



Courtesy of New Line Cinema

Rapid fire

Last Man Standing, a recently released drama, is now playing in Winston-Salem. In this scene, Christopher Walken plays Hickey, the hit man for an Irish mob.

Consort resurrects past musical paths

By SETH BRODSKY
OLD GOLD AND BLACK REVIEWER

One of the great joys of living at the end of the 20th century (and in the shadow of darker elements they must not be forgotten) remains the long redemptive path carved out by the past centuries of artistic works. Indeed, one need not even subscribe to a doctrine of social progress and evolution to acknowledge the unprecedented vastness and richness of sheer creative history we have accumulated in the past millennium.

Yet with this history, we also possess the essential task of keeping the long path clear, of consistently redefining its original lines and curves, reilluminating its directions and intersections. And we must do so not simply as a restorer and preserver, but as a kind of time-traveler; not just observing the past, but acting upon it, through it and in it. For if we succeed, we tap into an inimitable world of simultaneous reality and fantasy.

The Wake Forest Consort modestly performed this essential task Sept. 19 in Brendle Recital Hall at the Scales Fine Arts Center. A cherished institution of the university, the consort devotes itself to the authentic performance of early music (from roughly the early Renaissance to the mid-eighteenth century) on original instruments.

Its four members are all professors of music: Teresa Radomski, soprano, Selina Carter, viola da gamba, Helen Rifas on harp, and Stewart Carter on recorders, also doubling on viola da gamba and the sincerely beloved krummhorn. In this particular concert, the ensemble was accompanied by two members of the New York Historical Dance Company, Dorothy Olsson and Mark DeGarmo, complete in period dress and gesture.

Rather appropriate to the divining and resurrection of a carved path in musical history, the consort titled its program "Dances and Divisions on a Ground," celebrating the earlier musical practice of performing variations upon a basic and often anonymous melody, bass, or harmonic progression. Often, these variations were inventions of the performer, balancing a dialectic of deliberation and spontaneity between a thought out musical line, a trick bag of appropriate licks, and veritable improvisation — hey, it's jazz, cats.

Indeed, it seems the inevitable conclusion is that if one wants to break out of the dusty museum, one must play

with the relics — wear the ancient jewelry, cook with the ancient bowls, carve with the ancient tools. And so did the consort, taking up this improvisatory practice several times throughout the program, recreating not simply the sound of this music, but the music itself.

The three instrumentalists played with substantial technical knowledge and a sense of the living quality of the musical lines. Stewart Carter, renowned in his own right as one of the nation's premier early-music scholars, may still be the fastest man with a recorder in the Piedmont Triad area. The continuo of Rifas' harp and Selina Carter's viola da gamba supplied an ample foundation, and possessed an exceptional roundness of tone and articulation.

And Radomski truly shone; the quality of her voice was of course consistently fine, but it was her visceral vocal characterizations of the text and line, indeed of the theater of much of the songs, which raised the performance to such a high level. The lyrics of the wonderful Dowland songs became confessions and anecdotes of an entertaining and personal nature, and the solo concert aria, "Amarillia bella," by Caccini, possessed a moving intimacy.

The past shall never be the present, and trying too hard to reinstate obsolete rituals can have mixed results; however, in light of this, a clear and unexaggerated dramatization of old worlds may also have a delightful effect of imbuing the historical validity of the occasion with a quietly rapt fantasy, perhaps even a trans-epochal nostalgia.

The introduction into the program of historical dance provided such an effect, extending past the choreography of two figures to a quiet evening of dancing among a prince and his wife, complete with coy innuendo, sly challenges and flaunting of the "newest" dance moves, some humorously antiquated and others carrying a distinctly contemporary flavor.

The role-playing repartee between the dancers and the consort, now their personal court musicians, was approached enough to remind us the stereo-mongers of the infinitely more organic quality of the pre-modern state-of-the-art sound system.

And so, a humble exercise in exposure of the creative path — humanity's better half — from a good while back, executed with polish and poetry. While precedence certainly isn't everything, its power, validity and inspiration for hope must not be underestimated — if we can continue to remind ourselves of the living, breathing works of good which came before us, we can continue to anticipate those ahead.

