

Organization promotes cultural study, awareness

Students perform Native American songs and dances

By JULIE POLSTON
Feature Writer of THE BATTALION

Members of the Native American Student Association (NASA) will perform Plains Indian dances and songs Wednesday Nov. 18 at 11:30 a.m. in front of Rudder Fountain.

The purpose of the performance is to recognize Native American culture in a contemporary manner through dancing, singing and storytelling.

NASA president Ray Torgerson said, "This is very much a contemporary, modern type of performance."

Torgerson said students will perform several different styles of dance including the traditional style, the fancy style and the old

style. The traditional style is sometimes referred to as contemporary dance and stems from the Southern Plains Indians, he said.

He said the fancy style, which is also called the feather style, is a more active and aerobic type of dance that originated in the 1930s to attract tourists.

The old style, however, is an accurate and historical representation of various tribes from different eras, he said.

Torgerson said there are several reasons for dancing.

"Usually, people say they dance for their ancestors," he said. "It's sort of abstract, but they (dancers) dance for their people, the history and the tradition."

Torgerson said there will also

be Northern and Southern Plains singing.

"The Southern Plains has a lower, bass sound and the Northern Plains has a higher, falsetto type of sound," he said. "These are typical songs that are very old in history, and there is a story behind every one."

Torgerson said some of the songs are more modern and were written recently for pow-wows. Other songs date back to the mid-1800s and are consequently very important to the Native Americans, he said.

In addition to the dancing and singing, students will also be telling stories.

Rose Hardman, a senior at Texas A&M, said she began using the stories to teach her children.

Hardman said that in the past, Indians taught their children through stories and examples. Many of the stories are legends, which are based in truth, she said.

"I get my stories from books and things that have been written down from elders in different tribes," she said. "They are interesting, very beautiful stories of the Native American people that you never would hear."

The Native American Student Association meets twice each month at 8:30 p.m. in 407 Rudder. Membership is open, and everyone is welcome to join.

"The purpose of the association is to educate and break down stereotypes," Hardman said. "You don't have to be an Indian to be a member of the club."

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R.E.M. gets back to the people, stays true to earlier releases

By JENNY MAGEE
Reviewer of THE BATTALION



R.E.M. "Automatic for the People" Warner Bros. Records

"Automatic for the People" was an automatic for induction into my personal top 10 favorite albums.

This album is important for R.E.M. and their fans, not only because Michael Stipe's clear voice sings out profound lyrics with captivating distinctiveness, but because "Automatic for the People" has rechanneled an honesty that seemed absent on "Out of Time."

More than a continuation of the style of "Out of Time," "Automatic for the People" is reminiscent of older works such as "Life's Rich Pageant" and "Murmur."

However, this album has something more. There is a maturity, a refined understanding for the pain and suffering of existence that makes this album a musical photograph of life. I would even venture so far as to say that this is one of R.E.M.'s best albums.

The Georgia-based band is singing for the people again. It feels as if the music wants to wind its way into the dark corners of the world and touch some hidden part of humanity. The acoustic quality of the songs adds to the simplistic, truthful nature of the album.

The album's opening song, "Drive," professes, "Hey kids, rock and roll, nobody tells

R.E.M.'s latest album returns to the band's basics, diverging from its recent "pop" trend.

you where to go," setting a personal tone that is continued throughout the album and culminates with "Everybody Hurts," which produces a feeling of the unity of pain.

Even the fact that the album contains an instrumental, "New Orleans Instrumental No. 1," seems to denote a diversion from the "popular" collection of songs that made up "Out of Time."

R.E.M.'s ever-present environmental theme reappears with "Try Not To Breathe." Every song seems important and carries its own unique message. It would be impossible for

me to pick a favorite out of the album's 12 songs, but I can come the closest with "Nightswimming." It is not as if I can explain the songs in a generic way; the experience of listening to "Automatic for the People" is something that allows for personal interpretation.

R.E.M. has always had something to say. I mean, they are not exactly the type of band that has spent their musical career singing bebop love songs. Michael Stipe claims to have written only one love song in his career, "Losing My Religion."

There is something profoundly artistic about all of R.E.M.'s albums, but it seems even more intense in the work on "Automatic for the People."

In this world of mixes and technological sound, the basic musical accompaniment produces this rare untarnished effect. However, I must say that a lot of the effect that R.E.M.'s music produces is the result of a very significant factor — Michael Stipe's voice. The man has this ability to mix his clear musical vocals with deep brooding emotion. The result almost borders on a folk sound; it is absolutely mesmerizing.

As much I would have liked to see R.E.M. remain an underground college band forever, I think they bring hope to the semi-mainstream music scene and to a synthesizer-nursed generation.

R.E.M. sings for the environment, for human emotion, and for life in general. It is for the people; that is automatic.

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