normalcy." The music that accompanied these dull times was boy-meets-girl, boy-gets-girl — Pablum, as Anderson called it, songs like Buddy Holly's "Peggy Sue."

Rock and Roll was born in 1954, with the release of Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock." The new sound expressed the boredom of young peo-

ple, Anderson said.

"It meant that kids had energy," he said. The kids with the energy were the post-World War II Baby Boom babies, grown up to their early teens and ready to go.

The music had energy, but no meaning. The music of Elvis Presley, the first white man to play rhythm and blues, had no social meaning, nor did the Beatles' early music, Anderson said.

Enter the new decade, and tensions between blacks and whites. The sound of Motown became popular — Stevie Wonder and Diana Ross.

"Now, blacks were being bought by whites," Anderson said. The new music, which was actually old music discovered by whites, meant new dances, but still the same old meaningless themes.

Artists like Riley B. King, better known as B.B., came off the "chitlin' circuit" and formed integrated bands, reaching new audiences.

Whites also responded to racial problems in their music — Neil Young's "Southern Man."

And Vietnam was a widely-sung war. Folk music became popular on the lips of artists like Pete Seeger, the Kingston Trio and Peter, Paul & Mary. The song "Blowin' In the Wind," written by Bob Dylan and sung by Peter, Paul & Mary, was a call for change, Anderson said.

The war had its opponents, but it also had fans. "The Green Beret," the same song played by the Aggie Band, supported macho things like war and fighting and being a man.

"Youth was alienated," Anderson said. Music was a way to protest the fighting.

In the 70s, more causes were added to the list of targets.

"The Establishment," which Anderson said includes the president, the Pentagon, organized religion and other grown-up things, was a prime source of

song lyrics.

"California Dreamin'" by the Mamas and Papas attacked religion; the singers stop at a church and "pretend to pray."

A lack of identity and revolt against the 8 to 5 world of parents surfaced in songs such as the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby" and "42nd Street" by Cat Stevens.

Nasty pollution, created no doubt by The Establishment, inspired "Yellow Taxi" by Joni Mitchell.

Young people became so used to revolting against The Establishment and its members that they turned to just plain revolt against nothing in particular.

"Born to Be Wild" by Steppenwolf expressed this spirit. "I Am Woman" by Helen Reddy was a result of the Women's Right movement. Then came "Get It While You Can," by Janis Joplin. Anderson led into the song by saying it is good advice for Aggie women ....

Songs such as these marked "a change in how men thought about women," Anderson said.

In the 70s, more causes sprang up, and songs to go with them.

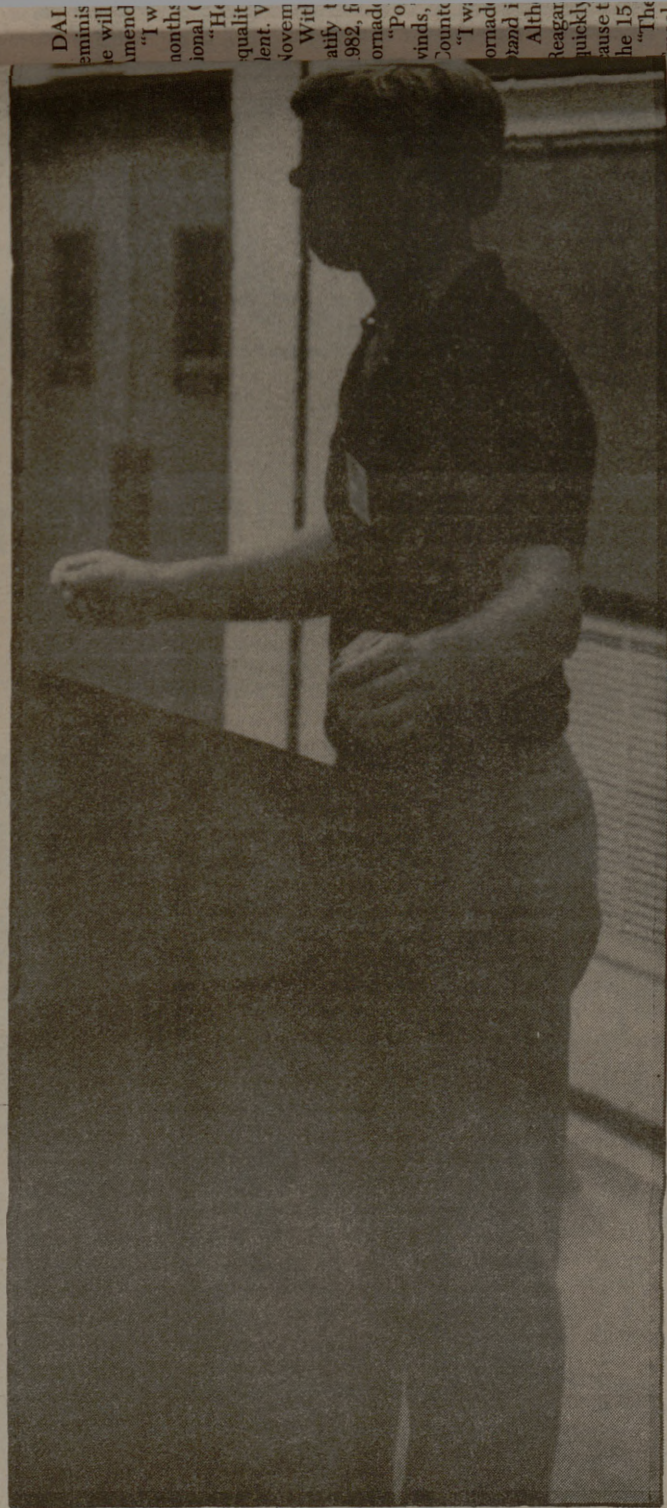
Sexual liberation — "Love the One You're With." Drugs, pro and con — "White Rabbit" by Jefferson Airplane, called the ultimate drug song by Anderson, and "Damage Done," by Neil Young.

