

# Ohlone music department hosts events

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Staff writer

What better way to welcome Christmas than to sit back and enjoy some old rock tunes with a mix of new ones. The Music Department at Ohlone will be putting up three events in the upcoming weeks that are sure to get your feet tapping in the Christmas spirit. Ohlone's

Jazz/Rock Combo Class taught by Tim Roberts is putting together an end-of-the-semester concert through an amalgamation of rock classics with some contemporary picks by students.

The result is a testament to their hard work and advanced ability in the music field. The event will be held this Friday at 7 p.m. in the Jackson Theater. Tickets will be

selling at the door with prices at: \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors, staff and student and \$8 for youth.

There is also the Christmas Extravaganza, which will feature the Ohlone Community Band, Ohlone Wind Orchestra and Ohlone Tuba Ensemble, who will play more classic Christmas tunes. Some featured songs include the "Silver Bells," "Greensleeves" and "Sleigh Ride."

This will be held on Saturday in the Jackson Theater at 3 p.m. and the tickets will be sold at \$10 for everyone at the door.

The Old Mission is hosting the Ohlone Chamber Singers' 23rd Annual Christmas at the Mission Concert. The Ohlone group of singers will be joined by Bell Choir from the Livermore church. The Chamber Singers are a talented

group of individuals who are an auditioned group that put on this show every year. The featured work for this concert is Conrad Susa's "Carols and Lullabies, Christmas in the Southwest." The concert will be held this Saturday at 8 p.m. and on Sunday at 4 p.m. and tickets are priced at \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors, staff and students and \$8 for youth.

# South America, a different kind of life

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through the southern tip of Arizona at the border crossing of Nogales. They raced across the Pacific Coast before sweeping inland to Celaya, covering roughly 1,000 miles in three days. At Celaya they met with a mutual friend, Pablo, whose family raises cattle and breeds bulls for fighting.

During their three-week stay, they got intimate with the Spanish language by conversing with the locals and socializing with Pablo's friends. They had also set up a bar on the third floor of an apartment Pablo's family had set them up with.

After three weeks of shooting pool, bull fighting, sightseeing and soccer, Shragger's bike got stolen while he was in an Internet café, so the pair parted ways. Shragger headed back up to the U.S. to re-allocate funds and Kuei south toward the Pacific Coast and went to Acapulco, which was "infested with tourists and time share apartments. It was just a string of hotels and lots of gringos." Kuei went to Puerto Escondido, which had beautiful beaches and was a "rejuvenating experience...I had never actually witnessed a sunset, where I could watch the sun be enveloped by the ocean. It was like a red marble and the sound of the waves breasting and breaking was like the sound of the oceans extinguishing that red marble."

A week after Puerto Escondido, Kuei reached the Yucatan Peninsula where he visited the ruins of Chichen Itza, Uxmal and Palenque. The Mayan ruins "were humbling... just thinking about the past civilizations that have lived there, what life and the surrounding area must have been like back then...but the thousands of tourists kind of killed it for me."

In Pecaya, Guatemala, Kuei met a girl from New Zealand and hiked up a volcano with her. "When I got to the top, I threw some rocks into the volcano, counted how long it took for the rocks to hit the bottom and called it a day."

Kuei then went to the area between Colon and Puerto Lindo to look for a sea captain to transport him across the Darien Gap. On the first two days, "the boat was bearable, but after seeing so many desert islands that looked like desktop backgrounds, I started going crazy." Kevin described the boat experience as "like being confined to a prison cell not much more than 5 ft by 5 ft." with the "unrelenting sun and salty breezes" giving him "an unquenchable thirst." This compounded with "having nothing to do but lay on the deck and be baked in the sun. Reading the same book over and over... just watching your bike rust



Photos courtesy of Kevin Kuei

**Student Kevin Kuei fraternized with locals, immersed himself in a foreign culture and experienced things not possible in the United States. Above, Kuei's motorcycle Betsy getting a tan on the beach; below, Kuei bikes through South American urban roads.**

in the salty breeze, my mind became concave." The only reprieves to his mounting feeling of insanity were nights "when we would pull into a mangrove cove and swim ashore to watch lightning storms erupt over the Darien [Gap]." That and "knowing that at the end of the voyage I would be on an entirely new continent. I couldn't wait to reconnect with a road."

When Kuei arrived at Cartagena, Colombia, he concluded that "tourist areas were something to avoid." The colonial fort that Kuei saw was "artificial and done-up—like Disneyland." Kevin did not want to "go where everyone else has gone before, and to have the same memories."

