

—Cover Story—

It began with a man named Richard Adler

By CATHY MCHUGH
Staff Writer

When composer/lyricist Richard Adler was an undergraduate at UNC in the 1940s, he got \$50 together and invited Robert Frost to come to Chapel Hill and read some of his poems.

Frost accepted and read his poetry in Hill Hall. And so here in Chapel Hill, where tradition is a way of life, the biennial UNC Fine Arts Festival was born.

Fittingly enough, Adler helped kick off the 1987 Southern Accents Fine Arts Festival March 19 with about an hour and half of song and entertainment in the Carolina Inn's ballroom.

Southern Accents schedule of events

Thursday — Banjoist Walter Raleigh Babson will perform at 4 p.m. in Gerrard Hall, and a panel discussion of women writers, "Women's Voices of the Modern South", will be held at 7 p.m. in Carroll Hall.

Friday — Southern Rock, featuring Guadalupean Diary, Dash Rip Rock and Love Tractor performing at 3 p.m. in the Great Hall. Admission \$1.

Saturday — A Coffeehouse Concert from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Forest Theatre. Rain site: Lenoir North Dining Room. At 8 p.m., The Carolina Dancers and Wall St. Danceworks will perform in Memorial Hall.

Sunday — A Day of Storytelling at the Forest Theatre, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Rain site: Gerrard Hall.

Monday — Literary critic Louis Rubin will give a talk, "The Sense of the Past", at 7 p.m. in Hanes Art Center Auditorium, room 121.

Tuesday — Social critic Robert Coles will speak at 8 p.m. in Murphey Hall.

Wednesday — Artists Judy Voss Jones and Karen Davies will have a slide show and discussion at 4 p.m. in the Hanes Art Center Auditorium, room 121.

Thursday — Photographer John Rosenthal will have a slide show and discussion in the Hanes Art Center Auditorium, room 121. At 8 p.m. director David Lynch will present a film showing and discussion in Hamilton 100.

April 4 — Folk artist Howard Finster will hold a slide show, discussion and performance at 4:30 p.m. in the Hanes Art Center Auditorium, room 121.

April 8 — Films by Ross McElwee will be shown in the Carolina Union Film Auditorium: "Charleen" at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. and "Backyard" at 8 p.m. and 10 p.m.

April 10 — Director Ross McElwee will present a film viewing and discussion at 7 p.m. in the Carolina Union Film Auditorium.

The evening's reception honored Adler as the festival's creator and the people who have helped plan the festival, programming director Mary Campbell Jenkins said.

The festival began Monday with a drama workshop by The Road Company, which performed the play "Blind Desire" in the Union, Chuck Davis and the African-American Dance Ensemble performed at noon Tuesday to a crowd that encircled most of the Lower Quad.

"You could tell people wanted to skip their classes, and for something cultural, everyone was really getting into it," sophomore Sarah Alam said. "That's what college life is all about."

Later that afternoon, a literary panel discussion focused on women's perspectives in North Carolina. Panelists Jill McCorkle and Daphne Athas, UNC creative writing instructors, and North Carolina State University's Lee Smith spoke. With Distinguished Alumni Professor Doris Betts as moderator, the discussion was filled with personal anecdotes from the panelists that produced bursts of laughter from the standing-room-only audience in Gerrard Hall.

By Tuesday, Jenkins said she thought the festival was taking off. "It's getting the recognition and momentum we'd hoped for," she said. "Today especially, we've had great turnouts and people really seemed to be interested in the panel's discussion."

Highlighting this week's events was the Wednesday night concert by 1987 Grammy Award winner, the Rev. Al Green, in Memorial Hall. The Black Student Movement Choir opened for Green.

Green's concert was one of the only two events in the program that require a fee. The other event will be Friday's Southern Rock Show in the Great Hall, where students can see three bands — Guadalupean Diary, Dash Rip Rock and Love Chapter — for \$1.

Through April 10, events will continue, including a panel discussion by women writers, a rock concert featuring three Southern rock bands and slideshows by various artists and photographers.

The students in Suite B have been working since September to plan the festival, and most importantly, they say, to make it accessible to the students.

About 25 students divided into four committees on programming, fund raising, publicity and hospitality and brainstormed for a theme. They came up with Southern Art because of the tremendous amount of art, literature and now filmmaking coming out of the South, Jenkins said.

