

Poetry

Albuquerque Slam Poet Laureate Program Offers Historic Title

by Zachary Kluckman

For the first time in 700 years a Poet Laureate will be appointed by the people in an open competition, offering a unique opportunity for underserved artists and a brand new title for the City of Albuquerque.

After nearly 700 years of traditional appointment of Poets Laureate by government officials, Albuquerque Mayor Martin J. Chavez and Executive Director Zachary Kluckman create an historic new title, and opportunity, for poets in the region. In it's inaugural year the Albuquerque Slam Poet Laureate program will appoint the world's first Slam Poet Laureate, allowing local residents and visitors to name their new spokesperson directly, in what will prove to be a truly historic first.

In 1341 the Roman poet Petrarch took the title Poet Laureate for his poem "Africa". Almost three hundred years later, King James I recreated the title in it's current incarnation for friend and poet Ben Jonson. This year, the Albuquerque based program aims to create a second title for poets by recognizing the impact of spoken word on the new voice of the nation. Acknowledging the fact that slam poetry has significantly reinforced the role of poets as story-tellers and historians in modern society, this program will combine that aesthetic with the traditional role of spokesperson that the laureate title carries. *Continued page 4*

Black 47 espouses an unblinkingly political and thoroughly Irish form of rock and roll. But BLACK 47 AT CONNOLLY'S is also the story of a working band with a deeply indie spirit. — www.filmbaby.com

Black 47 At Connolly's, The Movie—A Rollicking Good Time and the Next Best Thing to a Live Show!

by Bill Nevins

Black 47, inimitably led—lo, these 20 full years-- by Wexford- born Irishman Larry Kirwan is the undisputed House Band of New York City, but in many ways they have become America's Hometown Band as well! Blasting out reels, reggae, hornpipes and good old fashioned rock n roll on uilleann pipes, trombone, sax and Strato-caster, Black 47 power Kirwan's wittily skewed and often highly political lyrics to swirling heights—turning in the widening gyre, indeed!

The band sings about Ireland, old and new, America rough and sweet and wars in Iraq, Belfast, or on the mean streets of Manhattan with fierce sincerity and roguish laughter. What other band could make the tale of their being shut down by dubious AUTHORITY on stage in Hoboken, Fordham Road or Dublin into uproarious anthems like "Green Suede Shoes" and "Rockin' the Bronx"? Kirwan has even mined the band's rocky road adventures for his full length memoir Green Suede Shoes and the soon to be published novel Rockin' the Bronx.

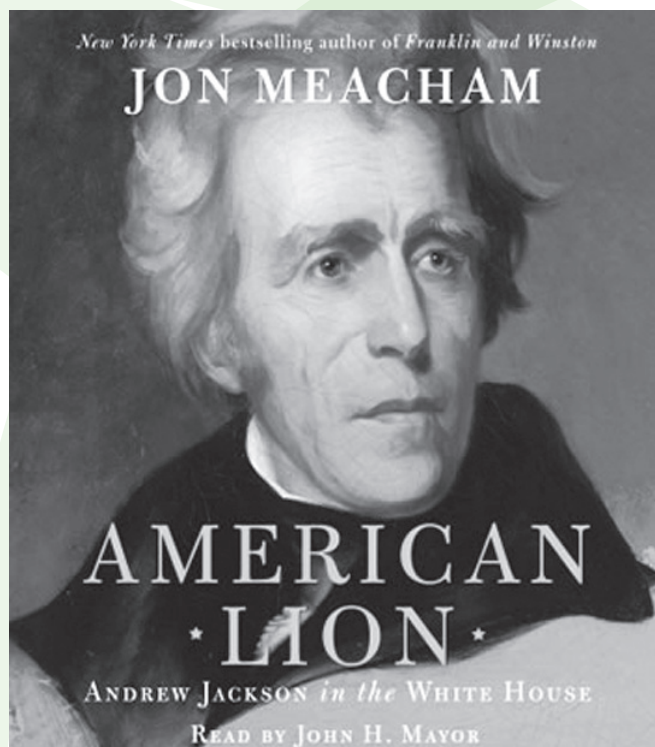
If you've been to a Black 47 live show, you probably have been to many—or you're waiting anxiously for them to come 'round again so you can get another "New York fix" of their delightful brew of humor, feeling and mind-expanding historical musings on the Irish diaspora and all diasporas in this mixed up wild world of singing, dancing, struggling peoples. This movie will take you back to those unforgettable live shows, or get you psyched to seek out the band
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BOOK REVIEW

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American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House

by Jon Meacham

Random House, 2009, Pulitzer Prize Winner

By By Jack Pickering

This book is accurately titled. Old Hickory was surely a protector of his tribe as a male lion protects his pride. While I still regret Jackson's harshness toward Native Americans, author Meacham has helped me to understand the mindset jounalisticallly dubbed "Manifest Destiny" in 1845. Historical inevitability remains a thorny issue. Yet, when technologically advanced European men pushed aside less advanced natives, the conquerors were bound to protect their women and children. Jackson showed leonine qualities in doing so.

