

# Creative Living

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(F1E)

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"Approaching Men," 1970, by Lester Johnson, is 69 by 180 inches, as big as the wall of an average size room. It is oil on canvas. As in all of the works in the show, there is a readily apparent mental distance between each of the figures in the crowd.

MINDY BAUNDERS/staff photographer

## Johnson's art reflects humanity

By Benita Bornstein  
special writer

When in the 60s and 70s, the trend in art was toward pop, minimalism or photo-realism, Lester Johnson maintained his commitment to figurative painting.

"Lester Johnson: Men With Bowler Hats, 1969-1971" at the Donald Morris Gallery through Feb. 23 is a testimonial to his strong belief in that mode of artistic expression.

James R. Mellow, critic of Arts magazine and author of the catalog essay, "Lester Johnson and the Lonely Crowd," said of these 1970 paintings: "They established Johnson as one of the new masters in the slow resurgence of interest among American artists in the human figure as a subject for painting."

Florence Morris agreed. "We feel privileged to show

these paintings. They are museum quality."

The exhibition of paintings is commanding not only in size but in the monumental scope of the muscular and powerful images of the lonely men. Without the overt social commentary of Beckmann, Johnson's paintings are nonetheless metaphors of the human condition.

DARKLY outlined and thickly painted, the anonymous men in bowler hats are decidedly urban, nameless residents of the Bowery. Johnson achieves this image without architectural landscape or landmarks, only the dark-hatted figures.

In "Three Drunks Smoking," 1970, he uses props, tables, bottles and cigars. But it is the rhythmic repetition of the figures that communicates a grim sense of conformity.

The square-jawed men are generally impassive, their faces and profiles ambiguous. They don't relate to each

other. In "City Crowd," 1971, they move with diffusion as if carried by the crowd. They crowd the canvas, each head and torso occupying its own space.

Compositionally, the figures are forms and shapes: rectangles, cylinders, circles, etc. According to Mark Morris, the paintings are like studies in art history — the flat Egyptian influence as well as the Greek frieze, a movement of figures across the canvas.

And move they do. Tightly packed, they are in action, but restless and estranged. In "Approaching Men," 1970 the huge hands and feet move with assertion and force, almost like a dance as they approach the viewer.

In the diptych, "City No. 2," 1971 two Beckmann-like figures dominate the canvases as if in dance while the anonymous crowd moves around them.

JOHNSON'S group of self-portraits further attests to his

### review

commitment to the figure. Although small and unimposing in manner and stature, Johnson's self-portraits reveal the same strong, muscular and energized image as the men in his paintings. Imbued with self-confidence, he doesn't waver in his commitment as he paints his lonely men.

Despite the fact that these works are almost 15 years old, there is a freshness and immediacy in composition and content as if they were painted yesterday.

Donald Morris Gallery is at 105 Townsend, Birmingham. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday.

## Clarinet solo highlights symphony show

By Avigdor Zaromp  
special writer

For those who feel the desire to venture outside the standard repertoire, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra program last week provided such a diversion in at least one major selection — the Symphony No. 1 by Walton.

The opening selection, Tchaikovsky's "Hamlet" Overture, is more familiar but isn't in the "warhorse" category. Between these two works was the stretch of the most familiar territory — Mozart's Clarinet Concerto in A Major. This was a substitution for the relatively obscure Clarinet Concerto No. 4 by Louis Spohr.

While the musical judgment of history might seem arbitrary and capricious

in some individual instances, this judgment didn't seem unreasonable regarding items on this program.

Mozart's classical masterpiece, in my opinion, has scored an unqualified victory in terms of musical content, even though comparing works of different styles and periods has its pitfalls.

QUEST conductor was the English-born David Atherton, who at age 40 has already established an impressive reputation. He was joined by the young clarinetist, Richard Stoltzman, in the Mozart concerto.

The Tchaikovsky overture conveyed convincingly the intricate moods and descriptions which it portrays. The



Avigdor Zaromp

harsh episodes were outlined with liberal use of the percussions. These were contrasted with the tender scenes depicting Ophelia.

Among the many tone poems depicting Shakespearean characters, Tchaikovsky's "Hamlet" is one of the most noteworthy, and this performance has enhanced its stature.

Atherton used a small orchestra for Mozart's concerto. It sounded suffi-

ciently lively and energetic in the introduction of the first movement, but it also proved to be unobtrusive in its support of the tender notes of the clarinet.

Stoltzman's performance turned out to be the most satisfying experience of this program. The rapid and winding passages in the fast movements flowed with natural ease and beauty, which was a tribute to composer and performer alike. While Stoltzman does

possess an impressive technique, he knows how to use it as a tool rather than an end.

In the slow movement, the tender and unpretentious cadenza had more impact than some of the most astonishing technical feats occasionally witnessed in other works.