The space program gave us Elton John's "Rocket Man."

The sound as well as the message had changed. Electronic music replaced guitars; boy meets girl was tossed in favor of give us peace, change the world.

Then, Anderson said, a sense of reunion. "Old Man" by Neil Young. Did we realize something was missing?

To finish on the theme of "getting back together," Anderson ended the presentation with "Imagine" by the late John Lennon.



Dr. Terry Anderson.

Photo by Bernie Fette.

## COLLAGE

Students create own beasts

NORMAN, Okla. — A "Side Hill Kiantler," you might be interested to know, is a creature with long legs on one side and short on the other. This arrangement greatly facilitates walking on steep hillsides, but it prevents the animal from following a straight path, earning its reputation at the personification of sin.

This would not be news to you, if you were a member of sacred Monastery and Convent 301 — a.k.a. as the ancient and medieval history class at the University of Oklahoma. Students who found themselves in that class of Norriss Hetherington's were told their convent's "bestiary" had been lost, and it was their assignment to recreate it, page by mythical page.

A bestiary is a medieval book about animals either real or imagined, which provides parables for human behavior. For example, one authentic bestiary claimed lion clubs were always born dead, coming to life on the third day. "This fable, of course, parallels the resurrection of Christ," Hetherington explains.

In setting out to create their own bestiary, each student did a page, complete with illustrations. Thus emerged the "Prey Seeker," which sits at the right hand of the devil and eats the innards of a dove representing the clergy. In a more modern fable, another student created a bear that used its charming appearance and wily ways to sell sugar-coated cereals to children — a beast named the "Sugar Bear."

— Collegiate Hedlines

## Summer travel costs rising

It costs about 14 percent more to travel this year than last.

"Travel Weekly," in April, 1981, reported that airfares are the most-increased costs, up 30 percent over 1980.

Amtrak and other rail passenger carriers increased their fares by about 16 percent and oil companies raised the price of gasoline about 15 percent over a year ago.

The cost of getting there has risen even more than the cost of living once you're there. The consumer price index showed

an increase of "only" 11.7 percent for the same period.

Travel prices will probably continue to soar into the fall as airlines increase fares. Rail travel is also expected to increase when Amtrak raises fares by more than 30 percent this fall on some routes and cuts service to many sections of the country.

One bright spot is that gas prices should remain level throughout the year, thanks to a May price freeze by OPEC. (It doesn't matter, because it's

already too high to afford anyway.)

It is wise to plan your trip well ahead of time. Make all plane reservations early to avoid rate increases. It is also possible to take advantage of special rates by buying tickets early. (With catches like "Only \$95, if you buy your ticket between 3 and 4 a.m. on the third Tuesday before you plan to return from your destination ...") Saving money makes some things easier to put up with.

### FOCUS

Editor . . . . . Cathy Saathoff  
Cartoonist . . . . . Scott McCullar

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