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In Concert Tonight: Jazz and country with a little protest

The Providence Journal-Bulletin

Andy Smith

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Eugene Chadbourne has a style all his own

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music for a long time. In 1978 his
group, the Chadbournes, mixed
country and the downtown New
York art/music scene; in 1980 a
critic described his album There'll
Be No Tears Tonight as “Hank Wil-
liams on LSD.”

He’s released a stream of records
and cassettes, including politically
charged collections like The Presi-
dent: He Is insane (1985) and
Corpses of Foreign Wars (1987)
that he sells through the mail. (For
Information, write Chadbourne, 707
Longview Drive, Greensboro, N. C.
27403-2018.)

“It’s kinda cool to get stuff direct-
ly from the source,” Chadbourne
said. “Country guys do it; Ernest
Tubbs, right up to a few years ago,
would sell his own records to the
people. It’s like a big deal out of it.”

Between his politics, his gleeful
subversion of musical boundaries
and his overall strangeness, you
don’t hear much Chadbourne on the
radio, not even college radio.

“When Jesse Helms was reelec-
ted, everyone was coming up to me
and saying this is terrible, there’s
going to be all this censorship,”
Chadbourne said. “But music has
been censored for 25 years. Every-
thing on the radio now comes from
a list of 100 songs picked by a com-
puter. Half the stuff you hear on
classic radio would never get played
today. The only reason I’m into the
music I’m playing is that I used to
hear things on the radio.”

Tonight Eugene Chadbourne
performs at AS220, 71 Richmond
St. at 8:30 p.m. Admission is $10.
For information call 831-9327.

CONNECTING STYLES: Eugene
Chadbourne says his unique blended
music isn’t strange at all.

Jazz and country
with a little protest

By ANDY SMITH
Journal-Bulletin Pop Music Writer

TOMO ME, NONE OF WHAT I do is really bi-
zarre at all,” said Eugene Chadbourne. “Of
course, I live with it every day. Other peo-
ple’s perceptions might be different.”
True.

There are people who think playing the
notorious electric rake, not to mention the
occasional amplified bird cage, is a little
odd. Just as there are those who find Chad-
bournes unique combination of country music,
avant-garde noise, jazz, psychedelica and free-
wheeling political protest beyond the pale.

With his thick glasses and bushy hair,
Chadbourne looks like some musical mad doctor.

Here is a man who plays “free improvised
country & western bebop,” who has a recent LP ti-
tled Country Music from the World of Islam, who
can put a half dozen genres into a blender during a
single medley.

“Oh, in the scheme of things it’s not that
strange,” said Chadbourne in a phone interview
last week. “We don’t sacrifice any goats on stage;
no one goes to the toilet. It all depends on your
point of view.”

But he does promise to bring The Rake with
him for his show tonight at AS220 in downtown
Providence. As a matter of fact, several rakes.

“We’ll probably have a rake quintet,” Chad-
bourne said. “We’ve been building them as we go
along. They’re not that hard to build, or play. The
problem is listening to them.”

Chadbourne is accompanied on this tour by six
musicians, including two former members of Camper Van Beethoven: Victor Krummenacher on
bass and multi-instrumentalist Jonathan Segal.
Chadbourne and CVB have collaborated before, on
’87’s Camper Van Chadbourne; they’re calling
the current incarnation either Camper Van Chad-
bourne or Eugene Chadbourne, depending on
who you talk to.

“It’s a chance to work with a lot of people I
really like,” said Chadbourne.

Chadbourne has been making idiosyncratic

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