THE WALTON symphony, which was the single work after intermission, composed in 1935, is tonal and melodic in nature. It doesn't have the harsh dissonances that make many 20th century works unappealing to large segments of the audience.

Atherton seemed to be thoroughly familiar with the work and used the large orchestral forces to achieve the best possible results. Still, the feeling of

aimlessness and redundancy in this massive work was there. But this is based on limited exposure to this composition, and a thorough familiarity on my part could have resulted in a different impression.

The composer himself was bogged down with this work for a few years, a fact that in itself is not a reflection of its quality. After all, Brahms also had his agonizing streaks with his symphonies. The difference might lie with the inherent ability to resolve the frustrating dilemmas.

Atherton is scheduled to conduct the DSO in this week's program as well. It will consist of works by Haydn, Stravinsky, Silvestre Revueltas and Ravel. Salvatore Accardo will perform the Stravinsky Violin Concerto.



### Music Gullid presents

The Bass Bonnier Quartet will be the guest artists for the Cranbrook Music Guild Series at 8:30 p.m. Tuesday. Performing with Bonnier, well-known area jazz pianist, will be Gene Parker, reeds; Dan Jordan, bass; and Tom Brown, drums. Programs are in the Cranbrook House library, 300 Lone Pine, Bloomfield Hills. Parking is in the Christ Church Cranbrook lot with shuttle bus service to Cranbrook House. Afterglow for artists and guests follows concert. Tickets are \$8. Call 648-3786 for information or reservations.

## 'Pacing' vital sales approach

By Chuck Moss  
special writer

"Modern Persuasion Strategies, the Hidden Advantage in Selling," by Donald J. Moine and John H. Herd, Prentice-Hall, 204 pages.

Never scream at a screamer. I learned that from my mother. But for those not so fortunate, there's "Modern Persuasion Strategies," a new "how-to" sales manual put out by consultants Donald J. Moine and John H. Herd.

Herd also runs the Achievement Center in Rochester, for which his work is a handbook. Designed to improve sales technique, MPS is grouped around a single idea — pace your customer.

"We do trust people we perceive as being like us," write Moine and Herd, "and this extends to speech volume. People who speak softly are very aware of screamers and whisperers. They consider their own speech volume normal and intuitively trust others who speak at their level."

It's achieving this intuitive trust that the book counsels, how to subtly gain rapport with the customer. Hence, the "pacing" involves molding your rap to the style of the customer.

But wait There's more! MPS is full of other techniques such as subliminal commands ("wouldn't you like to sub-

scribe to this newspaper?"), using "mental erasers" (such as "clearly our book reviews are better"), and the "repeated yes technique," leading the customer from "yes" reply to "yes" reply: "Doesn't a better paper have better book reviews? YES. Don't more people subscribe to the Eclectic because it has better book reviews? YES. Shouldn't Chuck Moss' better book reviews be paid more? YES," and various other psychological tricks.

The book moves fast, is interesting, and contains huge doses of common sense. It's also local, which makes it more fun to read. References to Rochester, M-14, and a hilarious dialogue with Don Masey given up what could be a dull textbook.

A conversational, quick-stepping style makes the lesson go down easy. And the authors even show examples from the era's master salesman himself, Ronald Reagan.

For a book devoted to manipulation, the narrative avoids cynical "sucker born" approach. And, hey, who doesn't have something to sell these days?

"Modern Persuasion Strategies" can give everyone food for thought and possibly some useful techniques. At the very least, you'll be able to note them when they're used against you.

### Author to sign books

John Herd will be signing copies of his book, "Modern Persuasion Strategies," 2-4 p.m. Saturday at B. Dalton Booksellers, Oakland Mall.

Herd, who graduated cum laude from Wesleyan University of Middletown, Conn., also studied at Columbia University and Université de Grenoble, France.

Herd and his Achievement Center associates have conducted sales training seminars for major companies such as Xerox, Chevrolet, Gelman Sciences, Merillat, National Steel Group, Parker Chemical, AT&T Information Systems, GTE Valeron, Michigan Bell, Ford Motor Co. and Citicorp.

Herd has conducted more than 1,500 training seminars throughout the country.

"What we do not do," said Herd, "is hold workshops for the public."

He agreed there are some persons in sales who have a special talent for reading and reacting to others and compared it to "info-red vision" on a scope at night. He added, "They don't know they have it."

Admitting he was the opposite of a natural genius in sales, Herd said, "I couldn't sell my way out of a paper bag."

He used what he termed "my deficiency" to an advantage explaining, "Most salesmen don't like to be analytical."

Because his salesmanship was learned, he was forced to be analytical and as a result made an intensive study of the psychology and techniques of selling.

Herd said his publisher has expressed interest in at least two more books.