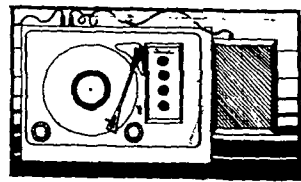


the daily Collegian arts



Record reviews

A hit for Randy?

By CHARLES BIRKHEAD
of the Collegian Staff

Lots of people have had hits with Randy Newman's songs. Three Dog Night made a smash out of "Mama Told Me Not To Come." Peggy Lee had a success with "Love Story." Harry Nilsson recorded a whole album's worth.

It seems that just about the only one who hasn't had a hit with a Randy Newman song is Randy Newman, despite the fact that he plays better piano and has more hair than Elton John.

Undaunted, Newman has come out with his fourth effort, "Good Old Boys." It's basically about the redneck South. The opening song is called "Rednecks", as a matter of fact.

"Last night I saw Lester Maddox on a TV show. With some smart-ass New York Jew. And the Jew laughed at Lester Maddox. And the audience laughed at Lester Maddox, too.

Well, he may be a fool but he's our fool. If they think they're better than him they're wrong."

Most of the songs that have been written about the so-called "Southern crackers" wouldn't have gone beyond the fifth line. Newman, however, doesn't

take the traditional liberal "sophisticated" attitude.

Newman is aiming at anyone who thinks of Southerners as ignorant bigots with these lines:

"Down here we're too ignorant to realize That the North has set the nigger free. Yes, he's free to be put in a cage in Harlem in New York City."

The inspirational figure for the album is Huey Long, governor of Louisiana from 1928 to 1935. His photograph adorns the back of the jacket. Newman describes him and his like in "Kingfish": "I'm a cracker, And you are, too. But don't I take good care of you?"

Newman sympathizes with the Huey Longs and their followers, but he sees the sadness and hypocrisy, too. Long's own words are sarcastically set to a sprightly piano accompaniment in "Every Man A King": "Ev'ry man a king, ev'ry man a king. For you can be a millionaire."

But there aren't too many millionaires in Newman's Southland. More typical is the voice of "Birmingham": "Got a wife, got a family, Earn my livin' with my hand."

I'm a roller in a steel mill In downtown Birmingham."

"I work all day in the factory," says Newman's protagonist, "and that's alright with me." But he has his gripes too, as is shown in "Mr. President (Have Pity On the Working Man)":

"I know it may sound funny But people ev'rywhere are runnin' out of money."

Newman's arrangements are a little more complex on this album. The heretofore rarely used strings and brass are heard with much greater frequency. Newman has even resorted to using background vocals, with Eagles' songwriters Don Henley and Glenn Frey doing the honors on several tracks.

The album contains two love songs. One of them, "Marie," is worth the price of the record alone.

Newman's piano playing is as inventive and refreshing as ever. He even uses the electric version of the instrument on a couple of cuts.

It's comforting to know, from listening to this album, that one of the very few true originals in American pop is as good as he ever was. If only a few more people would listen to him!

'Youth and Age'

THIS PORTRAIT of an old woman and a young girl is a photograph by Jan Kreicsbergs, a Latvian who has sent some of his work to a friend in the United States. The photographs are on display on the second floor of Carnegie.



Latvian's work displayed

Carnegie Building

Jan Kreicsbergs, a 35-year-old Latvian photographer, has 27 prints on exhibit in the second floor of Carnegie Building. The exhibit has been assembled from prints the artist sent to Robert Jaskovskis, a photographer-friend.

Kreicsbergs' work appears regularly in Latvian fashion magazines, periodicals and newspapers. This showing covers a number of years and displays a wide variety of styles.

Pattee Library

Mixed-media paintings by Michael Allison using a wide range of materials are on display in the library's east corridor lobby.

Oil paintings and water colors by Dennis R. Hutchings of

Exhibits

Port Royal, Pa. will take the place of the Allison show. Hutchings' work is predominantly traditional landscapes.

Rick Hoffman, a graduate of the Tyler School of Art, will be showing acrylics in the library's circulation lobby.

Manuscripts, first editions and memorabilia by novelist John O'Hara, a Pottstown native, will be on display in the Rare Books Room. The O'Hara exhibit opens tomorrow.

Photographs by Dennis Douvanis (graduate-philosophy) are being shown in the west lobby through Oct. 15.

An exhibit on the occult will be featured in the west side of the main lobby. The display has been set up to tie in with Colloquy's guest speakers on the same subject.

The east side of the main lobby has an exhibit called "Four Easy Pieces" of Penn State history. It's about the Goodyear blimp, student publications, the names of Penn State buildings, and traditional class rivalries and related hijinks.

Senegalese group is Artists Series' dance replacement

This has been a bad year for dance companies and for the Artists Series' dealings with them.

When the Artists Series drew up its original 1974-75 schedule last spring, the National Ballet Company was supposed to come to Penn State this fall. The company folded this summer because of financial difficulties.

The Artists Series countered this setback by signing the Agnes De Mille Heritage Dance Theatre for a performance on Oct. 31 with a special performance Nov. 1. Financial deficits forced the group to cancel the remainder of its U.S. tour.

