



Van Morrison performed in Rec Hall Saturday night, where his mellow style was preceded by the rock and roll performance of Dave Edmunds' Rockpile.

Van Morrison plays

Rock, mellow combined

By JOHN MARTELLARO
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

The Van Morrison-Dave Edmunds' Rockpile concert at Rec Hall Saturday night never did sell out, and it's too bad because that means a number of people missed an opportunity to see a pair of excellent performances.

One thing is for sure, Edmunds and Morrison combined to put on a performance that more than satisfied the fans who were there, as evidenced by the enthusiastic response they both received.

The two acts portrayed contrasting musical styles, but instead of clashing they served as counterpoint to each other — Edmunds got things started with a rousing, high energy rock 'n roll set, followed by Morrison's mellow approach.

The long wait between acts — approximately 45 minutes — also contributed to the effect.

Edmunds and his band took the stage and immediately leapt into a supercharged upbeat rock performance, proving the aptness of the name "Rockpile" by dishing out a heaping portion of hard-working rock 'n roll.

The music was simple and direct — guitars, bass, drums and vocals — the type of music that can sometimes become repetitiously dull unless done well, but this was done extremely well.

The performance was uniformly excellent, but the highlight of Edmunds' new material was the song "Trouble Boys," soon to be released as the single from the band's new "Hot Wax" album.

Edmunds also treated nostalgia lovers to a dynamic version of the old Chuck Berry classic "Promised Land," followed by Edmunds' old '60s hit "I Hear You Knockin'," which was performed well, but slightly marred by some feedback problems.

Bassist Nick Lowe was the most animated of the performers — mugging at the crowd, pointing fingers, giving thumbs-up signs, and playing his bass in strange positions, even upside-down at one point — and performed the lead vocal on one of the night's best numbers, "They Call It Rock," which had fans dancing in the aisles and provided a concise definition of their performance.

Needless to say, Morrison was left with a tough act to follow. And at first, it looked like he was going to blow it completely.

Unconfirmed rumors had Morrison stuck in Harrisburg until very late, and supposedly he still had not reached State College when Edmunds had finished his set.

And when the band took the stage and began the hauntingly

familiar intro to "Moondance," Morrison still was nowhere to be seen.

When he finally did come out, it really did look like he had just gotten there. He seemed disoriented, like he was lost and half asleep, and just mumbled the words without any feeling. It seemed like a very forced performance.

The song was salvaged by the backing musicians. The two female background vocalists were excellent, and Pete Bardens' keyboard work was first-rate.

Bardens' electric piano gave the song a somewhat different effect from the acoustic work on the original version, and the song as a whole was performed slightly more upbeat than the original, as were a great number of the songs throughout the concert.

Morrison seemed to find himself after that, and took control of the band from then on, leading the other musicians instead of being carried by them as he was at first.

One effect the band performed very well was to slowly bring everything down low — the energy level, the beat, the volume — only to bring it all back up again at Morrison's signal (raising his voice or his right hand with the ever-present tambourine).

One of the best things about Morrison's performance was that he was not afraid to try new things with old songs. Instead of trying to make the old stand-bys sound like mirror images of the originals, he adapted them to his new style of the '70s.

For the most part, it came off well. The only time it didn't seem to work was on the classic "Brown-Eyed Girl." The addition of the extended synthesizer solo to a soft, romantic ballad just didn't come off.

The first set ended with a dynamic version of "Whenever We Meet Again" and the band left the stage to thunderous applause, which brought them back for stirring renditions of the classic "Caravan" and the title cut from the new album, "Wavelength," which had everyone up and dancing in the aisles.

Bobby Tench's guitar solo on "Wavelength" was his best of the night, no mean feat considering some of his earlier performances.

A number of people complained about the shortness of the concert and Morrison's omission of "Domino" from his repertoire — valid points, but they failed to totally ruin what otherwise was a first-rate evening of music.

It's really too bad more people didn't show — they would not have been disappointed.

Famed company performs

Dancers excel, earn reputation

By LYNNE MARGOLIS
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

It's no wonder the Martha Graham Dance Company has a reputation unequalled in the world of modern dance. Led by the lady who helped pioneer the art form, the troupe performs with the consistent excellence one hopes for but doesn't always find in a professional dance company.

Watching the young dancers perform in Eisenhower Auditorium Friday night, I thought back to other dance companies I'd seen. Always, there was something not quite right — the colors weren't coordinated well, a dancer's timing was off, the poses were not quite symmetrical when they were supposed to be.

In Graham's company, these shortcomings do not exist. The costumes, designed by the 85-year-old choreographer, were not at all gaudy, and they did not clash.

In the first dance, "Diversion of Angels," the women's garments were leotards hugging taut torsos, then billowing into silky flows of angel floss.

One thing I did question was the use of symbolic colors for each of the principal dancers' costumes. In "Angels," the three female leads wore white, red and yellow. Combined with movement, it was easy to assume that white represented virginity (what else?), red represented lust, and yellow represented a joyous awakening, the half-opened bud who blossoms fully once she experiences romantic — and sexual — love.

The program, however, defines "Angels," as "a lyric dance about the loveliness of youth and the pleasure and playfulness, and the quick joy and quick sadness of being in love for the first time."

If that's the case, was the Oriental lady in red representing desire or not? If she was supposed to be as lustful as her dance suggested, then how did it fit into the overall scheme? I still don't know. Fortunately, the dancing of Yuriko Kimura was so spellbinding I hardly cared whether I had it figured out or not.

That statement pretty much sums up

what I felt about all three of the dances performed Friday night. As with any modern art, Graham's style of dance is wide open to interpretation. "Oh Thou Desire Who Art About to Sing," seemed to depict the progression of a relationship between two lovers. First, there was tortured hungering, to music that was screechy strings and low, ominous piano notes. The lovers wanted to become one, but something kept holding them back.

She wanted him, but she withheld herself, knowing she possessed awesome control over him because of his longing for her. She teased, he became more tortured. Yet she seemed to ache just as badly for him at the beginning of the dance!

Finally, she allowed him to undress her. He gently placed her dress down as if it were priceless. Later, he placed her on a platform, looking up to her in worship of her being.

She left to dress again, but instead of

the red wrap which covered her leotard before, she was wearing a green, and black one. A long strand of the material tied her and her lover to one another. At times, it seems to bind them more tightly together; at times, it seemed choking.

My immediate reaction was, "Ah," the red meant desire (a little trite, two times in a row), and he green and black were jealousy and resigned suffering." Hmm, then why call it by such a positive sounding title? And why

dedicate it to Alexander Calder (something the Pennsylvania Ballet has also done)?

Maybe, as with "Angels," it doesn't matter when one considers the dancing itself, so superbly executed by Lucinda Mitchell and Tim Wengert.

The third and last dance of the night, "Phaedra," was an interpretation of the famous Greek myth. However, that knowledge didn't enhance my understanding of this one either. So I sat back and enjoyed the company's

dramatizations of ancient gods and goddesses. Their emotional depictions of Phaedra's obsession for her step-son and her destruction at the hands of the goddesses Artemis and Aphrodite, were as beautiful and moving as any Shakespearean tragedy.

Martha Graham's symbolism may have confused me, but her art, taught in dancing classes as a technique in itself, is beautiful. Her contributions to the performing arts will never be forgotten. I hope they will never be forgotten.

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