

Taylor's melodic soft touch charms audience

By DIANE D. DIPIERO
Collegian Arts Writer

He's too old to be a "sweet baby," and he's getting quite bald these days, but James Taylor still has a knack for making great music. Last night, Taylor let his melodic voice and words touch the entire Rec Hall audience. The success of this University Concert Committee-sponsored event should prove to any doubters that Taylor is not a has-been musician.

Backed by two powerful singers, Taylor crooned through his most famous ballads. One-third of the audience recognized the songs after only a few strums of the guitar. Cheers resounded for "Up on the Roof," "Sweet Baby James" and "Fire and Rain." Taylor's voice was in fine form; the words flowed gently and easily from his mouth. Taylor also introduced a few tunes from his new album, including "That's Why I'm Here," "From the Album That's Why I'm Here," he said. "Which is why I'm here," The Buddy Holly tune "Every Day" was a bit lackluster, but "Only a Dream in Your Arms" was a moving lyric-and-soft-touch Taylor.

Although the evening could be labelled mellow, Taylor rocked

through a few songs. Especially good was his cover of "Knock on Wood." Thanks to a great band as well as his own talents, Taylor smoothly moved from tender ballad to mellow rock without missing a beat.

Taylor's voice was simply beautiful. "Carolina in My Mind" sounded better live than it did on vinyl. "Handy Man" also illustrated Taylor's gentle vocal abilities.

There were humorous moments, too. Before a song called "Mona," Taylor told the audience that they could go to the bathroom or have a smoke now, because the intro to the song would be rather long. It seems that Taylor received a pig for his 21st birthday named Mona, who "was about as big as a football" back then, but soon grew quite large. "She gained 650 pounds," Taylor said. And his brother said to him, "One day, that pig is gonna kill your kid." But before Taylor or his brother could make a roast out of her, Mona swallowed rat poisoning. Thus, Taylor's tribute to his pal — "so much of you to love, and so much of you to take care of," Taylor sang of Mona "pushing up a pine tree in my field," and how "when I think of how I caused your death, I miss you very much."

And during the chorus of "Shower the People," two spotlights shone on stage: one on Taylor and one on a tape reel, from where the background vocals were emanating.

Taylor returned for two encores. His first contained a beautiful version of "You've Got a Friend" (with the entire audience singing softly along with him) and the one people had been yelling for all evening, "Steamroller." Taylor's second encore was a strong capella song with his back-up singers.

The greatest thing about the concert was that Taylor was himself the whole time. He never seemed to slip into an egocentric, "I'm great, aren't I?" attitude. (He had a plethora of opportunities, with the audience applauding wildly before during and after songs.) At one point, he began to sing, "So... So what?" He paused and looked down. "I left my f---ing footpeddle on." Taylor never failed to sing with conviction. His love for music poured out of him and reached the audience in a deluge.

In "That's Why I'm Here," Taylor sings, "People pay good money to hear 'Fire and Rain' again and again." With Taylor performing so well, it's no wonder that they would.



James Taylor and band entertained at Rec Hall last night with their own brand of mellow music. The concert featured songs from an upcoming album, *That's Why I'm Here*, but his high point was a rendition of "You've Got a Friend." Taylor has no shortage of friends in State College.



Renowned artist Benny Andrews (second from right) was one of the featured panel speakers on Saturday at the Paul Robeson Cultural Center concerning Black artistry and its influences. Artists from around the country gathered to discuss the development of a uniquely Afro-American consciousness that holds universal artistic significance. All of the people involved in the symposium have their art work displayed at the Museum of Art.

Symposium examines Black artistry over last 60 years

By ELIZABETH A. FRANK
Collegian Arts Writer

Historic, spiritual and enlightening are just a few of the words used to describe reactions to the *Since the Harlem Renaissance* symposium that took place this weekend at the Paul Robeson Cultural Center.

The event was sponsored through a grant from the Equal Opportunity Planning Committee and co-sponsored by the Museum of Art, the Paul Robeson Cultural Center and the Black Studies program.

Held in conjunction with the *Since the Harlem Renaissance: 50 Years of Afro-American Art* exhibit at the Museum of Art, the symposium brought scholars, artists, museum curators, students and art lovers from all over the United States to participate.

"Why is it after 60 years we're still mounting surveys of Black American art?" asked executive director of the Studio Museum in Harlem Mary Schmidt Campbell at

the keynote speech Friday evening. Campbell said she saw the exhibit when it was being mounted at the College of Old Westbury and thought it was both important and beautiful. "How compelling the images are," she said.

But, she added, a kind of "cultural apartheid" exists that keeps Black American artists from being included in general surveys of American art.

Campbell said she has very mixed feelings about exhibits like this because it perpetuates that attitude.

Referring to the recurrent images in Afro-American art she asked: "Where do these visions come from? What's kept them alive?" Campbell said if this exhibit can bring about this kind of inquiry she's in favor of it.

