

arts & entertainment



Balanced acts give opera life

Review by Carla Engstrom

The Number of Fools is an exciting and easily understood opera sung in English. As the curtain was raised, the audience was enthralled by the lovemaking of Madame Baldeski (Carol Penterman) and Lt. Karasiewicz (Scott Root) in the production's debut at Kimball Recital Hall Wednesday.

The lovers' mood is intensified by the old-fashioned quality of the harpsichord. It adds a dream-like quality with an occasional disruption in the brass section.

The opera is set in the Revolutionary War. Gen. Casimir Pulaski, a famous Polish officer recruited by Benjamin Franklin, commands a Polish legion to assist in the rebels' fight against the British.

Madame Baldeski and Karasiewicz plan to steal jewels captured from the British and now in the custody of her husband.

Penterman has an exciting voice and handles personality changes well. She changes from a tender lover to a diabolical woman.

Historical touches

The cast's costumes look like they stepped out of a history book. The set's designs aren't elaborate, but candles are lowered in Baldeski's house to add an 18th century touch.

The next scene is the day of battle. At a court martial for Corporal Grabowski (Dale Ganz) Grabowski is charged with conspiring to make, drink and distribute spiritous beverages. He is formally charged by the chorus in the court with "messing around with the enlisted men."

Ganz exhibits his strong voice when he explains how hard times in Poland forced him to escape to America. His acting is full of anguish, and he played within the lines well.

Virginia (Vena Genuchi), taken in by Grabowski, is brought to trial. She's pregnant and explains in an emotion-filled voice that Grabowski took her in out of kindness.

Genuchi engrosses the audience with her vibrato, and it's smooth and easily understood throughout her dramatic song.

The charges are dropped, but it's a sham. They tricked the court.

Death is glory

Pulaski (Vaughn Fritts) is the only one left in court. He sings strongly, "Why should a soldier weep over death? Death is my glory."

Diabukow seems to appear out of nowhere. Pulaski cowers, although not very convincingly, at the change in Diabukow's character. They sing a powerful duet over the

futility of the situation. Diabukow takes on an almost in-human character.

Grabowski and Virginia enter the tavern, happy with the court's decision.

A dance scene with drunken peasants lightens the mood. They dance in mockery of the upper class. The dancers stay in drunken character, yet appear smooth and polished.

Again, seemingly from nowhere, a priest appears in a black cape, like Bela Lugosi. He foretells of the evil eye watching the dancers and condemns them for their merriment.

The peasants react in fear, recoiling from the priest.

The wind ensemble supports the cast in mood and emotion, but in a few places rises to a level that drowns out the singers. The musical score adds to the plot's unity and is played smoothly by the orchestra.

In the closing scene, the count returns and says he is Lucifer. He expresses his despair over humanity and its foolishness in living only to suffer.

Drew builds up to a fine dramatic ending, and his despair is believable, even for the devil.

When Virginia goes into labor, the characterization of Genuchi draws the audience into sympathy for her plight. She sings her final song with screams caused by physical pains. She leaves the audience wondering about Lucifer's last line, "The number of fools on earth is infinite."



Photo by Kevin Higley

Vena Genuchi plays Virginia in the opera *The Number of Fools*.

Money-woes put paradise in limbo— Sheldon's predicament inexcusable

By Michael Zangari

... don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you got 'til it's gone, they pave paradise and put up a parking lot. *Jane Mitchell.*

after
midnight



"They" are not exactly paving paradise or putting up a parking lot, but the financial predicament of the Shel-

don Film Theatre, as reported in the Oct. 15 *Daily Nebraskan*, is one that never should have happened.

The theatre may not be able to order any films for next semester, a grim prospect on both an entertainment and educational level. It would be easy to leave it at that, but there is a confusion of issues that should be distilled into some basic ones.

Films at Sheldon have been supported by federal grants, gifts, and ticket receipts in the theatre's three-year history.

It is not enough.

The one basic ingredient missing is university support. Sheldon Film Theatre's educational value on this campus has never been in question. Extensive use of the

Continued on p. 13

Play deals with sex, relationships

By Carla Engstrom

It's a sexual revolution. People run wild. Women wear corsets and husbands entrust their wives to a eunuch in the Restoration comedy *The Country Wife*.

