

arts

18
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spotlight

Mayhew's work is a much heralded reflection of the American landscape

By SARAMMA METHRATTA
Collegian Arts Writer

There are some people who glance at a painting and wonder what all the fuss is about. There are others who gaze dreamily at the same painting, nodding, smiling, perhaps wishing that they could enter this world of ideal color and form. And then there are those who have not only entered this world, but created it, filling in shades of beauty and possibility with a potpourri of pigments and brushes.

Professor of art Richard Mayhew exemplifies the contemporary artist. The fact that he is a Black artist who has contributed substantially to the art world made him a natural choice for Bucknell University's Since the Harlem Renaissance program. Excited by this proposal to exclusively showcase Black artists from the Harlem Renaissance to the present, Mayhew convinced the show's coordinators to include Penn State in their four-city tour. The show, then, will be presented at the University through November 17, with Mayhew joining a panel discussion titled *Afro-American Art and the Contemporary Scene*. The discussion is part of this weekend's symposium and will take place tomorrow afternoon from 3:15 to 4:45 at the Paul Robeson Cultural Center.

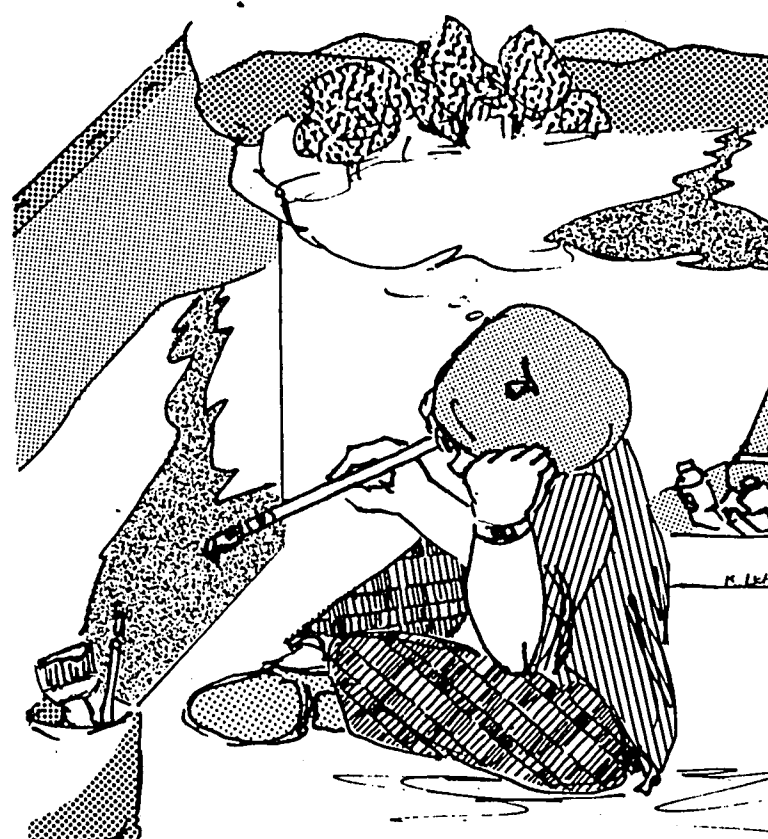
No stranger to recognition, Mayhew has collected enough honors and awards during his career to make even the strictest nonasthetes take notice. For his landscape oil paintings, Mayhew was named Academician of the National Academy of Design in New York, an honor dubbed the "Academy Award" of painting by artists. Mayhew also

received the Academy's Grumbacher Gold Medal and Merit Award, as well as awards from the Ford Foundation and the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Not one to idle away the hours between awards, either, he has been involved in solo and group exhibitions with such institutions as California's Young Gallery and New York's Queens Museum and Grand Central Galleries.

This past year, Mayhew took a sabbatical leave to study and paint in the Western United States, traveling through Mexico, Arizona and California. He described the experience as a lesson in "creative internalization." Rather than propping up an easel in the desert or making out preliminary sketches of the landscape, Mayhew merely sat on hillsides in these arid states and looked. He then embarked on a California retreat, funded by the Djerassi Foundation, and painted what he had seen — not by remembering the experience, but by reliving it.

"There was this kind of spiritual encounter that I felt when I painted," he said. "I was actually back in the desert again, looking. I got so caught up in the fluid joy of creativity, when I saw the finished works, I didn't know where they came from." But come they did. Mayhew's desert sabbatical proved to be one of the most artistically prolific periods of his life: He finished 20 paintings in 3 months.