All of the artists who participated in the symposium are represented in the exhibit. One of the most interesting and exciting aspects of the symposium was getting to hear firsthand accounts of what it was like to be a part of the New Negro

movement from the Harlem Renaissance on.

The first panel, *The Harlem Renaissance*, included artist David Driskell, Edmund B. Galtier, director of the Museum of Afro-American Art in Boston and David Levering Lewis, author and professor of history at Howard University and Rutgers University where he was named Martin Luther King, Jr., professor of history. Manhattan Community College professor of art Michael Chisolm moderated. Galtier said the New Negro Movement in the '20s was bigger than the Harlem Renaissance, although Harlem saw itself as the center of the movement.

He explained that he sees the art of that period as part of a general movement because art objects are best understood in their historical context. The 20th century Black urban community began in the '20s when Blacks migrated to the cities from rural communities. Blacks who moved to New York met a whole new body of Black people, alike yet different than themselves,

that redefined the Black experience, she said. Levering agreed with Galtier's social emphasis.

The first panel stressed that the Harlem Renaissance brought about a sympathetic portrayal of Blacks and legitimized the Black theme. African themes as well as the daily life of Black people became subjects of Black artists.

Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett and Ernest Crichlow were the artists who participated in the second panel *Afro-American Art of the 1940s and 1950s*.

Catlett is a sculptor and printmaker who still lives in Mexico. She described herself as 1. Black 2. a woman and 3. a sculptor. "I didn't write a speech, I'm a sculptor," she said, "and a public speaker."

She described her experience of having to get special permission to bus in her students from Prairieville University in Texas to see a Picasso retrospective in 1940. The exhibit took place in an art museum in New Orleans that was open to Blacks. It was the first time most of her students had ever seen a

museum. "Some people are still working under the same conditions in the south," she said.

Commitment, support and a common purpose were the three things that characterized the artists of that period, she said. Her sculpture *Tired* is a Black woman sitting down with an exhausted look on her face.

Artist Ernest Crichlow likened the artistic atmosphere of the '40s and the '50s to the '60s. He said warmth, caring and concern were evident in the work of that period.

He said that art is like a great pie: "It's not all black or white, you put your piece into it and don't try to be like others. 'Don't copy — draw things from your own experience.'"

Margaret Taylor Burroughs participated in the 1960s panel. She said in the '60s "Blacks held up a mirror to America and said we're Black and we're beautiful. Look what you've done to me. Americans and Africans must be free."

Social themes dominated the '60s, and Jeff Donaldson, William Walker and other Black artists took art to the people when they received no academic recognition. They created a wall of art on adjacent buildings in Chicago with *The Wall of Respect*.

The last panel dealt with the contemporary scene. Benny Andrews, a panel member, characterized the present as a time when Black artists are much less visible. "They're silently waiting behind closed doors to be ready when society opens up again," he said. Black artists, though, are becoming more a part of the selection process in exhibits, Andrews said. Panelist Lowery S. Sims, historian and associate curator of 20th century art at the Metropolitan Museum said that Black women are making personal statements through performance art. For example, artist Lorraine O'Grady crashed a New York opening to which she was not invited in a dress made entirely out of white gloves and a Miss America-style banner that said "Mademoiselle Bourgeoisie Noire."

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'King Lear': Play one of several presentations given by British actors

By JENNIFER EDWARDS
Collegian Arts Writer

A little bit of England will come to the University this week when five actors from the London stage arrive for a week long series of performances. Sponsored by the Artists Series, Center for the Performing Arts, Penn State's Institute for the Arts and Humane Studies and the departments of English, theater and film, the group will be doing two shows of *King Lear* as well as one performance of *Pinter This Evening*, which focuses on the work and life of modern British playwright Harold Pinter.

play prestory

The five actors — Sheila Allen, John Burgess, Julian Glover, Pippa Guard and David Rintoul — have worked with the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre in London, and are now associated with ACTER, the Association for Creative Theatre, Education and Research. Through ACTER, several prominent actors from the London stage go to different university campuses and do several performances as part of a program called *Actors in Residence*. These shows are designed to give students and faculty a deeper understanding of the nature of works intended for the theater as presented by experts.

This group of actors will be presenting their own version of one of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies, *King Lear*. They have reworked the play so that it can be performed by five

actors instead of a larger group. "The opportunity to see a five actor version of *King Lear* is most unusual," said Richard Martin, manager of programming for the Artists Series. The performance stars Glover as King Lear; Rintoul as both Edgar and Edmund; Guard as Goneril, Fool and Oswald; Allen as Goneril and Cordelia and Burgess as the Earl of Kent and the Earl of Gloucester.

Minimal scenery and costumes are another feature of this performance. Teresa Tilson, audience development specialist for the Artists Series, commented that sometimes it is the sparseness of the sets and costumes that lets the acting be really beautiful. "I think that the people that go will enjoy it very much," Tilson added.

The first performance of *King Lear* will be at 8 p.m. on Wednesday in

Schwab Auditorium and is part of the Schwab Theatre Series. A second performance will be offered by the Series as a special event for non-subscribers at 8 p.m. on Saturday in Schwab Auditorium. Tickets are \$6 and \$4 for students, and \$8 and \$6 for nonstudents.

