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ARTS DEVO

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YODEL-AY-BLEEP-BLOOP This column is Arts DEVO's happy place—standing in the middle of the local arts scene, taking in a wide view of the comings and goings of local and visiting creators and painting a picture of the eclectic scene to share with readers. As I survey the next month or so, the local arts spectrum is typically colorful and the wide range is perhaps best illustrated on one end by:

The Last of the Vaudeville Cowboys ... Rick Crowder lives in Paradise and his yodeling-cowboy alter-ego Sourdough Slim has toured the country for more than 30 years, playing fairs, cowboy poetry gatherings and folk festivals, as well as some of the most famous venues in the country, including the Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center. He's been featured in the Los Angeles Times and performed on Good Morning America and will be playing the Barn at Meriam Park Jan. 12, 5-7 p.m. As if Slim wasn't enough of a draw, joining him for set of Western swing, country-blues, vintage jazz, cowboy classics and comedy bits is none other than Robert Armstrong, one of the most important underground comics artists (creator of Micky Rat), and bandmate to R. Crumb in the retro-swing outfit, the Cheap Suit Serenaders. And it's a free show!



Sourdough Slim and Robert Armstrong
PHOTO BY VERN EVANS

On the other end of the spectrum:

The Diva of the Diode ...



Suzanne Ciani
PHOTO BY MARIA JOSE GOVEA

The annual New Music Symposium at Chico State is perhaps the most consistently innovative arts event of the year in these parts. The two-day showcase features one concert of original music by student composers, and one featuring a performance by a visiting artist. Guest performers have included such experimental/new-music luminaries as minimalist trailblazer Terry Riley, and this year's headliner is none other than synthesizer pioneer Suzanne Ciani. The five-time Grammy-nominated composer and musician/sound artist has had a long, wild career that's included museum installations, neo-classical compositions/recordings, commercial jingles and studio sound effects (the sound of a Coke bottle opening, and the swoosh in the chorus of "Afternoon Delight"—both are Ciani), and immersive quadraphonic performances on the legendary Buchla 200e modular synthesizer.

The last one will be what Ciani will present for day two of the symposium, on Feb. 16. The students are on stage the day before (Feb. 15); both concerts take place in Rowland-Taylor Recital Hall at 7:30 p.m., and both are free!

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WHAT NOW? As y'all are undoubtedly aware, this here is the final print version of this column. It's the 723rd time I've filled up these page inches with my arts blatherings. In addition to these analog relics, there are another 32 digital-only renditions that filled the gaps during COVID, and that number will grow as the CN&R and Arts DEVO move to virtual publication only.

Here's hoping all you artists, rockers, scenesters and freaks will meet me online with your ideas for trouble and fun, so I can share and we can all continue to party together and keep Chico from turning into just another boring-ass town.

Rock on, my friends.