

Mosaics

in commemoration of the Nebraska State Capitol after fifty years, 1932-1982.

Symmetry of stone and of marble, order solid for the moment against all threats of chaos, you are the grand mosaic saying how sweet it is to have all other gods within, a part, of you

I see the walking plow that broke the earth you sprouted from I see the steam from the nostrils of the horses that pulled the plow, small mosaic of fetlock and of haunched in awful tandem.

Call it a seed that gave birth to the seed that birthed you; so tell us, Grandmother, Father, where does the good earth end and the dream begin?

Seed dropped into the furrow behind the walking plow you take root, you rise mightily you grumble, you want to be yourself yet more than yourself, and you are, you are, statue, tower, mural,

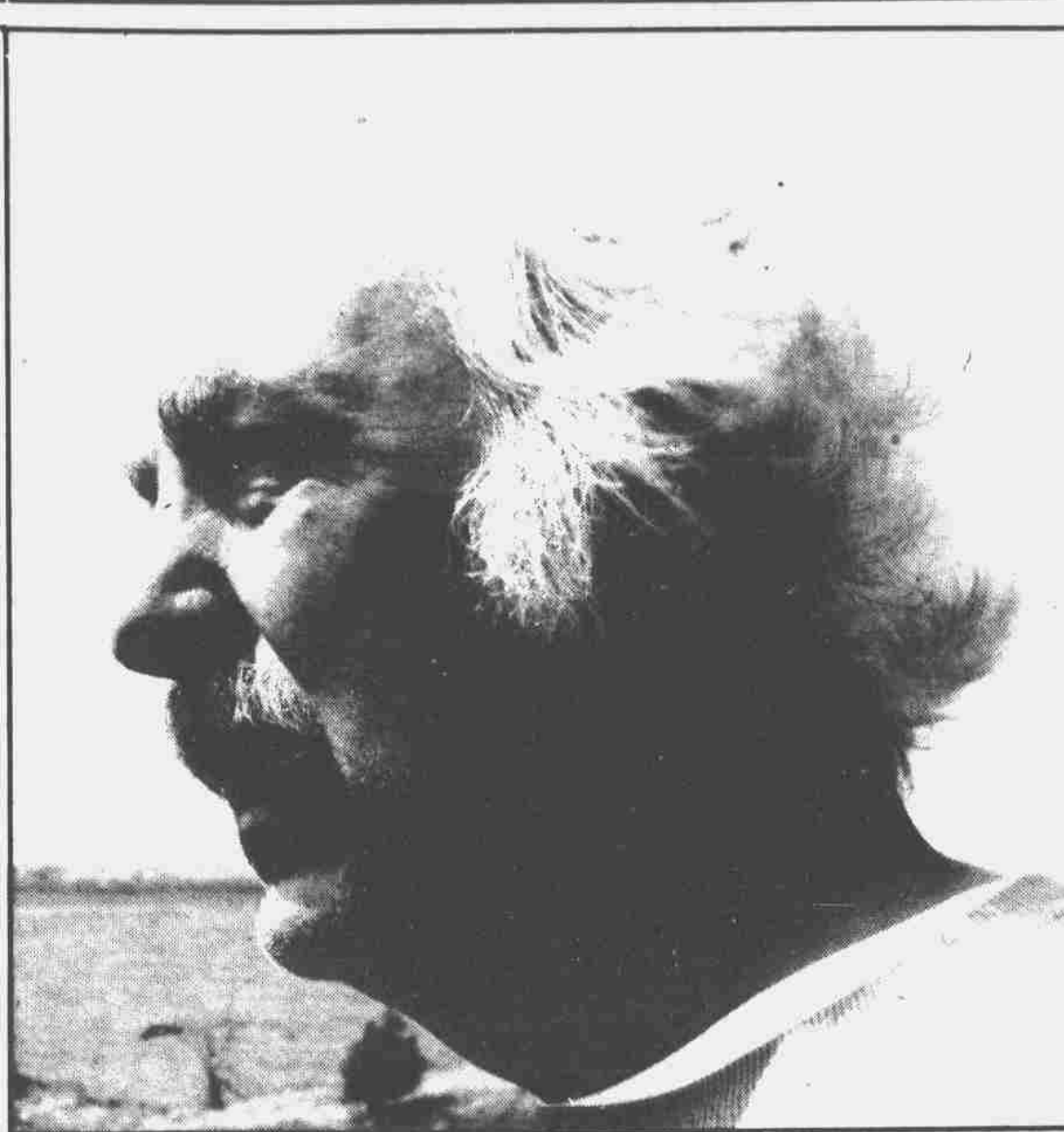
inlay, ivory, scroll, watchful citizen long dead alive in bronze, name deep to the touch in that heft of square and of circle.

I enter you to become a part of the seed that gave birth to the seed that birthed you. We are indeed mosaics, are we not, all of us, the quick and the static, palettes forever distinct with colors and the colors running?

On a clear calm night I too take root, I too rise, mightily I too grumble, I too want to be myself yet more than myself.

I stop somewhere just short of the stars, life at the edge of this massive calm upright, too clear-headed ever to lose. Almighty God! All around me, in each of the four great directions, the lights of an inland city move and do not move.

Beneath my feet mosaic after grand mosaic trembles. I too tremble — thunderbird, buffalo, coyote, fox, mosaic of blood evolved to know what I know: nothing solid at last but the seed, nothing at last more generous than the letting go.



William Kleppner

Photo by Jamie Bishop

Mandrell has more than charisma

By Mike Frost

Often, the phrase "but she has a great stage personality" is the show-business equivalent of "but she's a good dancer." In country music today, stage charisma is usually a crutch used by musical lightweights. The successes of artists like Kenny Rogers, Eddie Rabbit and Ronnie Millsap bear this out.

One would assume that country artist Barbara Mandrell would fit in this category as well. Her TV appearances, as well as many of her hit singles, smack of middle-of-the-road coziness. But, once on stage, Mandrell's musical abilities are surprisingly eclectic.

Of course, there were the obligatory renditions of her hits, including "Sleeping Single in a Double Bed," "Wish You Were Here" and "I Was Country When Country Wasn't Cool."

However, Mandrell surprised the crowd at the Nebraska State Fair Sunday night by performing a wide range of material not normally associated with her. Besides country standards ("Hey Good Lookin'"), she authoritatively performed blues ("Night Life"), rock ("All Shook Up"),

bluegrass ("Rollin' in My Sweet Baby's Arms") and gospel ("Swing Low Sweet Chariot").

In addition, Mandrell's instrumental virtuosity was effectively highlighted in many of the selections. She is surprisingly accomplished on the guitar and saxophone and probably should consider playing them on more songs.

Of course, there were some low points. The rendition of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" was at best unnecessary and at worst absurd. The in-between-song banter often seemed both unspontaneous and unending and too much time was spent showcasing the vocal talents (or lack thereof) of various members of the Do-Rites, Mandrell's band. Also, the opening act, Steve Wariner, who has had a couple of top 20 country hits, was exceptionally unexceptional.

However, these relatively minor faults did not significantly detract from the overall show. The crowd, estimated at 13,500, was enthusiastic and Mandrell did not disappoint them. Her talent and stage presence overwhelmed the audience. One hates to say it, but Barbara Mandrell is a great stage personality.

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