Jackson also was a lion in the colonies' struggle for independence from an unimaginative mother country. Most notable for me were

"Jackson's era was fueled by barbeque ... and pulled pork..." — *Jon Meacham, Editor of Newsweek, takes prize for Pulitzer Prize for biography on Jon Stewart's "The Daily Show"*

two of his characteristics: his passionate equalitarianism and unionism. While he recognized the industrial North's unfairness to the agricultural South, he faced down would-be secessionists such as Calhoun. Author Meacham helped me to understand my maternal grandfather's admiration for "old Andy" since both were self-made poor boys and staunch Unionists.

Jackson had a special disadvantage that my granddad lacked: he became fatherless while still in his mother's womb. Author Meacham touchingly recounts Jackson's devotion to his mother and, by extension to his wife and all women. Widowed before his Presidency, Jackson spent 8 lonely but largely productive years in the White House. Back at "The Hermitage" in Nashville, Jackson was paternalistic toward his "servants" (as he called his slaves) but clearly did not regard them as even potentially equal. He regarded abolitionists as troublesome do-gooders.

Jackson's great blind spot was his failure to see the inevitable conflict resulting from a nation half slave and half free, though his death in 1845 was only 16 years before Secessionists fired on Fort Sumter. Jefferson, also a slaveholder, was more prescient when in 1820 he called slavery a "momentous question like a firebell in the night." My only criticism of author Meacham is his failure to emphasize this blind spot in his hero. When I audited an American history course at UNM a decade ago, my professor Daniel Feller, led us to hear Jefferson's firebell. Feller, whose work is generously acknowledged by Meacham, left UNM to edit the Jackson papers at the University of Tennessee.

To be truly radical is to
make hope possible, rather than
despair convincing.

— by *Raymond Williams, Welsh academic,
novelist, and media critic*

Los Jaraneros del Valle

Build Musical Bridges with
Son Jarocho

by Bill Nevins

Victor Padilla uses engineering terms to describe the musical goals of Los Jaraneros del Valle: "We started out to find bridges built long ago with Mexico instead of the walls which, unfortunately, are now going up. We found the vigas of a musical bridge and we are re-constructing it." Based in Albuquerque's South Valley, Los Jaraneros are-- besides founder Victor Padilla-- Felipe Lucero, Antonio Aragon, Teresa Slack, Rafaelita Gonzales, Lorenzo Candelaria and Ricardo Maes. They perform every Friday morning at La Placita Café on Isleta Boulevard, in the heart of Albuquerque's Mexican and Latin American immigrant community, and they are being featured regularly at local arts fests and other venues. A cd is in preparation and they have tracks on a recent anthology of New Mexico music. Los Jaraneros' bridge is son jarocho, a folk music style until recently little heard in New Mexico, where the ranchera, norteno and mariachi styles of Texas and Chihuahua are more evident. Son jarocho originated centuries ago far from El Norte, in the balmy Gulf coastal region of southern Veracruz, where the annual late January Fiesta de la Candelaria showcases regional poetry and son jarocho. This music is the complex heritage of a transcontinental cultural journey, linking African influences with European and Native American styles, instrumentation and outlook.

Los Jaraneros draw their group name from the jarana, a small guitar-type instrument with five strummed courses of strings, several of them doubled-- the rhythmic heartbeat of son jarocho. Against this, Victor's or Lorenzo's arpa jarocho (Mexican folk harp) delivers arpeggios over a syncopated bass pattern on la liona (bass guitar). Meanwhile, Victor improvises melodies on his four-string requinto guitar, plucked with a bull-horn pua (pick) as additional percussion is provided by the cajon (wooden box) and dancer Teresa's staccato heel-strikes on la tarima, a small dance platform. Singing (in Spanish) alternates among all members of the group, with short choral responses following a lead singer. There is much improvisation, as jarocho musicians claim they never perform the same son exactly the same way. The overall effect is exhilarating!



MUSIC REVIEW

Son, of which there are several regional types in Mexican music, originally denoted the "noise" (son) of the people, as contrasted to the "dignified" music of the Church. Son jarocho is characterized by a 6/8 rhythm syncopated with 2/4 and 3/4 rhythms (sesquialtera) and the staccato heel dance (zapateado). It links Spanish fandango and theatrical song styles with Native American influences and the African-originating music of slaves and free Blacks, particularly the call-and-response element and note-bending also found in work songs, spirituals and blues. Irreverent was the original meaning of the term jarocho, and witty sarcasm has become a matter of pride among the musicians and people of southern Veracruz, many of whom are African-Mexicans who historically asserted themselves despite being outside the framework of mainstream Mexican society. This attitude bothered the colonial Church so much that it tried to suppress son jarocho for its "devilish qualities" of frequent sexual doble sentidos (double meanings) and a tendency to make fun of death, sorrow and the Church itself. "Devil's music" or not, son jarocho is entrancing,

focused in compas-- harmonic and rhythmic phrases repeated throughout each piece and within which the musicians improvise. You've heard it in the song "La Bamba" and in Ozomatli's jarocho-flavored rock. Mexican style "trance blues", if you will, which pulls listeners in, smiling and moving their feet.

