

IN THE ARTS
Former Vaselines rocker Eugene Kelly is getting a grip with his new band, Eugenius.
Page 9

The Arts

SECTION E

Letters 2
Week's Worth 11
William Safire 12

THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE • SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 1994



CARLA KIRKWOOD, longtime San Diego actress, rants and prays in her politically charged works.

Women's powerful

VISIONARY

performances



ANNE WALDMAN, poet and wit.



KAREN FINLEY "writes with the body" in her controversial solos about the political cultures that breed abusive families.

VOICES

Offer healing force

O sun, moon, stars — our other relatives peering at us from the inside of god's house, walk with us as we climb to the next century, naked but for the stories we have of each other.

— from "Reconciliation" by Joy Harjo

Unable to believe their stories, the frazzled Freud asked: "What do women want?" Persistent as a drum or heartbeat, female performers have been passing through town lately answering: "To be heard, to be heard, to be heard."

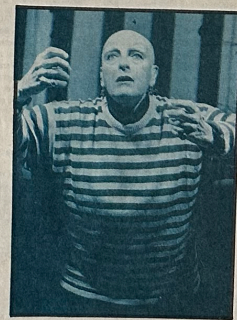
These writer-performers have their roots in different disciplines: performance artists Karen Finley and Rachel Rosenthal in the visual arts; poets Ntozake Shange, Anne Waldman and Joy Harjo from the African-American, Western humanist, and Native American oral traditions; Carla Kirkwood from theater; stream-of-consciousness comic Reno from the brash world of stand-up.

As feminists, they know that personal and political history are inextricably linked; as female artists, they create work aimed at healing not just themselves but the culture that marginalized or silenced their artistic forbearers and nearly killed the earth in the process.

Cutting across disciplines and taking on politics, medicine, science and technology as well as the art world, these female writers become oracular in performance, envisioning a future beyond the violence and churning ethnic conflicts of today. All reconstruct history from the female,

See Women on Page E-4

By **ANNE MARIE WELSH**
Arts Critic



RACHEL ROSENTHAL has been making provocative theater pieces since she signed on to the women's movement 20 years ago.

'Trios' truly collaborative

By **GEORGE VARGA**
Pop Music Critic

"I love bringing together artists who normally don't collaborate, and on my album they do," said bassist Rob Wasserman of his new album, "Trios," one of the most distinctive all-star outings in recent memory.

The 13-song release features the Grammy Award-winning bassist performing in various trio settings with an unusually eclectic group of past credits range from Lou Reed, Van Morrison and Oingo Boingo to past credits range from Lou Reed, Rickie Lee Jones, Bob Weir and jazz violin master Stephane Grappelli.

But what makes "Trios" so notable isn't the fact that it teams Wasserman with, respectively, Neil Young and the Grateful Dead's Bob Weir; Branford Marsalis and Bruce

Hornsby; Elvis Costello and Marc Ribot; Les Claypool of Primus and Chris Whitley; Jerry Garcia and Edie Brickell; ex-Jimmy Reed/Chuck Berry drummer Al Duncan and since-deceased blues pioneer Willie Dixon (to whom "Trios" is dedicated); and cellists Matt Haimovitz and the Kronos Quartet's Joan Jeanrenaud.

Nor is it the fact that the album opens with the stunning "Fantasy is Reality/Bells of Madness," which marks the first instance Brian Wilson has recorded with his daughter Carnie; a Wasserman-prompted pairing that has since led to a reconciliation between the former head Beach Boy and his long-estranged family.

Rather, it's that "Trios" manages to be a truly democratic and collaborative work despite

showcasing artists who, for the most part, usually insist on calling all the shots themselves.

"I'd have to say that everyone I worked with on 'Trios' was very collaborative on my project, and often I end up working with them on their projects and they're no collaborator at all," said Wasserman, who performs Wednesday on TV's "The Tonight Show" with fellow "Trios" collaborators Weir and Marsalis.

"The singer-songwriters who come on my album did something they normally wouldn't do, which is reaching out," he continued. "These are no anonymous sidemen" on my album; it's a great democracy. And I'm reminded again and again that

See Trios on Page E-8

Ford's film legacy

It is well and proper that the San Diego Symphony will honor America's greatest filmmaker this week with a formal exhibition of his most ambitious silent film, complete with authentic accompaniment by organ and orchestra.

What, you may ask? Did Orson Welles make silent films? No. But Orson Welles, asked in a 1967 *Playboy* interview to identify his principal American influence, said: "... the old masters. By which I mean John Ford, John Ford and John Ford."

In the two decades since his death, John Ford has slipped further from unfashionable toward forgotten. Critics offer him respect rather than analysis. Even his most zealous fans tend to cherish his work rather than acclaim it. For the general public, the question never arises. John Ford is just history. Friday at 8 p.m. in Copley Symphony

Welton Jones

CRITIC-AT-LARGE

Hall, many of us will get our first opportunity to see Ford's 1924 epic, "The Iron Horse," complete with the premiere of a newly reconstructed accompaniment by San Diegan Eric Beheim, played live by theater-organist Dennis James and members of the symphony under the baton of Carl Daehler.

There will be fun and games starting at 7 p.m., with live performances of railroad songs, a trivia contest and even a rare silent spoof film titled "The Iron Mule." But the attraction is Ford's film.

See Jones on Page E-11