

ONE MORE SHOW

83-year-old performer recalls lifetime of dancing, traveling, painting

By AMANDA STEVENS
Journal Staff Writer

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

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

The 20-minute show featured two costume changes.

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

Broadway dancer, choreographer and artist, Maitland sat in the "theater room" in his Rio Rancho home recently 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 Gaynor, Roy Rogers, Louis Armstrong and Lena Horne.

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

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 says. "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 crying. I was terribly shy."

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

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

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

Backstage he developed 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 blowtorch to create jewelry," he says. "Some

If you go

WHAT: Richard Maitland's one-man art show

WHEN: Art is on display through Dec. 18. The gallery is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays..

WHERE: Dreamscapes Gallery, 1523 Fifth NW

MORE INFO: Call 688-3190

But that's 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 says. "I think I had more acclaim there as a dancer and as an artist than anywhere else."

"When I moved back from India (in 1963), I knew my dancing days were over, so then I moved to Santa Fe and had a career in art," he says.

Maitland is having an art show at Dreamscapes Gallery, 1523 Fifth NW.

"(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 says. "I've never really shown my collages and assemblages, which are very different from my romantic period."

people would play cards; I would paint a mural."

His desire 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."



Richard Maitland, artist, choreographer and dancer, has a one-man art show at Dreamscapes Gallery.



"Santorini" is a painting by Richard Maitland of a Greek village.

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