

From Cacaphony To Harmony

BY STEVIE DANIELS

Mike Greene, Eric Gregory and Gibbons Ruark read selections from their poetry last Friday night at Farrago. The audience received great diversity of presentation, technique and subject matter.

Mike Greene read from his book, "The Ancients," accompanied by an ensemble which served as an extension of the intensity in his verse. The lines of Greene's poetry that were distinguishable from the instruments seemed to convey an idea of "man" as a destructive, misguided race set against nature. He spoke of man coming to the island and turning it into a concrete cave. A dichotomy between "them" and "us" was set up in the later part of the prelude. Although he argued against the destructive nature of man the method he chose to do so gave evidence to that objection. The cacophony of the piano and drums overwhelmed his voice even though it too was loud and accusing. In selections from "Personal Interests" he stated that "men are meaningless substance" which contradicts the intense anger he directed at man's insensitivity to nature. Greene's reading lacked any affirmation of existence except that of his own due to the audience's intense awareness of his poetry.

In a much more reserved manner, Eric Gregory followed Greene. He read also with intensity but in a different degree. Gregory's verse assumed a definite shared knowledge among the audience. He made allusions to Cretan mythology, the muse of tragic poetry, Melpomene, and to ancient Rome. He achieved an integration of modern sensibilities with the past and other cultures. His technique was rhythmic and emphasized thought more than image. I would like to point out a most effective instance of synaesthesia, a device often used by poets and Symbolists: "the taste of rain upon my back."

In his last poem which centered on friendship, Gregory set up an interesting contradiction between nature and

human community. He said that "starry nights say I should be without my friends." The poet moved back and forth between the joys of friendship and the barriers of alienation from those friends. He reiterated his first comment at the end by saying starlight is ancient yet friends are new.

Gibbons Ruark, a previous resident of Laurinburg, followed Gregory who had been a sedate contrast to the opening of the reading. Ruark slowed the pace of the evening with his humor and the confidence of experience before audiences. His first 2 poems were love poems—the former in the subjunctive tense which I found interesting due to the fact that its use is largely disappearing from the English language. He used traditional techniques of rhyme and terza rima saying that he knew it was "old-fashioned" but he "couldn't help it." He used synaesthesia very effectively in his poem, "Lecturing My Daughters" and "Screech Owl Lament for Edward Thomas." The later poem referred to the death of Edward Thomas after which there was "a silence so deep you could breathe it."

The poem, "Night Fishing" has been highly acclaimed and rightly so. It is a true integration of actual experience, imagery, tradition and universality of life and death. The poem was based on a yearly ritual from his boyhood of blue-fishing on the coast of South Carolina with his father. It explores through careful images the meaning of this event for him, his father and further, to the listener. The last line, "our lines tangled and our tackle lost" completes and extends his thought most effectively.

"Listening to Music in the House of Friends" brought together the dual joy of love and beautiful music. Friendship and music fuse in the course of the poem into a "perfect silence that does not reign long after imperfect music ends."

Ruark had opened his reading with comments about his pessimistic temperament but he proved to this reviewer

and the audience (judging by their response) that he was also optimistic and affirmative of life. He revealed this not just in his humor (which is not always a sign of joy) but in his ability to in- and yet move it beyond the personal. His sincere attempt to join with the audience in some kind of shared experience by explaining his technique and some criticisms of his work also gave evidence to his positive character. The night as a whole was a combination of many contraries; young and developed talent, rhythm and dissonance, and joy and cynicism.

Review

BY LEE VAN ZANDT

Usually, the Springs Traveling Art Show is the favorite and most well received visiting show to come to St. Andrews. This year, however, in relation to previous years, the entire show was a great disappointment. The show, composed of 33 works, out of a field of 757, represents a certain amount of talent found in the Carolinas, yet this talent that is shown is more of a creative talent than an artistic talent. Even though knowledge of the use of varied media is shown there is no real representation of true artistic and imaginative talent. Previous shows have shown much more refined and finished works, whereas the work in this year's show seems to be much more amateurish.

The show was judged by James Monte, curator of New York's Whitney Museum of American Art, who awarded the \$1,000 purchase prize to Dr. Joan Gregory for a small, abstract tissue collage of a seashore. Granted, collage technique is difficult but it seems to me that there were other works of art in the show which were much more deserving of first place, illustrating a more imaginative attitude towards art.

In recent years the Springs Mill show has been known to represent the top talent around this area, and out of a field of 757, I wonder what the other 724 entries looked like?..



BY GUY MORRISON

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