A Date With the Blues

Paul Butterfield, the legendary blues man himself, will perform in concert this Sunday night at the James A. Little Auditorium on the campus of the School for the Deaf. Appearing with Butterfield will be the jazz-pop group, Klimanjaro.

Butterfield first made a national name for himself in 1965, when his milestone album, "The Paul Butterfield Blues Band," introduced teen-agers of white-America to the blues. So influential was his work that eventually every important rock group from then on included blues or blues-derivative numbers in their sets. But perhaps his most important contribution to rock in the '60s was that day in 1965, that he and his band backed Bob Dylan at the Newport Folk Festival— the day Dylan went electric.

The concert will begin at 9:30 p.m. and advance tickets can be purchased at The Candyman Music 'n' More for $11. Tickets can also be purchased at the door for $12.50.

By SUSAN ZWINGER

Last week, as I cruised the aesthetic arteries of Los Angeles, trying to discover its pulse and source of vitality, I quickly learned that doors would open mysteriously for me whenever I mentioned Santa Fe. Eyes would glaze over, breath would be sucked in—a dangerous act in LA—and transcen- dent states would inevitably be achieved by the Angelenos. "Isn't that a very strong center for The Arts?" they would inevitably ask. At this I would humor, perspire and belch, then mumble something incoherently, not wanting to be dishonest, but, at the same time, not wanting to dispel a highly profitable myth.

The reason for my ambivalent response is that I am essentially cynical about the Santa Fe scene—and with good reason. In the past three years, three of our most innovative galleries have closed—Hill's (1982), Heyd-Bar (1983) and Hansen (1984). This, coupled with the fact that last year's Festival of the Arts was received coolly by the arts community (because it did not work), that the big bucks and that the aesthetic here continues to be dominated by commercialism, has instilled a brand of cynicism in me that would make art-end- eratic critic Tom Wolfe blush.

But ironically, within 24 hours of my return to this tri-cultural nirvana, I found myself totally enchanted by one of the more exciting exhibitions to take place since the defunct Armory shows opened in January—and fittingly, it took place at the Armory for the Arts.

"Space X," as it is called, was generated in less than 30 days, opened last Friday night with punk rock bands and a home-made video of the crowd (an art event itself), and will run through March 5. Under the loose guidance of Nancie Sutor and Stuart Ashman, a former Armory exhibition designer, the most innovative and ex- perimental works of Santa Fe’s most energized artists, whom Sutor had shown locally—collected as Sutor so aptly pointed out, the goals of "sellability" are not necessarily consistent with the creative process. In fact, galleries tend to demand a certain amount of "expec- tability" from their artists, while the creative process tends to produce the un- expected, driving gallery staffs right up the wall and art critics out of their "sims."

Overall, "Space X" is one of the healthiest and most exciting exhibitions to be seen in town in recent memory. But lest the reader think that LA pollution has affected my judgment, I should quickly add that the works on display are very uneven. The bad news first.

Poor craftsmanship is the handmaiden to the quick-and-furious school of self-expression. This exhibition generated passionate swirls of paint, ill-chopped hunk of wood, wooden, dangerous, hang swills of neon, and peculiar hunk of Rubber Lady-like para- phernalia. The general installation itself, comprising works of such variety, at first appeared to be more closely related to the hardware and appliance section of Albuquerque’s largest Goodwill outlet than a fine arts exhibit.

Secondly, politics came through as a heavy-handed theme. References to the poverty in Poland, jet bombers, pollution, sex, destruction and war in the Middle East abounded and smacked of the tone of '60s art. Somewhere within these pieces there crept the belligerent conviction that by merely making images of these tragedies, we can somehow cure them.