Not such a loser after all: Beck as esoteric as ever

By MIKE CARTWRIGHT
CONTRIBUTING REVIEWER

Going to a Beck concert is like reaching into a bag of Halloween candy. You don't know what you're going to get, but you know it's going to be good. One night Beck might draw upon Woody Guthrie's influence and play a completely acoustic show, and then the next night he might play with a full band and blast out hard hitting songs like "Mutherf—er."

Either style is excellent, but the fans at the Grady Cole Center in Charlotte Friday night got the special treat of hearing both styles in one show.

From the beginning it was obvious that Beck wanted to perform for the crowd. He started the concert off with the friendly gesture of toasting his audience over a glass of wine, and he then proceeded to rip through

two of his most popular songs, "F—in With My Head" and "Loser."

These songs, especially "Loser" (his only really big radio hit), got the crowd excited and Beck played off this excitement by doing a robotic dance all over the stage during his next two songs, "Novacane" and "Hotwax." Beck's dancing continued throughout the entire concert, and he even invented his own vertebrae-shaking dance called the sissyneck.

During the middle of the show Beck decided to cool things down a little bit, and he played four acoustic songs, or as Beck calls them, "slow jams." These songs were each from a different album, so even though they were all acoustic they each had a unique feel. He played the folk-inspired "Heartland Feeling" off of the *Golden Feelings* album, and after the song he poked fun at himself saying he sounded like "Springsteen with a hernia."

He then tried to accommodate the audience

by asking if anyone was familiar with the "one foot in the grave situation" (referring to his 1994 independent release *One Foot In The Grave*). Since the crowd responded positively, he played "A—hole," a song about a person making others feel lousy. He countered this

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somewhat depressing song by retrieving his band from backstage (where it appeared they had been enjoying some more wine) and playing an upbeat version of "Jack—" from his latest record, *Odelay*.

"Heartland Feeling", "A—hole" and "Jack—" were all extremely well done, but my favorite song from the acoustic section, and

probably my favorite song of the evening, was "Pay No Mind." Beck played this song by himself with simply a harmonica and an acoustic guitar, but he was able to fill the entire auditorium with an array of intricate sounds.

He added to and rearranged the lyrics from the song's original recording, and in doing so he displayed his limitless creativity and his mastery of impromptu singing. This freestyle aspect to Beck's live shows is what makes him such an engaging performer.

After the "slow jams" Beck started to get a little bit wild again, as he played the first two singles from *Odelay*, "Where It's At" and "Devil's Haircut," with an abundance of energy. He then broke into "Mutherf—er," complete with heavily distorted vocals and blaring guitars. Beck ended the show with "Beercan", an upbeat song that had the entire ground floor audience dancing like the ground was on fire.

Upon the demands of an encore by the audience, Beck returned to play "High Five (Rock The Catskills)" at an obscene sound level.

It is Beck's ability to incorporate the audience into his show (he had an ongoing conversation with a spectator about her pimple) and his fun personality (everything he said brought about laughter) that makes Beck a critic and audience favorite. Although he doesn't have a huge amount of commercial success, Beck is considered a musical genius by many other musicians (his songs have been covered by rock 'n' roll legends like Tom Petty and Johnny Cash).

Sometimes it's good to keep musical gems a secret so they can continue to play small venues. However, concealing a talent as large as Beck's is like trying to hide that bag of Halloween candy. Pretty soon somebody will find out about it.

A CLASS TO REMEMBER

ANGELOU TEACHES COMMON HUMANITY AMID DIVERSITY

By BROOKE JOHNSON
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Having been under the wing of Maya Angelou, the Reynolds professor of American Studies, for three weeks, students in her World Poetry and Dramatic Performance class took what they had learned to the stage in a performance on Friday.

The performance, given in Brendle Recital Hall to a nearly full auditorium, was the fulfillment of intensive study under Angelou. According to sophomore Katherine Bradley, the two-and-a-half hour course was sometimes complemented by work out of class with Angelou and visits to her home.

Instead of just being a poetry reading, the students gave a dramatic performance of poetry, incorporating music, song, movement and acting into their recitations. Students felt that it fit suitably into the liberal arts philosophy of the university. "It was not just a poetry reading," senior John Whitmire said.

