

'All the King's Men' author

Warren pens sensitive collection

By THOMAS JESSIMAN

Robert Penn Warren

Being Here

ROBERT Penn Warren, winner of one Pulitzer prize for fiction and two more for poetry, has established himself as one of America's great men of letters. He has earned that distinction by a sensitive and persistent look at issues and riddles that have bothered him since he first came into prominence.

In *All the King's Men*, his best novel, Warren concludes the book with a fearful study of the nature of time. "But that will be a long time from now, and soon we shall go out of the house and go into the convulsion of the world, out of history into history and the awful responsibility of Time."

Now, 35 years later with the publication of *Being Here: Poetry 1977-1980*, Warren has nobly lived up to that responsibility. This collection of poems has a vitality and wisdom equal to or surpassing earlier works, both in fiction and poetry.

Warren makes a positive statement about the world he perceives in *Being Here*. There is much that terrifies him, that makes him wish to avoid being honest with his reader, but in the end he succeeds in tapping his 75 years of wisdom to assert rather than negate. He sets the tone for the book in the dedication, which is a

he and a girl met.

It is in this context, one of the poet's constant questioning of the nature and effects of time, that Warren addresses the main theme in this and all his works—the question of who we really are. In *Speleology*, the second poem in the collection, Warren raises that central issue:

*Years later, past dreams, I have lain
In darkness and heard the depth of that
unending song.*

*And hand laid to heart, have once again
thought: This is me.*

And thought: Who am I?

Part of the answer to that question lies in viewing the past in the correct manner, and although much of Warren's poetry contains graphic examples of a happy past, there are those moments that he still wishes to forget: as in *Function of Blizzards*.

This idea of truth and Warren's desire to know who he is dominates the book, and when he looks into the future, like the past, he has problems finding the answers. In *Safe in Shade*, the speaker is a young boy, probably Warren himself, who

patiently waits for his grandfather to begin to explain the nature of things to him. When the grandfather finally does talk, he tells a story of the future that the young boy never imagined.

In the end though, after he has struggled with his past and his future, Warren finds the peace in nature. *Sila* is perhaps the best poem in the collection; it is a moving piece about an Eskimo boy growing up with his dog in the wilds. Like many other Warren poems, *Sila* seems to say that in nature and the silence of being alone in the outdoors, we can find answers to some of our worries and concerns.

In *Swimming in the Pacific*, a poem about an old man walking on a beach and still looking for the solutions to his question, Warren says that love is the only answer:

*When the fog closed in,
I simply lay down, on the sand supine,
and up*

*Into grayness stared and, staring,
Could see your face, slow, take shape.
Like a dream all years had moved to.*

It is a simple message when played against the backdrop of complexities and troubles raised in *Being Here* but Warren tells us so much about life and ourselves that we gladly accept such a truth.

Thomas Jessiman is associate editor for *The Daily Tar Heel*.

Books

remembered conversation with his grandfather:

*Old man: You get old and you can't do
anybody any good anymore.*

*Boy: You do me some good, Grandpa.
You tell me things.*

Now Warren is the grandfather and he tells us what we need to know.

Many of his poems involve an old man looking back on his past and recalling an incident that happened 50 or 60 years ago—it may mean returning in his dreams to the cave in which as a boy he almost lost his life; or, perhaps, it could be returning to the bank by a stream where

Jukes release merely a lackluster imitation

By ROB MONATH

Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes

Love Is a Sacrifice

SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY and the Asbury Jukes' most recent album, *Love Is a Sacrifice*, represents a pop-style collection of rock ballads.

Like many of the popular bands from the Asbury Park area of the New Jersey shore, the Jukes' music caters to



Southside Johnny will appear at UNC Tuesday

The opening rock ballad, "Why," particularly echoes Bruce Springsteen's characteristic sound. Southside Johnny's lead vocals have the same imploring, sincere tone of Springsteen's vocals, guitarist Billy Rush's leads are melodic and simple, and a standard drums/bass/keyboards/guitar back-up is filled out with lots of horns, adding an orchestrated effect.

Though Southside Johnny's vocals often break his self-imposed Springsteen mold on other cuts, even the soothing timbre of his own voice can't invigorate the

banal lyrics of songs like "Goodbye Love." In fact, every tune on the album describes love in one aspect or another, overworking the theme with endless strings of lyrical platitudes.

Unfortunately, the music and studio work on the album parallel the monotonous vocals in their mediocrity.

Whether it's a catchy progression as on "Restless Heart," or a funky guitar riff like the intro to "Why is Love Such a Sacrifice," the Jukes repeat it—over and over and over. Add to this repetition three-note, cliché guitar and saxophone solos, and the picture gets even dull.

Finally, the album suffers from poor technical judgment. Delicate acoustic guitar inappropriately juxtaposes grinding electric guitar in the opening bars of "Murder." Likewise, the only thing that really hurts on "It Hurts" is the excessive use of tremolo studio effect throughout the song.

Despite all of these hampering attributes, the Jukes' music on this LP has some merit simply because it is repetitive and often uptempo. For people who just wish to be instilled with unqualified animation and mirth, the Jukes' music may provide the necessary stimulation. Hopefully, such will be the case in their upcoming concert appearance at UNC's Memorial Hall Tuesday evening.

Rob Monath is Weekender record critic.

Records

commercial rock enthusiasts' need for rock n roll/beach music. While all the songs on *Love Is a Sacrifice* are originals, not a single cut on the LP really distinguishes the Jukes from other names in their genre, like Bruce Springsteen or D.L. Byron. In essence, the Jukes are a bona fide copy band.

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