

A Resident Great

For 23 years, James Dickey has been a teaching legend at USC while continuing to write his literary works.



USC's Poet-In-Residence James Dickey has taught here for 23 years.

By OCTAVIA WRIGHT
Staff Writer

Writing wasn't always James Dickey's dream.

"I had no interest in writing as a child. I was interested in sports," USC's poet-in-residence said.

But last year the former athlete was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, which is considered to be the most illustrious arts and academic organization in the U.S.

The road from sports to poetry began when he had to go into the armed services after playing a season of football at Clemson. There, reading and writing became his hobbies. After completing his service, he went to Vanderbilt University and completed his B.A. and M.A. in English, and then he began to teach.

"I got my first job teaching at Rice in Houston," he said. "Then, I went back into service around the time of World War II. Afterwards, I was then given fellowships to write in the

South of France and then in Florence, Italy," he said.

After teaching at the University of Florida, Dickey worked on a Coca-Cola advertising account from 1956 to 1962. His book *Deliverance* was published in 1970 and filmed in 1972.

Reed College and California State-Northridge were his two final teaching jobs before his present 23-year run at USC.

"Before coming to USC, I was an incumbent poet laureate of the U.S. at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. But, it only ran for a two-year term," he said.

Many different reasons inspired him to take his present position at USC. "First, my best friend who had graduated from Vanderbilt had taken over the English department here. And, being originally from Atlanta, I wanted to be close to my roots. And USC gave me an offer that I couldn't refuse," he said.

Dickey draws inspiration from diverse sources. "In general, I like Shakespearean writers. Anyone who uses language with recklessness and precision. Contemporarily, I like writers

from different languages and generally anyone with an imaginative insight," he said.

Dickey is working on seven books and three movies. His book *Voiced Connections*, a book of interviews and lectures, came out last Friday.

His current project *Crux* is a sequel of *To the White Sea*, a fiction piece based on events in World War II.

He has already finished the screenplay for *Alnilam*, his first movie about World War II. The movie has already been signed by a production company and will be directed by John Guillermin who directed *Towering Inferno*, he said.

The other two movies evade the war topic. *The Sentence* is a prison story, and *Gene Bullard* is a movie about a young sheriff who doesn't want to be in the law enforcement business," he said.

Dickey said he thrives on work. "The more I do, the more that I see that I can do. I just can't get enough of it. Writing is my recreation," he said.

Orchestra to perform international pieces

By KATHY HEBERGER
Staff Writer

Variety in music style, solo performances and in conductors will characterize the USC Symphony Orchestra's second concert of the season tonight at the Koger Center for the Arts.

The concert's pieces are from different nationalities and styles, from Maurice Ravel's "Pavane Pour Une Infante Defunte" to 20th century American composer Aaron Copland's western-flavored "Rodeo."

"It's an excellent selection of pieces — a little bit of everything," orchestral doctoral conducting student and orchestra manager John Ricarte said. "It's going to be very, very pleasant."

In this concert the winners of the music school's annual Concerto Aria Competition will perform solo pieces with the orchestra's accompaniment. "It's a chance to really showcase the musical talent at USC," Orchestra Conductor Donald Portnoy said.

In the Concerto Aria Competition, judges select the best woodwind, brass and strings performers based on solo performances. Every other year the competition is for vocalists and percussionists.

One of this year's winners, junior bassist Richard Simons, will perform Capuzzi's "Concerto in F Major." Simons, who says he took up the bass at his sister's advice, says the solo performing is very different from playing as part of the group. "You have to have a clear scope of what's going on and what you're doing," he said.

The performance of the Capuzzi piece may be the piece's debut in the state. "It's not everyday that you hear a double bass concerto,"

sophomore violinist Samuel Thompson said.

Senior clarinetist David Calloway, the woodwinds winner in the concerto competition, says solo performance is an essential experience for him. "I hope to make a career of performance. I need to get up in front of people to play whenever I can," he said.

The performance will also include USC students conducting the orchestra. Ricarte and first violinist David Rudge, USC's two orchestral doctoral conducting students working under Portnoy, will each conduct two of the concert's seven pieces.

"I appreciate Dr. Portnoy providing an opportunity for us to conduct, and I appreciate the orchestra's playing for us," Rudge said.

Orchestra members say having different conductors is a good experience. "It's neat. Each conductor conducts differently and expects different things from you. It's exciting," sophomore violinist Heather Neeley said.

