

She was hostess to great artists

Pat Carroll captivating as Stein

By GAIL STRAMA
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

She was witty, sarcastic, overbearing; although it was hard at times to keep up with her, she was captivating.

Television, film and stage actress Pat Carroll, playing Gertrude Stein in "Gertrude Stein," delivered a fascinating monologue in the Pavilion Theatre Friday night to an audience that was varied in age, but seemed to be dominated by the middle-aged set. She appealed to all, no matter what age, as she became Gertrude Stein, writer and hostess to some of the world's most famous artists and writers of the 20th century.

Picasso, Hemmingway, Matisse and others came alive and ceased to be just names in the corners of paintings and on the fronts of books. She told of endless evenings of entertaining these celebrities when they were not yet the legends they are now.

Her anecdotes were often subtle, and she passed over them so quickly that sometimes it was almost impossible to catch them, but she made clear the type of woman that Gertrude Stein was. Once you got used to the pace of the one-act, one-character play, it was easy to get lost in her character.

Carroll portrayed the early 1900s well, taking her audience easily through the period. Bringing out the headstrong

personality of Stein well, she left no doubt in the audience's mind who ruled the Paris household.

The character was not elaborately dressed: a long, brown velour-type robe covered her ample figure. She sat in a wooden Victorian armchair for most of the play, except for times when she circled the small set or paced while reminiscing her predicaments.

The set was no more than her chair beside a desk, a few lamps and a bookcase in the corner; all atop an old tapestry rug. A backdrop-screen of old paintings and brownish wall-papered walls contributed nicely to the musty effect of her Paris home.

Calling "Gertrude Stein" a work in

progress, Carroll said at the end of her presentation that the finished product at the conclusion of her tour would be quite different from what the audience saw here.

She encouraged criticism from the audience on points of Stein's life which were not clear.

Carroll said she is not a scholar on Stein:

"I feel tremendous passion for her as a human being," she said. Carroll added she found Stein totally fascinating, petulant, and child-like.

I believe Carroll's goals were nearly achieved in portraying the unique character of Stein.



A funny and sad film about being gay

By DIANA YOUNKEN
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

There is a sentimental but striking bleakness of courage at the end of the tragic film, "Now Voyager," as Bette Davis assures Paul Henreid that all is not lost or forgotten. "We may not have the moon, but we still have the stars."

It's heady stuff that shimmers in our personal view of film — a place to compensate for our mistakes, right the wrongs inflicted on us and cleanse ourselves in sensual pleasure whenever possible.

Tom Joslin has the stars and flaunts them to their best advantage. He's the filmmaker and subject of "Blackstar: Autobiography of a Close Friend," which was shown Saturday night as part of Gay Awareness Week on campus.

But "Blackstar" is not a tragic film; it's a moody dichotomy of light and darkness — a sometimes funny, sometimes sad portrait of growing up gay in America, as seen through the eyes of Joslin's family and lover.

If it appears that Joslin himself contributes very little to this conversation about his lifestyle, and his family's reasons, if not rationale, for his being gay, nothing could be further from the truth.

His family are colorful, sympathetic characters, so it comes as no surprise that Joslin delights in their presence in his film. His mother has difficulty expressing tight emotions; she seems most accepting of Tom's homosexuality, or wanting to; anyway, though Tom's lover Mark is convinced she's a surface liberal, one who does not genuinely respect his marriage to

Tom even though she appears to approve.

His father and brothers are of another breed, so to speak; they seem less willing to be up front even with surface feelings. They guess that Tom's gay because his mother favored him, because he engages in drama and art (in this instance, film) or because he witnessed his eldest brother's troubled times with women. Only Tom's mother senses he has always been gay, and she seems to have a piece of the stars that can only be called wisdom and sensitivity.

But "Blackstar" does not direct charisma to pretentious advantage, nor does it mask itself under a facade of "gays are okay, they're normal, really." Tom is a person, a creator and humorist, who happens to be gay. And those who bring themselves to view a part of Tom's life he has chosen to show, do not come as a matter of politics but out of sensibility, even curiosity, and that's okay.

"This sad straight society has dulled sex," his lover Mark reads from a political diatribe. Once we make it through the first and rather bland half of the film (a needed but cumbersome picture essay of his childhood), Tom's rite of passage into a healthy sexuality becomes quite clear.

He is a man who truly loves being loved and loving, even if it means that "you learn to lie pretty well" about your likes and dislikes.

Perhaps that's not unlike where all of us, homosexual or heterosexual, stand all of our lives — somewhere between what Gertrude Stein wonders is the answer and Alice B. Toklas replies "What's the question?"

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