Now the Artists Series has scheduled the Senegalese National Dance Company. The group will appear in University Auditorium 8:30 p.m. Oct. 13. Tickets for the Agnes De Mille Heritage Dance Theatre will admit patrons to the performance.

A matinee performance at 3 p.m. Oct. 13 also has been scheduled. Tickets for this performance go on sale from 9 a.m.

to 4 p.m. Tuesday at the University Auditorium.

The Senegalese National Dance Company has performed throughout Europe, South America and the United States. The group's dances portray the history, the aspirations and the preoccupations of the Senegalese people.

"A superb African dance ensemble with an exciting program," Anna Kisselgoff, dance critic for The New York Times, wrote of the company. "They are not to be missed."

Maurice S. Sengher, the company's director, visited about 200 villages, covering 4,000 miles in Senegal to gather information on the dances of his nation. With his collaborators he has watched and listened to 2,000 singers and dancers, shot 250 yards of film and taped hours of songs from all parts of the country.

All this information goes into making up the company's varied dances, which demonstrate the tales and rituals of Senegalese folklore in the fashion that Sengher witnessed in the villages.

'Seagull' to open University Theatre

Anton Chekov's drama "The Seagull" will open the fall season for the University Theatre.

Directed by Archie Smith, assistant professor of theatre arts, the play will open Thursday at the Pavilion. A student preview has been scheduled for Wednesday.

The box office for "The Seagull" and University Theatre's other fall productions, "Surrealism — A Celebration with Two Plays: 'The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower' and 'The Breasts of Tiresias'" and Lanford Wilson's "Lemon Sky," will open Monday.

The box office, located with the playhouse in the Arts Building, will be open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. On performance days, it will be open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

University Theatre works in two theaters on campus — the Playhouse, which has a conventional proscenium

stage, and Pavilion, which has an arena or theater-in-the-round stage.

The University's production of "The Seagull" will include several passages cut out of Chekov's original script by Russian censors who seemed the passages dealing with sexual relationships too sensitive.

Ushers are needed for all the University Theatre productions. Students signing up to usher must be at the theater half an hour before the house opens. They seat the patrons and hand out programs.

Ushers are guaranteed a seat for the performance. Anyone interested in ushering may call Helen Weston at 863-0381 or come to the University Theatre office at 137 Arts Building.

Reservations for "The Seagull" and other fall productions may be made by telephone by calling the box office, 863-1884, during its regular hours.

Museum of Art

"Manayunk and Other Places: A Francis Speight Retrospective" will continue in galleries A and C at the Museum through October. The Museum staff has collected about 60 oils, watercolors and drawings which illustrate Speight's work over a 50-year period.

Gallery B currently houses an exhibit of pieces from the Museum's permanent collection.

The Museum is open noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. Museum tours are scheduled every Thursday at 1:30 p.m.

Chambers Gallery

Jeanne Steven-Sollman will be showing her drawings and paintings until Oct. 18.

Kern Graduate Building

Bob and Susan Duncan, residents of Morrill, Maine, are exhibiting their oil paintings in the Graduate Commons Gallery through next week.

Denis Faleski is showing her ceramics in Kern's display cases through October.

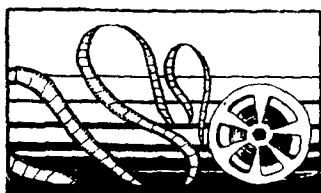
Zoller Gallery

Super Mud '74, the annual student invitational ceramics show sponsored by the Department of Art, opens Monday. Penn State ceramics students will be exhibiting their work along with those of students from the Universities of Chicago, Georgia, Delaware, and Montana and Ohio State University.

Arts Building

Bruce Horowitz, a Penn State graduate, will be showing 20 photographs of children in Room 212 of the Arts Building through October. Horowitz is a youth worker with a community association project in Rochester, N.Y., where he works with elementary school-aged children.

All of the photographs in his exhibit were made with inexpensive dime-store cameras which Horowitz uses for desired visual qualities.



Now playing

Polanski's 'Chinatown' engaging

By TONY D'AUPELLI
of the Collegian Staff

Roman Polanski's decision to include John Huston in "Chinatown" was hardly accidental. Huston's "The Maltese Falcon" remains a classic of its genre, the highly entertaining literate detective story which was so well done that its basic emptiness is all but ignored. Set in stark dichotomies, especially good vs. evil, the often convoluted plot serves as a backdrop for a drama of human frailty. In this genre, deception is the rule, money the goal and simple greed the motivator.

"Chinatown" is Polanski's modernistic detective story, an updated version with a heavy dose of Polanski's dark humor. Compared to Altman's "The Long Goodbye," "Chinatown" milks the genre, exploiting the audience's knowing conceptions of what to expect. Whereas Altman threw out the old style and turned the genre on its head, Polanski uses the conventions of the detective story to full advantage, creating his best film in years.