Cellist Jacqueline Taylor, a former concerto competition winner, makes her living as a musician as she earns her music degree.

"Experience with different conductors makes you aware of what they're doing, understanding what they want," she said.

Taylor says the concert's number of smaller scale pieces varying to a great extent gives the audience a chance to move in their seats.

"Having a great many small pieces gives the audience a break, a chance to take the baby out or move in their seats without bothering anybody," she said.

The concert begins at 8 p.m. at the Koger Center for the Arts.

'Harlem Nights' might be Murphy's worst movie yet

By DAVID BOWDEN
Staff Writer

Eddie Murphy seems to think he can make any movie he wants and just reap in the cash. After the bad *Beverly Hills Cop II* and the even worse *Coming to America*, Murphy has released what may be his worst movie yet, *Harlem Nights*.

What plot there is centers around a night club owned by Sugar Ray (Richard Pryor) and his hot-headed adopted son, Quick (Eddie Murphy). Sugar and Quick run a successful place, and that draws the attention of Bugsy Calhoun, the villainous mob boss (Michael Lerner).

Bugsy wants to drive Sugar and Quick out of town. That is the

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plot. Bugsy sends a policeman on the take (Danny Aiello) to intimidate them. He acts tough and makes racist remarks. Bugsy sends a pretty girl, Jasmine Guy of "A Different World," to seduce Quick and kill him.

There are some dumb, allegedly funny scenes that are just pathetic. For example, Della Reese plays a madam who gets in a fight with Quick.

The end of this scene is not

shown, where Murphy's character shoots her toe off on purpose. Losing body parts is only funny in Monty Python movies. It isn't in this movie. Why would Quick do something this stupid? Murphy probably doesn't even know.

Later in the movie, Quick says something to the effect of, "Sorry I shot your toe off, Vera." Vera says, "I love that kid." What a touching family scene.

Let the reader beware. Murphy is trying to make a drama with comedic moments, not a comedy. Sugar and Quick own a nightclub and deal with the mob and racism.

Eddie Murphy does not act well in this, or write or direct well

is trying to make a drama with comedic moments, not a comedy. Sugar and Quick own a nightclub and deal with the mob and racism.

Eddie Murphy does not act well in this, or write or direct well either. Maybe Murphy should not have let his ego talk him into being actor/director/screenwriter/producer of this mess.

If he let some other people who knew what they were doing help him, this movie might have been better.

The movie is all the more annoying because there are so many generally funny people who aren't funny in the movie. Richard Pryor, Redd Foxx, Della Reese and Arsenio Hall all do nothing of in-

terest in this picture.

Hall might get an Oscar for doing the most irritating crying scene in movie history. Anyway, he was in the movie for three minutes at most.

Murphy is one of the funniest comedians alive.

So what is it that makes him think he can get away with this trash? He probably is so spoiled by success that he thinks he could make a documentary on escalator repairmen that could gross more than \$200 million. The movie-going public should show him that he has to make good movies by not going to bad ones like *Harlem Nights*.



Eddie Murphy portrays the character Quick in *Harlem Nights*.

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Nancy Reagan wrote to get even, but she got panned

By The Associated Press
WASHINGTON — Nancy Reagan might have settled a lot of old

scores in her memoir, *My Turn*, but the critics panned it when they got their turn.

With only a few exceptions, the book has been reviewed as shallow and mean. *The Philadelphia Inquirer's* critic, Susan Page, suggested the former first lady could have called it *Take That*.

On the other hand, some critics found an unexpected side to Reagan — warm humor.

In the *Chicago Tribune*, Dorothy Collin called the book as much fun as "a long gossipy lunch."

San Jose Mercury News critic Florence King said Reagan had produced "a blunt, very funny memoir."

Her book leaped to first place on most best seller lists. It took the No. 2 spot on *The New York Times'* widely watched best seller list for Nov. 19, and her agent Mort Janklow says it will reign as No. 1 in the list the *Times* will print Nov. 26.

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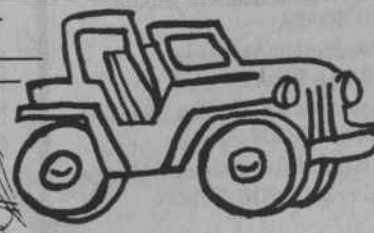
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