

Mime creates art from air and imagination

By OCTAVIA WRIGHT
Staff Writer

Students had a chance to preview an art form that has been both appreciated and misunderstood by many last Monday. It al-

most stands in a field of its own. The field is mime.

One may wonder what inspires people to take up mime. When asked about his inspiration, mime William Shaw said he's been do-

ing it since childhood and that he just likes his work.

"I was trained by a mime and I did extensive research on the art of miming. Later on, I got a job in Hilton Head doing this and I got

paid a good bit. Later on, I got a job in Myrtle Beach and I enjoyed it," Shaw said.

And it was easy to tell that he enjoyed his work. While he was performing for pictures, the crowd's responses were generally pleasant, but there were a few unpleasant ones.

But Shaw doesn't let people get to him.

"Sometimes you can care too much about what people think. Ninety-nine percent of the audiences are positively responsive to my act. I realize that the people who do not respond positively have a problem because they don't understand it. It makes me feel good to see that 99 percent of the people are smiling. It's good to know that you can do that for a person," he said.

Shaw calls himself a 'roving' mime who creates imaginary objects out of the air and different situations. "It's a form of theater and speech. When the mime comes by, he is full of energy and sometimes after I've completed my art, I have to take long walks to release that energy."

However, soon Shaw will have to save that energy for future per-

formances. "Mime season flourishes between spring and summer, and I've planned to do some things for it. I plan on performing in front of Longstreet Theater when the weather gets better along with do-

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Will Shaw
mime

ing some performances downtown. It's all good exposure."

The exposure of mime in the Southeast is one of the goals that Shaw has set for himself. "The art of mime is not very popular down here in the South. From Washington, D.C., on up, there are a lot of mimes. But from there on down, there are very few. I feel that this campus is an ideal place for mime because there's such a large diversity of students here. And, it would enlighten their minds on the art form."

Unfortunately, there are some people who do not understand the art of mime. "Women and children

are my best audiences because they are generally (more light-hearted) than men," Shaw said.

Shaw has also experienced 'unwelcome' feelings from blacks.

"It's funny. Some blacks feel disappointed when they see me — partially because they don't understand it. They only see a suit as a sign of progress (for the black race as a whole)," he said.

Fortunately, Shaw doesn't let this ignorance get to him. Instead, he's got several things planned for himself and others for his future. After completing his bachelor's in Media Arts and Theater and Speech from USC, he plans to get his master's in directing and acting. But school isn't the only thing he has on his mind.

While continuing his work with the Patchwork Players and the Southeastern Players, he plans to get involved with the S.C. Arts Commission and to help underprivileged children. "I want to share what I have with kids," he said.

The time that he spends with kids only mimics the time he spends with his daughter, Serena, he said. "She's great. She talks about me a lot. She can relate and understands that my acts are all theater and its okay".



Teddy Lepp/The Gamecock

Mime Will Shaw performs for a group of students at the Grand Marketplace in Russell House.

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