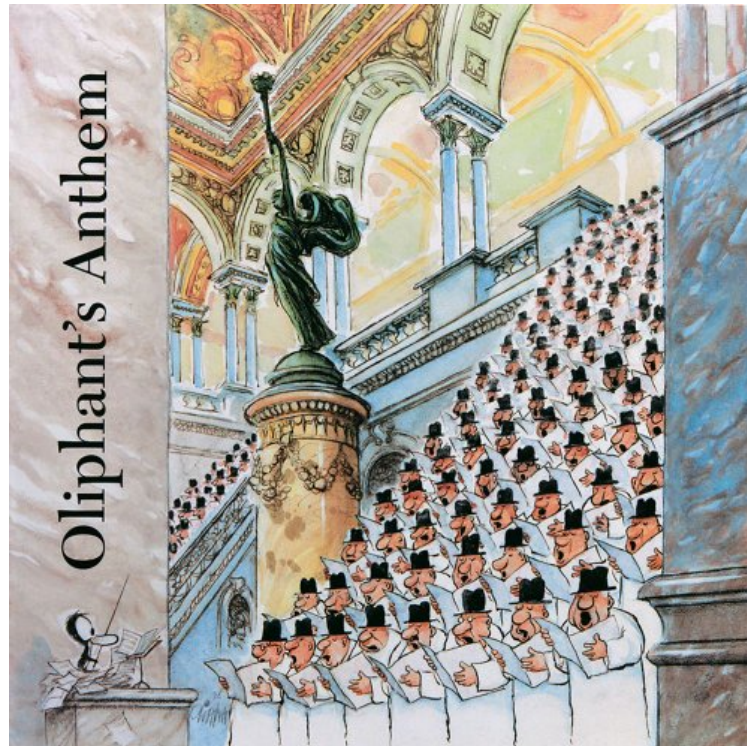


Oliphant's Anthem

Pat Oliphant

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Pat Oliphant : Oliphant's Anthem before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Oliphant's Anthem:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. good visual commentary, i wish Oliphant were covering today's political scene
By Peter B. good visual commentary, i wish Oliphant were covering today's political scene
3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The art and science of "stirring up the animals"
By Robert Morris Pat Oliphant is one of my favorite political cartoonists and this is among the best of several collections of his work. What to say? Oliphant's Anthem is the companion volume to an exhibition at the Library of Congress (in 1998) which commemorated his art. It provides graphic and compelling illustrations of his reactions to a period which extends from the Viet Nam War until the Clinton administration. The collection includes 60 drawings, sculptures, and various art media which have been added to the Library's permanent collection. In the Preface, James H. Billington observes that the Library of Congress is pleased "to add Pat Oliphant's name to the pantheon of great political artists represented in our holdings and proud to contribute, through this exhibition and publication, new information about a creator whose ideas, accomplishments, and art will certainly endure." Credit Sara Day with gathering and then editing the material provided in this volume. That said, and with all due respect to those who praise Oliphant's art, it requires no explication. It speaks for itself and does so with a visual power and eloquence which I (at least) am unable to describe. So, what would be appropriate to share in a brief commentary such as this? First, that Oliphant's best work immediately seizes one's attention (as does Picasso's Guernica and Munch's The Scream) and the viewer either "gets it" or doesn't. Also, he captures in each drawing and in each sculpture the essence of his subject (as he perceives it)