The last three decades of major son jarocho bands like Mono Blanco in Mexico, Tenocelomeh in California, La Tuza in Boston--and, of course, Albuquerque's own Los Jaraneros. Victor and other members of Los Jaraneros, following the apprenticeship tradition of son jarocho, study under the guidance of Maestro Oti Ruiz, the great Veracruzano harpist who now lives in Albuquerque and teaches music in Bernalillo. Victor speaks in reverent terms of Oti Ruiz, adding with a smile, "Oti says I am his bridge to the US, but the truth is that it is a two-way bridge!" Lorenzo Candelaria adds his hope that local fans and students of son jarocho will join with arts organizations to bring masters of this art to New Mexico for workshops and performances in coming years. Lively, addictively danceable, irreverent-- the music of Los Jaraneros and their compadres in son jarocho strengthens joyful bridges among peoples and slyly winks at sadness.

Los Jaraneros may be contacted at (505) 563-0910 or (505) 263 6554.

RIO GRANDE TRIBUNE

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*Black 47 continued...*when they roll into a venue near enough for you to catch them—hardcore fans drive hundreds of miles to see them and their cds are said to be favorites among our troops overseas!

Black 47 defines the term “working band”. From their base at Connolly’s Pub and Restaurant just off Times Square in NYC, they circulate around the East Coast and sometimes out to Chicago, San Francisco, Denver—they even stopped



once to play in Albuquerque and may again! Maybe not quite the “200 gigs a year” they boast of in one song, but darn close to it!

Like all hard working New Yorkers, Black 47 bust loose on New Year’s Eve, particularly in these tough economic and political times. This hour long film made lovingly by Victor Zimet and Stephanie Silber of Hand Made Films, grabs the essence of a recent Black 47 New Years in Times Square Blow Out—“full bore and balls to the wall”, as Larry Kirwan likes to declare after a pint or five. And interspersed with live concert wildness and sweat, the film looks back at Black 47’s beginnings from 1989 onward, when piper/NYPD cop Chris Byrne met Kirwan in a lower Manhattan dive and struck up the musical friendship which birthed the band and led to many’s the mad night in Paddy Reilly’s, Connolly’s, Rocky Sullivan’s Pub and other legendary watering holes. (Full disclosure: I first met Larry Kirwan myself and became a lifelong admiring pal, back in the 1970s dark ages at Malachy McCourt’s late great and notorious NY pub, The Bells of Hell—but that’s another story, and the name of a Black 47 song itself, come to think of it.)

Catch this movie when you can!The dvd can be ordered via www.hometeamproductions.com and the movie Black 47 at Connolly’s will be shown on the BIG screen on Wednesday, November 11, 2009 during the WORD! Poets & Songwriters Movie Program at The Guild Cinema, Albuquerque, NM www.guildcinema.com -000-lore

Poetry Slam Continued...

Two of the most significant aspects of this program are that now a potential laureate is asked to prove him or herself by reaching the audience, and also the people will now get to pick their own laureate in a performance setting.

“This program creates a unique opportunity for the people who will be represented by this laureate to ask them for something, a demonstration that their words and feelings match those of the audience enough to be representative...to be a spokesperson for those values,” says Kluckman.

The newly crowned laureate will serve a one year term as liaison between the city and the people. This one year reign has one limitation - the laureate may only serve once. The organizers have crafted this program to create new opportunities for literary artists in the community who are often overlooked by the traditional limitations of laureate appointments. By the same token, they have created this rule to encourage poets to make their year count artistically and in terms of service.

“As much as we want to allow the open performance dynamics of slam, we also want the winner to be a poet first...someone who loves their craft and brings a passion to it,” states Kluckman.

The competitors will battle through two preliminary bouts of three rounds each in May, including free verse, structured poems and a one minute “free” round. The winner will be determined by audience votes and a combined jury of established poets and audience members will determine the final outcome on June 13, 2009 at the historic Kimo Theater. For the last ten poets standing the prize package includes a professionally recorded CD by a Grammy winning local sound engineer, the coveted “iced dog-tags” and the honor of being recognized as the first Slam Poet Laureate in the world.

For details on the competitors, venues and dates, please visit the website at <http://abqspl.wildapricot.org> or e-mail Executive Director Zachary Kluckman at tigerbrighttiger@yahoo.com for more information.