After Cartagena Kuei "wanted to experience the real South America." To reach Medellin, Kuei decided to only take back roads and thus wound up in Sante Fe Realto. "It was a really small town that didn't seem to have anything peculiar about it at first." When Kuei purchased a Cola, "the town gathered around us as if we were interesting or something." After an investigation by the military chief stationed at the village, Kuei was invited by the locals to eat with them.

Kuei befriended an ex-paramilitary man named Luis, who invited Kuei to have dinner with his family.

The people in the town had a past history with a paramilitary movement and the day after Kuei arrived "a lady from CNN was bothered that I was there; she thought I was a reporter." The day the CNN reporter arrived was also the day of the festival for the re-integra-

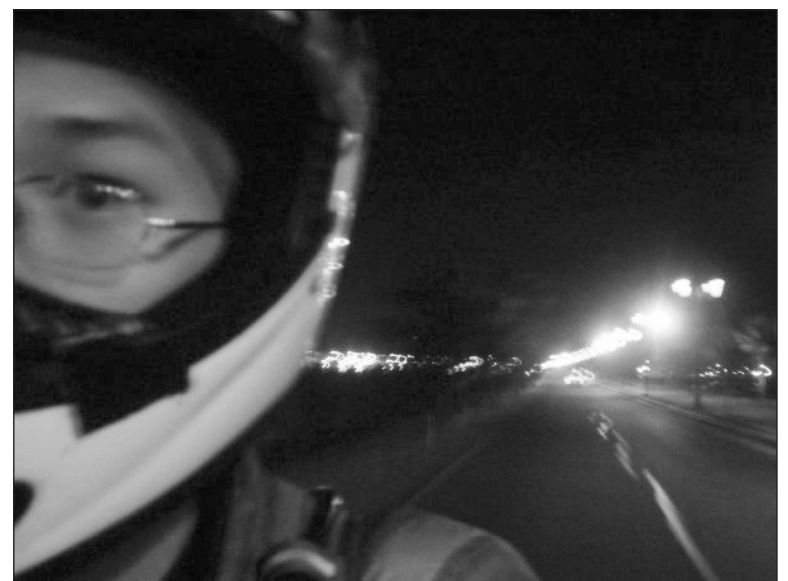
tion of former paramilitaries. Kuei was shown "videos of their glory days when they were still an active paramilitary. It was weird because earlier that day the same people you had met as villagers, just really normal simple people, were in the videos in berets and army fatigues."

Kuei said that "three or four years ago, before [Alvaro] Uribe was elected president, when the paramilitary was active, there was probably a fifty-fifty chance that they would have invited you for a drink or killed you on the spot."

The night before the festivities "there were like 30 villagers gutting animals by candle light." In the village all the children run around *au naturale* and there were like entire parrot families living in their thatch huts."

Every day at 6 p.m., there was a TV program that all the locals would watch at their respective houses. "One day we were invited to his house for the designated TV hour but the power went out. There was no electricity in the entire town so everyone just lounged outside watching fireflies, eating mangos and listening to crickets chirp in each other's company. What else was there to do?"

As much as Kuei liked Sante Fe Realto, "I always had a compulsion to keep traveling." When Kuei arrived at Saltar de Bordones, the third highest waterfall in South America. "I stayed three nights with the villagers there and hiked down to the bottom of the waterfall. The kids were really helpful, they got me firewood and there was this one particular kid Jennifer, who I played



soccer with and danced to Andean music with one night when it was raining too heavily to get back to my tent."

In Moccoa Kuei met a shaman who offered to "guide us through the use of yaje and offered us a place to stay." Yaje is a mixture of South American plants that produces a hallucinogenic effect coupled with nausea. "I became extremely ill, sickly, feverish at first. I had strange visions of cellular clockwork and unity. At one point I lost my depth perception and everything seemed to meld into a single pallet of shadows. The only thing that was definite was sound. The sound of the river below us, the sound of the trees moving. The shaman told us the yaje was talking to us...when morning came, I vomited heavily, and it felt as if a long festering cancer was being expelled from within. I was out for a week after that."

In Ecuador "the smile was less accessible. People didn't smile;

their faces seemed to always be in a perpetual frown or scowl. I didn't like it."

In Peru, "riding was like driving over the surface of Mars."

In Bolivia, Kuei got a cactus in El Alto and had an old lady boil it down into a mucousy concentrate. "We brought it with us to the Salar de Uyuni and rode out to the middle of the salt flat before ingesting it. At a certain point, I felt compelled to walk into the distance and eventually I stumbled upon this whirlpool of crystals. These clumped 3-inch high little Chichten Itzas...Raced across the Uyuni, it's like one giant salt block, these little hexagonal crystals, these uniform molecules, the reflection of your soul, out here anything in the distance stands out on its placid surface, out here, I am an island."

After Bolivia, Kuei felt that "whatever I had to see or do had been done and that it was time to go home."