Mayhew's work in the Western United States was his latest attempt to capture the American landscape in a project that he began in the past 20 years and is just now nearing completion. He is intrigued by the challenge of painting this



terrain that differs so dramatically from coast to coast. "If there is always that freshness, that daring in the work itself," he said, "you won't grow stale as an artist. With the American landscape, you're continuously coming into contact with new color, new lighting, new space, new inspiration." For example, "in the deserts where I was this past summer, a misty haze hangs in the air; the greens are a grayish violet green, and there's orange dirt, purple sand, pinks everywhere. It gets to the point where you realize

that the more you paint the American landscape, the more you see it, and the more you see it, the more you realize you haven't gotten it yet."

Born and raised in Long Island, N.Y., Mayhew did get an early introduction to the creative consciousness. "New York is the art market," he said, "so it attracts the best artists. I learned how to creatively survive — not just financially, but aesthetically. If an artist can achieve that, his life will be one of ecstasy. Of course, an artist must be

enough of a business person to be able to support his painting, and this involves knowing how to network — exhibiting in national and group shows. This is the way people get to know you, get to know your work. Some people find the business of art retarding, but for me it was stimulating."

More stimulating from a creative viewpoint was Mayhew's acquaintance with the Hudson Valley painters, a group of artists who came to Long Island every summer to paint the sand dunes and bay area. "As a teenager, I used to go fishing in the bay all the time," he said, "just so I could watch them work. Finally they looked at me and said, 'Let's see you paint something,' and I did." So impressed with Mayhew was medical illustrator and landscape painter James Wilson that he took on the 14-year-old boy as an apprentice.

Fracturing his art diligently throughout his teens, Mayhew had become a virtuoso of form by the time he was 20. "I could draw and paint upside down and backwards. But it wasn't part of my own creative process. I had to learn to be myself, and that took some searching and growing."

In pursuit of that elusive element of self, Mayhew went to study at Columbia University, and later at the Arts Students League and the Brooklyn Museum Art School in New York. Academia provided Mayhew with constant stimulation: He studied with such acclaimed artists as Edwin Dickinson, Hans Hoffman, Max Beckman and Rubin Tam. Mayhew further stoked the creative fires with the help of fellowships and grants: He spent four years wending his way about

Concert will help hungry

Starvation in America is the subject of an upcoming benefit concert, the second Rock Against Hunger. Three local bands will perform at 8 p.m. tomorrow night in the HUB Ballroom. Admission is \$2 to this concert sponsored by the College Democrats, with all proceeds going to the Oxfam America relief group.

The Weathermen, a high school band, will open the show. Band members Nathan Calhoun, guitar and vocals, Jim Hollis, bass, and Jesse Mills, drums, play Velvet Underground and '60s punk influenced originals.

With Glenn Sadin on guitar, Jeff Edmunds on bass and Doug Edmunds on drums, The Seen will play an entirely new set of original neo-psychedelic/folk/dance tunes. Public Service will close the



(Left to right) Bass guitarist Jeff Edmunds, drummer Doug Edmunds, and lead guitarist Glenn Sadin are The Seen's personnel. The band will appear at Rock Against Hunger tomorrow evening.

Billboard lists week's top pop singles

- By The Associated Press
- HOT SINGLES**
- "Oh Sheila" Ready for the World (MCA)
 - "Money For Nothing" Dire Straits (Warner Bros.)
 - "Take On Me" A-Ha (Warner Bros.)
 - "Saving All My Love For You" Whitney Houston (Arista)
 - "Part-Time Lover" Stevie Wonder (Tamla)
 - "Lonely Ol' Night" John Cougar Mellencamp (Riva)
 - "Dancin' in the Street" Mick Jagger & David Bowie (EMI-America)
 - "Cherish" Kool & The Gang (De-Lite)

Bands update: Most like the local scene but many want to branch out

Editor's note: The following is the first in an occasional series of articles updating the activities of local bands.

By NATALIE NICHOLS
Collegian Arts Writer

The Seen

One of State College's most innovative young bands, The Seen has returned from a disappointing trip to Europe to concentrate on songwriting and recording.