"It was taking the poems and being engaged with them. One of the key tenets of the liberal arts is that you don't really know something until you experience it," he said. Angelou said she felt that it was a great accomplishment considering

that of the 38 participants, only four had any previous experience with drama.

Whitmire, a philosophy major, agreed. "For someone who's never really performed before it was a chance for me to be on the other side." Freshman Jeff Cook, who has no experience with drama, said, "The intimidation of sitting before Maya Angelou and reading poetry really

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Jeff Cook
Freshman

helped some of us get over the fear of not doing well. It made you work harder knowing that she was listening to you."

Bradley said that it was Angelou's enthusiasm and excitement that really motivated her to do well.

While the purpose of the class may have been to incorporate poetry into dramatic performance, there was

much more to it. Bradley said that she felt the underlying concept of the class was to help the students realize that they were all people. "That was Angelou's common theme," she said.

The students carried this theme with them throughout the performance process. "We realized that these poems could be anyone's poem or anyone's song. That's why there were Caucasians reading African-American poems and men speaking women's words," sophomore Crystal Thomas said.

Thomas was one of the students who performed Paul Lawrence Dunbar's poem "When Malindy Sings," which is written as it would have been spoken by a black servant in the 18th century. Despite this, the poem was performed by women of varying race and ethnic background, bringing what was emphasized in class onto the stage.

The 56 poems the class used, all of which were chosen by Angelou, were an extensive variety that encompassed centuries of literature. The poets varied as much as their works did, ranging from Shakespeare and Yeats to Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen.

Of the poems, there were only six by Angelou herself, including "Martial Choreograph" and "Woman Me."

Reynolda Village Artisans Day features local talent, character

By JULIE STONE
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Reynolda Village became an outdoor craft gallery Saturday as several local artists displayed their works at Artisans Day. Several musicians performed, and painters, folk artists and sculptors peddled their wares to passers by.

David Stickel's realistic watercolor paintings are often of "reflective things or things that tell a story," he said. One of his favorite works won Best of Show at the Dimensions '95 exhibition held by The Associate Artists of Winston-Salem. Titled "Malawi Communion-Standing Room Only," it depicts a service in a crowded bush church in Africa. On person reaches through an open window for bread for communion, while another member of the congregation looks up at the person in the window.

Another of his paintings, of four red roses blooming in front of a white wall with paint peeling from it, had such a profound effect on a woman several years ago that she used money from a loan for a new business to buy it. When Stickel asked why she had made such an impulsive purchase, the woman, who had just lost a close friend to cancer, replied, "In your work I see life amidst death and decay." She then renamed the painting "Love Grows."

Stickel earned his bachelor's degree in art at the University of North Carolina at Asheville on a basketball scholarship. His career began during an exhibition at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tenn.

"God has given me an ability. He wants me to share that ability and be approachable," Stickel said. His next exhibition will be at the Carrboro Arts Center near Chapel Hill, from Jan. 30 to Feb. 26, 1997.

Other artists showing their works were Pat and Dick Vann, the minds behind an entire line of handmade wood folk art. Pat Vann does all the designing and her husband Dick carves the wooden figures, she said. Their favorite subjects are Santas, Noah's Arks, Uncle Sam, and angels. Their work has appeared in magazines and catalogs and at the EPCOT Center at Walt Disney World. This year they designed the Salem Vann Sanky, a Santa Claus toting an old-fashioned Salem coffeepot.

Dulcia Taylor is one of the six sculptors who work out of Sculptors Studio VI in Reynolda Village. Taylor said she has been sculpting since she was a child, when she would mold images of her teachers out of Play-Doh. Also a painter, she says that she is happiest when she is sculpting. Her favorite subjects are children, especially her daughter, who is also a budding artist.

Bill Jackson, who also works at Sculptors Studio VI, began sculpting when his wife decided to take a painting class, where there was a sculpture class at the same time in the next room. "After the third class, I told my wife, 'You've created a monster,'" he said. He enjoys sculpting faces with character in them, particularly children because of the expression from the parents or the child when the sculpture is finished.

"You amaze your own self," Jackson said.