

Getting Her Feet Wet

Student succeeds in business, sports and textile design

Editor's Note: In this weekly series, we examine the exceptional work and accomplishments of individual students in art, dance, music, acting and design.

BY KEN MORTON

When shoppers walk into most stores in Lincoln, they are instantly barraged with sights and sounds that make up the shopping experience.

What the average consumer may not realize is that every display and every product in a store is displayed and placed for a particular reason.

Beth Hunsicker, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln senior from Ottumwa, Iowa, has been studying the ins and outs of clothes merchandising and learning how to channel her business tendencies creatively.

Hunsicker came to UNL in 1996 on a swimming scholarship and originally majored in marketing.

"I wanted to come up with a narrower focus," Hunsicker said, "but nothing in the business school would really let me do what I wanted."

After looking through her student bulletin, Hunsicker settled on textiles, clothing design, with an emphasis on merchandising.

"Studying merchandising is all about learning how products flow—what do the customers want and what's the best way to present this product to the customer."

Please see HUNSICKER on 9



UNL senior Beth Hunsicker, shown with one of her original textile designs, combines her studies of textiles and design with merchandising.

Scott McClurg/DN

"Remembering the Titans" forgets history

Denzel Washington stars in the movie based on the racial integration of a Virginia high school.

BY SAMUEL MCKEOWN

"Remember the Titans" is based on a true story, and that's its greatest asset; it's hard to imagine the movie working as a fictional tale at all, considering the level of "smile on your brother" attitude that drips from frame to frame.

A true story somehow could work though, especially for the younger set that "Titans" was obviously geared toward. And while there were long bouts of dead action in the midst of a supposedly highly active movie about the 1971 integration of a high school football team in Alexandria, Va., the big play in the big game matters like it should. This is a standard measure of a sports picture.

There are other measures, of course, and "Titans," directed by Boaz Yakin, has the subject matter to surpass them. And I imagine that the original trappings of the Gregory Howard script more adequately dealt with the complex issues of busing and racial integration.

But the final version of the film, and Denzel Washington's iffy portrayal of the intense and angry black coach, Herman Boone, put a soft and fairly happy haze on the proceedings. "Titans" suffers for it. But its box office will improve for the same reasons, and with Jerry Bruckheimer as a producer, well, we know that's the main idea here.

The movie plays out on three broad fronts. First, there's the integration of T.C. Williams High School. Second, there's the integration of the football team after the popular coach, Bill Yoast (Will Patton, a Bruckheimer regular), is demoted to make way for Boone. Finally, there's the football team itself, which turns out to be a balling force of football might in the face of all its critics.

Boone is a real taskmaster, a man that loves to drill his team into runs that are hours and hours long. They have four practices a day when they don't learn how to get along. They do up-downs while Boone screams "fourth quarter!" And the team runs six plays.

I'm unsure if that was the reality of T.C. Williams, or if the makers have tweaked the Vince Lombardiism to a level that goes beyond the great Packers' coach.

I'm figuring a mix of both because Washington's performance can't match the brute force of a coach like Al Pacino's character in "Any Given Sunday." Washington was twice as intense in "The Hurricane." He seems to gear down here. A

Please see TITANS on 9

Artist uses puppets to dispel stereotypes

Buddy Big Mountain brings his world-famous show to the Carson Theater to entertain students and to educate his audience about issues concerning American Indian culture.

BY MELANIE MENSCH

Using humor, song and magic, Buddy Big Mountain will discuss American Indian stereotypes at the Johnny Carson Theater this week.

But don't bother reading his lips; they won't be budging an inch.

Instead, puppets like Awesome Fox, Iron Horse and Windell Snodgrasz do most of the talking in Big Mountain's entourage of zany characters.

Big Mountain, a world-famous puppeteer and the first nationally recognized American Indian ventriloquist, brings

an entertaining, educational show to the Johnny Carson Theater, 11th and Q streets, as a part of the Lied Center for Performing Arts Family Favorites series.

Supported in part by The Cookie Company and Nebraska Bookstore, the first of three sold-out performances will begin tonight at 7 p.m. Big Mountain will also perform Oct. 3 and 4 at 7 p.m.

Coming from a rich, mixed heritage of Mohawk, Comanche, Apache, Welsh and English, Big Mountain has entertained

audiences since he was a 2-year-old, performing traditional American Indian dances with his family at theme parks.

Intrigued by the theme park ventriloquists he met in the late 1970s, Big Mountain began to dabble in the craft. Soon, he began touring with his own handmade puppets and marionettes.

With the help of puppets, Big Mountain uses comedy, ventriloquism, singing and magic to address American Indian issues and stereotypes.

"I want to change the stereotypes people have of Native Americans—of being stoic, of not being funny," he said.

His humorous, thought-provoking shows provide insight on American Indian culture.

Helen Long Soldier, a multi-cultural affairs education specialist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said she saw Big Mountain perform at an American Indian conference in the mid-1990s.

"He's very imaginative, warm and funny," she said. "It's appropriate humor for the Native people. Even though he's using humor, he's not ridiculing anyone."

Big Mountain called himself "the straight man" in his troupe of whimsical puppet friends.

"I'm the hand and mind behind the show," he said.

"I want to change the stereotypes people have of Native Americans—of being stoic, of not being funny."

Buddy Big Mountain ventriloquist

Big Mountain said he patterned puppet characters after friends and family.

"Iron Horse is after my father, and Awesome Fox is very much like me," he said.

Iron Horse, a respected tribe elder, often talks about his younger days to Awesome Fox, a young, modern and curious American Indian. Windell Snodgrasz, a white singer and friend to the American Indians, is the jokester of the gang.

"I hope people see that Native Americans are like everyone else," Big Mountain said. "I leave little messages through my shows. I want people to see and hear (the messages) and take them home when they leave."

Charles Bethea, the Lied Center's executive director, said Big Mountain's show offered audiences a special mix of comedy, culture and family entertainment.

"He's fun and funny," Bethea said. "It's a chance for families to enjoy the performing arts together, especially of that of another culture."

As a member of the Iroquois Nation and a registered member of the Mohawk of Kahnawake Tribe of Canada, Big Mountain said he hoped to entertain and educate audiences about American Indians.

"I bring the culture to all people," Big Mountain said. "I touch the child people have in them. I hope to teach people to keep a song in their heart and a smile on their face."

Performance Preview

Buddy Big Mountain

Where: Johnny Carson Theatre, 11th & Q

When: Tonight, Tuesday, and Wednesday at 7 p.m.

MOVIE REVIEW

Remember the Titans

Director: Boaz Yakin

Stars: Denzel Washington, Will Patton

Rating: PG

★ ★ of 4 stars



Jerry Morgan/DN