The foremost question in any Seen fan's mind is, "What happened in Europe?" The band members had

plans to tour in areas of France and Germany, but the members were hardly over on the continent at the same time! Glenn Sadin, the group's guitarist, explained that disorganization was the band's main problem.

Jeff Edmunds, The Seen's bassist, lived in France for about six months before Sadin arrived early this summer with Doug Edmunds, the band's drummer and Jeff's brother. Jeff told the other members he was unhappy with the atmosphere in France because he felt the French didn't go out to hear live music very often and have terrible musical tastes. Because of this, Jeff felt that The Seen didn't stand a chance in

France and went home.

Glenn and Doug decided to stay in Europe for a while. They travelled to Germany where they stayed with friends and spent most of their time writing and practicing new songs. Their friends finally convinced the two to play once at a local bar, where they were well-received.

Meanwhile, back in the United States, Jeff was also writing a lot of new material. When they finally got back together, they used this "collective burst of energy," as Sadin called it, to put together an entire new complement of songs that they will play in their upcoming performance at 8 p.m. tomorrow night in the HUB Ballroom.

Given their local success, which includes brisk sales of their short tape, *In The Groove*, the next step for The Seen is an album. The members are recording a demo tape in hopes that a small record company will take interest in them, Sadin said. If not, they will release the material themselves on cassette.

The Seen members plan to send copies of this new material to college radio stations around the country, generate some airplay and get feedback from the D.C. "We feel that college radio is where it's at today," Sadin said. The album should be released in a year, and if all goes as planned, the Seen will start touring the country soon after.

The band's latest recording venture is the inclusion of its version of the classic, "Hey, Joe," on a German compilation album.

Sadin wanted to update everyone on the condition of the long-awaited Seen single: Keep waiting. Due to single problems with the record's pressing, it has not been released. There is no debut date set for the



Lead singer R.T. (Rodney Thompson) and guitarist Paul Young of the Earthtones perform at the 19th annual Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts. The band will appear at a University anti-apartheid benefit next Saturday night.

record, which contains the originals "Sleeping On Go" and "When Was Young."

Finally, The Seen expressed its gratitude: "We appreciate WFSU playing our recordings as much as they do and we're very appreciative of the support from our friends, known and unknown, in State College," Sadin said.

Public Service

State College's liveliest band has also been concentrating on songwriting, said John Patriarca, the band's drummer. They played all original material for the first time at the 19th annual Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts and got a great audience response. People stood in the middle of a downpour to cheer the band on, Patriarca said. "Every time we play, more people come to see us."

The band members are recording a demo tape that they will send to various record companies. They have been encouraged by MCA to send material and hope to get a recording contract with a label soon.

Until something comes through for it, Public Service will play "a gig or two" locally, Patriarca noted. However, he added "We really don't want to play in the bars." Along with the Rock Against Hunger benefit Saturday night, the band will play at an Anti-Apartheid rally on Oct. 11 on campus.

The Weathermen

The Weathermen, probably the youngest band in State College (the members are all about 15 years old), are now playing all original

material after playing all covers at the first Rock Against Hunger last April.

A relatively new band, The Weathermen made a fast change from playing songs of 1960's bands such as The Monkees and The Who to featuring their own music, which is influenced by the Velvet Underground and '60s punk bands such as the Standells, the group's lead singer Nathan Calhoun said.

Calhoun, who also plays guitar in the band, said that the group, which includes Jesse Mills on drums and Jim Hollis on bass, has been together for about a year, although Mills just recently joined.

Although The Weathermen perform mostly at local parties, the band did play the Arts Festival this summer. Their next gig is the second Rock Against Hunger concert tomorrow night.

"The members of The Weathermen have no future plans yet. 'We just want to have some fun with this,'" Calhoun said.

Earthtones

Unlike Public Service, which plays a mixture of upbeat ska and reggae tunes mixed with funk and soul, the Earthtones perform a purer form of the folk music that originated in Jamaica, which the band calls "crucial" reggae.

With Paul Young on guitar, Bill Wood on bass, Rodney Thompson, better known as R.T., on vocals, Terry Griffith on keyboards and Wallace George on drums, the Earthtones play cover songs of such important reggae artists as Bob Marley, Garland Jeffreys, UB40, Black Uhuru and Bunny Wailer, among others.

"The songs we pick are a wide variety of different kinds of songs, everything from dance hall rhythms, which are just a really happy kind of thing, to really biting, socio-political songs, all in a roots kind of vein," Young said.