The play will debut at Howell Theatre at 8 tonight and is "one of the few Restoration comedies that will make sense to an audience today," according to director Bill Kirk.

The core of the show deals with a man who pretends he is a eunuch. All the town's men feel it's all right for him to keep their wives occupied while they're away. And the audience learns, not too subtly, that he's by no means a eunuch, Kirk said.

It deals with relationships between men and women. It explores their jealousies, their deceit and deals with sex, Kirk said.

It is "very interesting that people say there's a sexual revolution in the '60s and '70s," Kirk remarked. During the Restoration, "there was a similar rebirth of freedom, the arts and people's awareness of sex. Audiences today will be able to understand."

The play was written in the 17th century by Restoration playwright Wycherley. At the time, theatre was the basic source of entertainment. Wycherley wrote the play for the upper classes. He would probably be considered the Neil Simon of his day, Kirk said.

Kirk said he chose the play because "it's important in an educational institution to begin to do some of those things (Restoration plays) for actors. They need a grounding in Restoration comedy."

"The specific differences between Restoration and (present day) comedy is that most of the training in this country is done for soap operas," which is "acting outside of the lines with a lot of pauses," Kirk said.

In Restoration, Kirk added, actors are forced to act and talk at the same time.

"All my acting and teaching centers around the method work (Stanislavsky) or the technique method," Kirk said.

In his approach to directing, Kirk said he "tries never to say no to an actor or designer, in hopes that their creative juices will flow. I really try to make it a group effort as opposed to me acting all the roles for them."

The director's interpretation of the play will be along classical lines. "I'm trying very much with this show to stick with the script. That doesn't mean I'm trying to do a historical reproduction, but do Wycherley's script as opposed to Bill Kirk's adaptation."

Music has been added to the production. The music

and lyrics are written by Doug Anderson, a UNL graduate student.

Kirk defines a successful play by saying, "Any director worth his salt thinks his show is a success. But if you have one person say one moment was fun, it's usually a success."

The cast is exciting to their director, he said.

"I really respect the talent of the people in the show. They're probably the most talented (cast) I've ever worked with. They respect each other's works highly and they feel everyone knows what they're doing."

Kirk summed his sentiments, saying, "I've got a cast that can act."

Movies

Sheldon Film Theatre:
Falstaff (Chimes At Midnight)— 7 and 9 p.m.
Stuart: *The Great Scout and Coyhouse Thursday* (PG)—1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30 and 9:30 p.m.
State: *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (PG)—7:30 and 9:30 p.m.
Plaza 1: *If You Don't Stop It ... You'll Go Blind* (R)—5:45, 7:30 and 9:15 p.m.
Plaza 2: *Car Wash* (PG)—6, 7:45 and 9:30 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday at 1, 2:40, 4:20, 6, 7:45 and 9:30 p.m.
Plaza 3: *Peter Pan and Gus* (G)—6, 7:30 and 9 p.m.
Plaza 4: *The Man Who Would Be King* (PG)—7, and 9:25 p.m.
Douglas 1: *The Omen* (R)—5:30, 7:30 and 9:30 p.m.
Douglas 2: *A Matter of Time* (PG)—5:30, 7:30 and 9:30 p.m.
Douglas 3: *Burnt Offerings* (R)—5:10, 7:10 and 9:10 p.m.
Cinema 1: *All the President's Men* (PG)— 7 and 9:25 p.m.—
Cinema 2: *Obsession* 7:15 and 9:10 p.m.
Hollywood and Vine 1: *The Romantic Englishwoman* (R)— 7 p.m. and *The Story of Adele H.* (PG)—9:15 p.m.
Hollywood and Vine 2: *Horsefeathers* (PG)— 7 and 9:45 p.m. and *The Bank Dick* (PG)—8:15 p.m.
Cooper-Lincoln: *Marathon Man* (R)—7:30 and 9:45 p.m.
Embassy: *Naughty Victorians* and *A Ton of Action* (X)—from 11 a.m.



Photo by Ted Kirk

Jack Horner is missing more than clothes as a pseudo eunuch in *The Country Wife*.