The Horizon Company dawns over Institute

by David Starr

Another throng of people left the movie and headed down the infinite corridor, where the sound of piano playing was heard. A few curious people decided to investigate further and traced the sound to its source in the Bush Room. Once inside the room they found themselves looking at four luminous murals that appeared to be windows looking out over landscapes of unimagined worlds. As they gazed, a pianist in the corner created flowing melodies that formed the perfect atmosphere for viewing the murals. The Horizon Company was working its magic again.

The Horizon Company is a presentation developed by Stephen Willard Hannock and Andrew Shannon. Hannock is the creator of the murals, and Shannon composed the electro-symphonic music. Hannock’s murals are the results of years of his experimentation with creating images slightly vague so that the viewer enhances the depth perceived. Hannock developed a formula for obtaining the pigments he required and, in a room lit only with “black” light, began creating his fascinating landscapes.

The visual portion of the exhibit consisted of four large out-sized murals, one on each wall of the room. A common idea is expressed in these paintings, one that Hannock calls “a kind of organic architecture, with seemingly man-made structures growing out of the landscapes.” The landscapes, if they are set on Earth at all, seem to be scenes from this planet’s remote past or distant future. However, Hannock’s most recent work is a view between two cliffs that looks up at a sky with two moons—definitely not an earthly scene. All of the scenes portray a rising or setting sun behind the landscape. “I like when a painting is looking up at a sky with two moons— Depicting a kind of organic architecture, with seemingly man-made structures growing out of the landscapes.”

Shannon perform solo piano improvisations, which were quite good. A common response to the music was an overwhelming “Yes! I like it!” This attitude is supported by the fact that over 1800 people attended the display. One reason for such enthusiasm is that the event was entirely student conceived and operated. The exhibit was set up by the Graduate Student Council, with funding provided by the GSC, the UA, and the Council on the Arts. Perhaps more exhibits would be as well attended if the student body had some say in what artworks will be displayed.

Those students who saw the exhibit will be happy to know that the Horizon Company will probably return next year. Those who didn’t see it should not miss it twice.