



Taking it to the people: musician Charlie Chan likes to perform in Lower Town Hall.

Chan a jack of all trades

By CHRISTIE ELIEZER

SHE'S not a male, Asian or a detective, but Charlie Chan is the name on her credit cards.

The multimedia artist is currently working on two short movies; an album for February '98 release featuring collaborations with Monique Brumby; developing her Web site to sell her music globally; and renovating her '61 Triumph Herald car.

Her past remains a haze. The jazz players she works with would be stunned to know of her "delinquent youth" with '80s band Electric Pandas.

"The wonderful thing about making music is that people apply their own set of values to what you create, and it's great to get their feedback," she says.

That hasn't been made easy by the fact that her CDs *The Adventures Of...* and collection of piano pieces *East and West* — introspective, brooding, intense — stylistically haven't set an identity. "That's probably my fault," she wails.

"The first album was supposed to be just a recording of *East and West* wasn't even

meant to be released. I recorded 14 hours of piano music and thought they worked so well that audiences might like to hear them. My next album will hopefully provide a real insight into what I do."

The records' ambience carry through into the shows.

"I meditate and do yoga before a show. Much of it is improvised, so I need to focus and be comfortable with what I do."

She experiments with venues to get that right atmosphere. Some try it with performances in art galleries or stained glassed churches.

Chan once did a Thai restaurant with a five-piece jazz combo. One day she wants to do a deal with a furniture store and perform a show with couches.

"I'm just trying to create a sonic temple where people can move in and out and find their own space without worrying what other people think. I also come from an orchestral background, so I'm aware of how to create uplifting music in a sit-down situation."

Charlie Chan and Monique Brumby, Lower Town Hall, tomorrow and Saturday.