The film is unquestionably engaging. Robert Towne's screenplay is a marvelous blend of humor, suspense and veiled social commentary. The greed here is buried under maneuvering of real estate by high officials. It is a subtle but fascinating intrigue: illegally diverted water will be used to develop land deviously bought by Noah Cross, a local millionaire played by John Huston. When a water authority

official (who also happens to be Cross' son-in-law) refuses to go along with the plan, he is killed. J.J. Gittes (Jack Nicholson), a suave private detective, is hired by the widow (Faye Dunaway) to track down the murderer. Gittes quickly learns what happens when he sticks his nose into other people's business: he gets it sliced.

Gittes is a man who doesn't learn. His cynical recognition of human dishonesty doesn't prevent him from deeper involvement with the widow, Mrs. Mulwray. Working with others' desperation, he tries to control his own. He can't see beyond the present far enough to see how he is reliving his disastrous past. Dealing with Mrs. Mulwray's weaknesses, he forgets his own.

Mrs. Mulwray's past is also snaring her. Gittes becomes involved, first because of professional interest, later for more personal reasons. Their relationship is inevitably doomed and is a replay of Gittes' tragic relationship with another woman in Chinatown. Gittes must finally come to confront himself, to recognize the guilt that led him to flee Chinatown. Mrs. Mulwray brings him back to Chinatown, where the film ends tragically.

Polanski has inspired excellent performances from his actors. The big surprise is Faye Dunaway, whose career has gone downhill since "Bonnie and Clyde." She brings humor and depth to her role, her impassive and coldly attractive face trying to

contain past hurts. She holds her own with Jack Nicholson, an actor with such impulsivity and strength that he automatically dominates. He, too, is fine. This is probably his best acting since "Five Easy Pieces," a remarkable portrayal of a man enjoying his facile flirtation with danger. As is typical of the detective story, Gittes' inner life is only hinted at, but Nicholson easily transcends the two-dimensionality of Bogart's detectives. Polanski also has managed to fill his film with marvelous bit parts. Even the role of a snotty office boy is done to perfection.

"Chinatown" is an excellent example of how collaboration in film can work. With a literate, intriguing script and excellent performances, Polanski can do wonders. He is aided by a great score by Jerry Goldsmith, an outstanding example of how a film score can be a "character." Alternately nostalgic and terrifying the music adds to the overall effect of the film in inestimable ways.

"Chinatown" is not without flaws. The ending is really an anticlimax, the locale is not used well, and the violence is excessive. The romantic scenes between Dunaway and Nicholson are curiously flat, making their relationship hard to believe.

Still, by his shrewd blending of humor and pain, by his demonstration of the desperation of closeness, Polanski has added maturity to the detective story. The lure of "Chinatown" is irresistible.

'Bank Shot' enjoyable non-movie

By PATRICK SOKAS
of the Collegian Staff

"Bank Shot" is a witty and basically enjoyable movie that suffers from the Chinese food syndrome: an hour after you leave the theater, you feel like you haven't seen a movie.

For a feature film, "Bank Shot" is unusually small caliber entertainment. At about 80 minutes in length, it would fit quite well in a "movie of the week" slot. Aside from the involvement of George C. Scott, the film is almost indistinguishable from a better-than-average made-for-television film.

Scott is the only major talent involved. Most of the supporting cast is familiar from the television guest-star circuit, although the co-star, Joanna Cassidy, is a newcomer. But it is an extremely likeable collection of odd characters.

Actually, it's the congeniality of the cast that keeps the movie going as long as it does.

The plot, such as it is, comes from a novel by

Donald Westlake, the author of "The Hot Rock" which was a far more successful film.

Scott is sprung from prison in order to mastermind a "bank shot" on the Mission Bell Bank, temporarily located in a mobil home. He formulates a plan for the holdup. "It's very simple," Scott states, wincing visibly. "We don't rob the bank, we STEAL the bank." And so it goes.

One of the major flaws, obviously, is in the screenplay by Wendell Mayes. Most of the dialogue sounds more or less stilted. Sometimes it is difficult to figure out just what the actors are trying to say. Consequently, some of the funniest sequences are those in which nothing need be said. On its best level, "Bank Shot" is a satire of the affection Americans for general, and Southern Californians in particular, hold for vehicles.

The humor comes from counterpointing various odd vehicles. One of the best scenes in the film is an opening sequence in which Scott, escaping from

prison in a gigantic earth mover, eludes the prison warden, following in his golf cart.

In later scenes, an antique car is pursued by a jet airplane and a traffic jam is formed between a tractor trailer, an ice cream cart and assorted other vehicles.

Aside from these novel ideas, "Bank Shot" seems to have drawn most of its humor from the old jokes' home. An film produced in 1974 which tries to find humor in feeding prisoners saltpepper (so they won't think about you-know-what) has got a dating problem. Such things were buried about 20 years ago.

Even Scott's performance seems more than a little strained. Presumably upon order of the director, Scott licks copiously throughout the film, as if someone had stolen his teeth. He never opens his mouth wide enough to let us see if that is indeed the problem.

Despite these flaws, "Bank Shot" manages to be good clean fun if you're in an undemanding mood.