The Earthtones have performed in some interesting places, but the most unique experience has to be their recent concert at Huntingdon Prison — a maximum security institution where several members of MOVE, the politically radical Philadelphia group that created much controversy earlier this year, are imprisoned. The guards would not allow dancing, Young said, and instructed the band members not to encourage it. Despite this drawback, Young felt that the inmates enjoyed the show.

Ordinarily, of course, the band like its audience to dance up a storm. "We want people to dance, it makes the biggest difference in the world," Young said.

The Earthtones get people rocking regularly at the Scorpion on Wednesday nights, and are scheduled to play at an Anti-Apartheid rally next Saturday on campus. They played at the Arts Festival this summer, as well as the Phyrst and the Brewery. More recently the band held two outside concerts at the Kern Building and had a gig at The Chi Fraternity.

All these different engagements are evidence of the Earthtones' universal appeal. Everyone from Deadheads to fraternity members enjoy listening to the band's music. Young said the Earthtones' small complement of fans is growing. "We have a lot of regulars," he claimed, "mostly when the band plays weekend gigs."



Friction hopes that video will its launch career

By PAT GRANDJEAN
Collegian Arts Writer

I'm sorry about your love affair that's just gone sour
I'm sorry 'bout your musical chairs
I'm sorry that your life is not a bed of roses
But no one ever said life was fair.
— Friction, "Musical Chairs"

Well... life's been pretty good to Friction of late. It may once have been known as the "Band Least Likely to be Invited for a Return Engagement" at many State College bars (due to the outright emotional and destructive tendencies of certain members of the audience rather than any weaknesses or politics on the group's part), but you can catch this quartet in one of its periodic local performances tonight at the Brewery.

Drummer John Whiteman reported that he and the other members of the band — vocalist Craig Matthews, bassist Jon Mertz, and guitarist Jim Gross — are just about finished recording a new album that they hope to release at the end of the year. Heartened by the positive reception given their all-original E.P. *Dancing Now* (it charted at 93 in the college radio-oriented *Gavin Report*), they're taking more chances this time around.

"We've always tried to mix our influences — Talking Heads, the Clash, funk, jazz, rockabilly — to come up with something unique," Whiteman said. "We'll take a rhythm you'd think would go into a rap song, say, and mix it with more rock-oriented rhythms. We try to keep a strong dance groove above all." The upcoming record features some experimentation with horn sections and five-piece percussion. Part of the credit for the band's greater eclecticism is due to Gross, who Whiteman praised for "being able to do anything right off. He's very flexible, adventurous." His guitar playing reminds Whiteman of avant-gardists Adrian Belew and Robert Fripp.

Friction's lyrics deal with a variety of fruitful topics, including love, social affairs and politics. Despite — or perhaps because of — the fact that the band's primary goal for their songs is to reflect real life, it has been regarded as something of a radical punk outfit by some members of its audience. Hardcore enthusiasts made up the bulk of the group's initial following in their home base of Harrisburg. "They wore Mohawks and everything," Whiteman said. "They didn't consider us a punk band musically — they liked our attitude. I talked to one of them, who told me 'You guys aren't one of us, but you're the closest we can find around here.'"

Finding compatible audiences and places to play can sometimes be an uphill battle. Although the Metron is Friction's main venue, the quartet has found its opportunities for local exposure limited by the fact that so few club owners hire bands specializing in original material. Despite the owners' reticence, Whiteman is gratified that the group packed the Phyrst in the midst of a snowstorm at its last State College appearance. "We always attract an audience that appreciates music for its own sake, rather than looking to hear what's familiar," he noted.

The band members feel it's time to expand their scope of performance and find more of a following. They've already opened for the Members, Matt Wilson, and Dez Dickerson (principal guitarist on Prince's 1992). A northeastern college tour is on their agenda, as is a possible relocation to New York — or, better still, Baltimore, Md. They've created a video that they plan to submit to MTV's Basement Tapes competition as well as smaller television stations in the Harrisburg area and clubs in New York and Canada. Hopefully, the new album will prove successful as an entree to a major label recording contract.

Were Friction to become a major success, Whiteman knows what kind of band he'd like it to be. "I really admire Talking Heads," he said. "I like the way they keep the band going, even though they all do other projects too. That way, they always have new ideas for when they come back to the band. I hope we can be that way, too."

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