

June 1999

it's a good way to be heard and showcase their talents; there is a camaraderie that builds up over time; and for many it is a significant part of their income. But whatever the reason or the inspiration, they all express a sense of purpose — a "mission" or a "calling" they are following. Call it Musical Ministry if you will, there is a real commitment to following the path of spirit. They are artists, visionaries, mystics, prophets, and they know that this is what they are called to do. It's not always easy, but it is their way.

Freedom and Harmoni, two of the poets/performers who will be playing, also caution against the use of the word "homeless," a feeling that many others echo. "To label people 'homeless' indicates a perception of lack, a perspective of disadvantage," says Harmoni. "The Earth

is abundant and many of us are simply following the path of Jah."

"All of us have a home," said Freedom. "It is called Earth. Some of us may not have houses to live in, but the work we are called to do has to come first. Artists deserve much more support in our culture."

The show is first and foremost a showcase of, and a thank you to, these very talented artists who grace the streets of Santa Cruz. And, hopefully, it will be an opportunity to build bridges as well, and for folks from many different segments of the community to get to know each other better. For, in the end, our hopes, dreams, and aspirations, our fears and our doubts, may be much more similar than we know.

Admission to the event is free, and all donations gathered from the raffle, basket passing, and food sales will be distributed among the performers!! Don't miss the first annual production of STREET WISE — SANTA CRUZ at Laurel Park, 301 Center Street, Santa Cruz.

Sherry Conable has done community organizing and special-events production in Santa Cruz for 15 years.