



GREG SORBER/JOURNAL

"Santorini" is one of Richard Maitland's paintings.

ONE LAST SHOW

■ 83-year-old has enjoyed a lifetime of dancing, traveling and creating artwork

BY AMANDA STEVENS
Journal Staff Writer

For his 83rd birthday, Richard Maitland wanted to dance.

One last performance.

So, he put on one last show to some old jazz music, including "Black and White Baby of Mine," at a friend's house on his birthday, Oct. 25.

The performance lasted about 20 minutes and was complete with two costume changes.

"I think it may have been my last dance, unless a miracle comes along," he said.

Broadway dancer, choreographer and artist, Maitland sat in the "theater room" in his Rio Rancho home Friday with one of his 1940s Broadway costumes on his lap as he reminisced about his past birthday.

The walls of the room are covered with photographs, signed and unsigned, of people he worked with in the past, including Marilyn Monroe, Harpo Marx, Mitzi

If you go

WHAT: Richard Maitland's one-man art show

WHEN: Begins Friday and will be on display through Dec. 18. The gallery is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

WHERE: Dreamscapes Gallery, 1523 Fifth St. in Albuquerque

Gaynor, Roy Rogers, Louis Armstrong and Lena Horne.

"I have worked with some amazing people," he said.

Maitland was born in Bisbee, Ariz., in 1925 and moved to San Francisco when he was 4. He stayed there through 1945 — that's where he found his passion.

"I started dancing when I was 7, tap dancing," he said. "I was a Meglin Kiddie, just like Shirley Temple and Jane Withers. It cost \$1 for three lessons a week. The first four lessons, I sat on the floor cry-



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Richard Maitland said he got into painting in the 1950s.

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ing. I was terribly shy."

Maitland soon overcame his fear and branched out into ballet and contemporary dance.

"I did it all, modern dance, ethnic dance, ballet, you name it," he said.

It wasn't long before he headed to the Big Apple where he performed in Broadway shows, including "Brigadoon" and "L'il Abner," he said.

Backstage during his performances, Maitland found an opportunity to develop another passion — art.

"I really got into painting in the '50s and when I'd go on tour, I'd bring my paints and paint in the dressing room or use my blow torch to create jewelry," he said. "Some people would play cards; I would paint a mural."

While Maitland was living a dream, his itch to travel was stronger. It took him around the world and landed him in India for seven years.

"In the '50s, I painted old

buildings and rooftops. I loved rooftops, and when I went to India, I brought my paints and started painting seriously. I never expected to be an artist."

But that is exactly what he became.

Maitland sold much of his work in India, as well as throughout the United States, including New York City, Texas and Santa Fe.

"I feel closer to India than a lot of places I've lived," he said. "I think I had more acclaim there as a dancer and as an artist than anywhere else."

While in India, Maitland organized The Children's International Dance Theatre and had students from all over the world, including Ghana, Sweden and New Delhi.

"After a while, there's nothing left for dancers but teaching," he said.

Maitland came back to the United States from India in 1963.

"When I moved back from India, I knew my dancing

days were over, so then I moved to Santa Fe and had a career in art," he said.

Maitland will have what might be his last one-man art show, beginning Friday at Dreamscapes Gallery, 1523 Fifth St. in Albuquerque.

"(On display there will be) everything from a few early paintings — it's a retrospective to look at what I've done in the past, but it's really to get old friends to see that I'm still around and see the far out things I'm doing now," Maitland said. "I've never really shown my collages and assemblages, which are very different from my romantic period."

The show will be on display through Dec. 18.

An artist reception will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. Friday and Dec. 5. The gallery is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

For more information about the show, call 688-3190.