The next step involved recruiting professors, many of whom had previously helped with the festival, and soliciting donations from differ-



Carolina dancers Donald Blumenfield (left) and Jack Arnold rehearse for their upcoming performance



Gwenda LedBetter demonstrates her medieval storytelling methods

Dancers choreograph for public awareness

By ANGELA HAMPTON
Staff Writer

Dance. A form of entertainment for many, and a way of life for others.

For Diane Eilber, it's a way of life. Eilber is a professional dancer from Durham who has made this commitment and says she's glad she did.

Eilber is also part of Carolina Dancers, one of the two emerging modern dance companies in North Carolina that will strut their stuff at 8 p.m. Saturday in Memorial Hall as part of the fine arts festival, Southern Accents. The other company is Wall Street Danceworks.

Many different aspects of dance fill this choreographer's everyday life. She choreographs pieces for her students at Dance Space in Chapel Hill and for Carolina Dancers. Choreography involves a considerable amount of time, she says.

Eilber usually choreographs one major work a year for the company. Preparing one dance requires an average of six to eight hours a week. "I started this piece in the fall of 1985 and worked on it four months and

edited it. It's an ongoing process," she says.

Eilber co-founded Carolina Dancers with Carol Richard, its current co-director, in Chapel Hill in 1976. She has also taught modern dance and ballet at UNC for nine years. She holds a degree in dance from the Interlochen Arts Academy and an M.A. in dance from the University of Michigan.

Eilber says her love for the art of dance keeps her involved in the company. "As of yet, none of us have ever been paid for our work. We don't do it for the money."

Working with other professional dancers provides her with a great deal of satisfaction. "It's possibly because it (choreography) has always been a voluntary effort, and you go to great lengths to make it work."

Co-director Richard describes Carolina Dancers as a modern dance company. The company started as a dance group consisting of both students and residents of the Triangle area. In 1980, Richard and Eilber converted the company into a professional dance group of about 12

members, both men and women, because of the influx of professional dancers into the local area. Most of the members teach ballet or modern dance in local dance schools.

Wall Street Danceworks is based in Asheville, N.C. Artistic director J. Moore Bannister started the company after moving to the area from New York City. The original studio was located on Wall Street in Asheville, hence the name.

"It's a concise group of three dancers, and we contract out two other dancers," she says. "I've got hoofers (tap dancers), jazz dancers, baton-twirlers — we do it all."

Wall Street Danceworks performs pieces from a variety of choreographers and does some of its own choreography, according to Bannister. "We can do ballet too, but we usually do modern."

Carolina Dancers do about 10 diverse concerts across the state each year. Their most recent concert was in February at Spirit Square in Charlotte. "We did a piece not too long ago at a church," Richard said. "Eight of the company's members

will perform three dances Saturday. "We chose these pieces because we were hoping to do things that might be interesting to a college audience," Richard said. "The Spoonbread Tango," danced to Cajun music, "is funny, with a Southern feel," according to Richard. "Sweep," the second dance, is "a duet about the dynamics of a relationship between a man and a woman," he said.

The final piece is "Dances from our Early/Middle Years." Co-director and choreographer Eilber says it portrays relationships through life. Bob Dylan tunes provide the melody for what she calls a "literal, not abstract piece." Richard describes it as "a reflection of who we were then and who we've become now."

Wall Street Dancers will perform four dances. "Fantasy," choreographed by Bannister, is a modern tap-dancing duet. "It starts out and slowly deteriorates," Bannister says. "There's tap everywhere. You'll see movements you never thought tap dancers did."

The second dance, "Tango Free," features an original percus-

sion score. The company will also perform "Between Us" and "Spaces," which are more dramatic pieces, Bannister says.

Company rehearsals vary according to upcoming performances. For approaching shows, Richard says Carolina Dancers practice each piece twice a week. On the average, though, the group rehearses about four times weekly. "But everyone takes classes all the time," she says.

The dancers in both companies say they hope their performances in Southern Accents will raise awareness of the growth of modern dance in North Carolina. "There's a lot happening in modern dance regionally," Bannister says. "There's a real element of a sophisticated dance audience (in this state)."

The N.C. Arts Council, under Raymond Williams, director of dance, currently funds both Carolina Dancers and Wall Street Danceworks, which are two of only three emerging professional modern dance groups in the state.



Jill McCorkle speaks during a literary panel discussion

DTH/Charlotte Cannon