Pinter This Evening is also being presented by the actors as part of the Schwab Theatre Series. In this performance the actors will dramatize the letters to and from Pinter, and they will also do a reading of his short play *Old Times*. Pinter will be presented at 8 p.m. on Friday in Schwab Auditorium. Tickets are \$6 and \$4 for students, and \$8 and \$6 for nonstudents.

Three additional events that will be free and open to the public are also scheduled for this week. Glover will be performing *A Piece*

on Robert Graves at 8 p.m. on Tuesday in 101 Kern. The actor wrote this program for the Royal Court Theatre in London in honor of Graves' 80th birthday in July 1975. Consisting of Graves' poetry and prose linked by narration from Glover, the play is, in the actor's words, "a gentle, incomplete guide to Robert Graves himself through his own writings."

Glover will also be doing a solo reading of the heroic epic *Beowulf* at 8 p.m. on Thursday in the Playhouse Theater.

A Discussion with Actors from the British Theatres is a public forum and will be held at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday in 119 Arts Building. "In addition to the performance for the Series, the actors are assisting in teaching," Martin said, explaining that they will be going to several classes during the week for seminars.

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Bearden: Black art is U.S. art

By VICTORIA JAFFE
Collegian Arts Writer

Black artist Romare Bearden doesn't want to relegate Afro-American art's impact to just Black culture. Black art is American art, Bearden told a group of reporters last Friday at the Museum of Art.

Bearden is an internationally acclaimed American artist and the current director of New York's Cinque Gallery. He visited the University as part of the weekend symposium, *Since the Harlem Renaissance*.

"This 'Renaissance' took place in the 1920s when people came from the south to Harlem for more economic opportunities. This influx of people brought ideas and fostered an artistic community. 'What hadn't been in Harlem before then was now blooming,'" Bearden said.

Bearden sees his art work and that of the other contributing artists as an important aspect of American cultural expression. In the United States after you have spent about two generations here, "you are part New Englander,

part Westerner, part Indian and part Black," Bearden said.

Bearden himself grew up in Harlem and became part of the culturally rich community there. Now 71 years old though he looks at least 10 years younger, Bearden is a very straight-forward and personable man. He said that he is creating more art now than ever before, citing the murals that he is painting for Howard University and a Social Security building in Long Island, N.Y. His advice for young aspiring artists is to work hard and try to find your own way.

All art work expresses the time in which it was done and makes a social comment, not a political statement, he said.

His own work is on display on the second and third floors of the Museum of Art. One of the paintings, *The Rites of Spring*, a 1967 collage and mixed-media work is a depiction of a garden friend he knew in the '60s who was "concerned with growing things," he explained. His cubist rendering shows a woman giving a leafy bundle of plants to a man as a peace-offering.

Count Basie orchestra provides some shining moments though songs are obscure at times

By DIANE D. DIPIERO
Collegian Arts Writer

I'm a music lover, not a music critic. Thus, I can't tell you when a piano is slightly off-key or when a trumpet misses one note. I know when music is enjoyable, though, and I can tell you that the World Famous Count Basie Orchestra was entertaining. It had a good beat and "you could dance to it." But I couldn't give it the highest rating, simply because the band didn't play enough songs that everyone could recognize.

concert review

The Basie Orchestra's Saturday night concert was presented by the Artists Series, Center for the Performing Arts and the Harlem Renaissance Symposium — a series of

events highlighting Afro-American contributions to American culture. It's great to know that the memory of one of America's greatest jazz composers and musicians lives on in musical form.

Full of verve and wit — not to mention fabulous talent — the band featured upbeat versions of Basie's great such as "One O'Clock Jump" and "Around About Midnight."

It was nice to watch old pros enjoying themselves on stage. Trumpet player Sonny Cohn smiled through the whole performance and gave a shy grin to the audience after his excellent solos.

The highlight of the evening, though, was bassist Lynn Seaton's wild scat singing — a series of strange noises combining the voices of Louis Armstrong and Animal on *The Muppets*. The piano player laughed so hard he lost his place, and the audience ate it up.

The performance's weak spot was vocalist Carmen Bradford. She sweetly performed "Am I Blue?" and "My Funny Valentine." But her voice was too weak to project through the entire auditorium, and often her words were garbled behind the microphone. "Were you expecting Lena Horne?" a man in leaving Eisenhower Auditorium asked his disappointed wife. Not really, but it seems that such a highly acclaimed band would feature a more powerful singer. It would have been to the ensemble's advantage to feature Bradford at the beginning of the second set, and then gone back to swinging instruments.

Despite the setbacks, the Basie Orchestra was a hit with the audience, and received two standing ovations. Talent abounds in this group, and the members exemplify the fun that the Count himself must have experienced on stage. But they say there's nothing like the real thing, and the Basie Orchestra, just lacks something that certainly its founder must have possessed.

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