and challenges those who view it to absorb and digest the implications of what he offers. Finally, he communicates his sense of rage in response to what he views as (for lack of a better term) "man's inhumanity to man." Even as he expresses anger, dismay, frustration, and impatience, he never indicates that he has lost all hope that various inhumanities can be eliminated while insisting that none should be tolerated. Of special interest to me is Harry Katz's interview of Oliphant on pages 13-78, accompanied by relevant illustrations with brief explanations. Oliphant responds to questions which readers such as I would probably ask if given the opportunity. For example, this brief excerpt quoted verbatim: "Katz: So you were aware pretty early on that cartooning didn't get the respect that it deserved for the quality of work that it represented." Oliphant: Yes, not enough anyway. David Low did more for the art than anybody in this century, I think. Of course there've been others, but his penmanship and his brushwork, and his sense of draftsmanship were just so well advanced. And of course you need to believe in something when you're doing this business." Katz: What did you believe in at that time? [i.e. late-1970s] What was behind the passion? Did you feel in your gut that there was a tradition you wanted to be part of?" Oliphant: Yes. And I don't think there's such a thing as a good conservative cartoonist. I think you have to have a fire in the gut to do it, and that doesn't come from being a conservative. You have to, by necessity, be a liberal. Otherwise you don't get into cartooning. You go and be a lawyer, or a stockbroker. You're not gonna sit there complacently and let things happen around you or to you. It's a way of being able to participate and maybe influence. Any cartoonist who rates himself or herself as a conservative will inevitably turn out cartoons which look like book illustrations -- all very competent, but with no fire or heart." Oliphant never seems to lose what Rafael Sabatini says of Andre Moreau in the novel Scaramouche: "He was born with the gift of laughter and a sense that the world is mad." One of my personal favorites portrays President Ronald Reagan as he was about to launch his campaign for a second term. Oliphant created a whimsical illustration of him ("There he goes again," page 40) wearing a top hat and tails and carrying a cane, leaping from one ice floe to another. The caption refers to a favorite Reagan putdown in presidential campaign debates as well as to his reputation as the "Teflon president." Most of his cartoons leave no doubt whatsoever as to what his opinion is of the given subject. The cartoon for which Oliphant received a Pulitzer Prize in 1966 is an indictment of the Viet Nam War. It portrays Ho Chi Minh, carrying a dead Viet Cong in his arms, proudly announcing "They won't get us to the conference table...will they?" (page 39) Another cartoon ("Remember Tiananmen Square," page 46) expresses Oliphant's contempt for totalitarianism's suppression of individual freedom in China. Those who share my high regard for this volume are urged to check out other collections of Oliphant's editorial cartoons as well as *Attack of the Political Cartoonists* which provides representative selections from almost 150 of his contemporaries. They and we are in Oliphant's substantial debt, especially as frustration with government leaders throughout the world is, if anything, greater now than ever before. When it comes to (in his words) "stirring up the animals," no one has done it better. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Oliphant at his best! By A Customer This is the first Pat Oliphant book I have read and I love his style. He takes no prisoners in his assault. Not the FBI, not the Pentagon, not Arab/Israel relations. I love his wit.

Ironic, isn't it? For more than a quarter century, Pat Oliphant has skewered the denizens of Congress with his biting sharp editorial cartoons. Now, in an exhibit and this companion volume, Oliphant is honored in the very repository of that illustrious body: The Library of Congress. Oliphant is, after all, the most important political cartoonist of the 20th century. His trademark wit -- shared with the adoring fans who read almost 350 daily and Sunday newspapers that carry his work -- has impaled presidents, dogged members of Congress, and critiqued a whole host of issues. From Vietnam to Bosnia, from Lyndon Johnson to Bill Clinton, Pat Oliphant has applied his considerable talent to the workings of the world. Oliphant's Anthem will catalog the 60 drawings, sculptures, and various art media that will be exhibited as a special tribute to Pat Oliphant's art in March 1998 at the Library of Congress. Interviews with the artist throughout the book will highlight his thoughts, concerns, and considerations as he has created this impressive body of work. Printed on glossy enamel stock, the black and white book will include an eight-page color signature. It is certain to be a collectible edition for Oliphant fans everywhere.

About the Author Pat Oliphant occupies a unique position among today's editorial cartoonists. Widely considered the dean of the profession, he is one of its sharpest, most daring practitioners. Oliphant divides his time between Santa Fe, N.M. and Washington, D.C. Pat Oliphant is syndicated by Universal Press Syndicate