

# Short performances acquaint audience with mime

By Charlie Krig

It seemed a strange dichotomy: a mime concerned with word-of-mouth advertising. But Keith Berger says it's "the best" way for people to get acquainted with him so he doesn't mind doing what he called "teasers," short appearances that promote his performances.

After a series of teasers in residence halls and the Nebraska Union Thursday, Berger retired to the Palms Cafe for some lunch and an interview. That's when he explained why he does teasers.

"They give people a chance to have a taste of his mime, which is only fair," Berger said. "Otherwise, they don't know if they'll like my show or not."

Berger was exceptionally expressive. Every word was punctuated by precise gestures as he discussed that night's performance at Kimball Recital Hall. Berger said he wanted people to know the nature of his show.

People get tired of "the hype of promotions" and they're more receptive to personal recommendations, Berger said.

Difficult to coax

Unfortunately, even then it's difficult to get people to

try something like a mime show, he said. "The general public is very hard to get to come to my performances. First, they usually don't get to see my teasers. And second, when they think of mime, they only think of Marcel Marceau," he said.

But even Marceau had to work for ten years until the public realized who he was, said Berger.

Coupled with the problem of Marceau's fame is the fact that the public compares all other mimes to him. Berger said he realized that, but he replied, "All I can say is, well, we do different things, but we both do magic. That's the most important part of the show—to make fantasies, to cast a spell."

"I look upon it as a ritual," Berger said as he lamented modern society's lack of motion and exercise. "We have to get people to be more physical. Not with brute force, but with movement."

Tribes of aborigines

Proof of the mime's power as magician and ritualist came as Berger told of his performance before a tribe of aborigines. Berger said the primitive people in Australia

reacted to his show exactly the way all his other audiences do. One man was so impressed by Berger's performance that he got the mime to teach him the motions involved in "throwing" an invisible ball from one hand to the other.

"It was remarkable how fast he learned it and he was so happy that he could do it," Berger recalled.

Looking back at his UNL performance two years ago, Berger remembered how packed, hot and humid the Union Ballroom was. Even though many may come see him again, Berger predicted his Kimball Hall performance would be "radically different."

"It'll be the same type of program but there will be a different way of expressing it because of the size of the audience and the hall," Berger said.

Before long it was time for Berger to work again; an hour at KLIN radio, a workshop for the Lincoln Action Program at the Malone Community Center and some resting time before the night's show.

So he strolled back toward campus, ready to entice the public with hors d'oeuvres from his banquet of expressive motion.



Photo by Tim Ford

Lead guitarist and singer Ray Benson does his best to get crazy when performing with Asleep at the Wheel.

## arts & entertainment

### Asleep at the Wheel's western swing draws collegiate cowboys, couples alike

By Jim Williams

All the collegiate cowboys were there at the Royal Grove Tuesday night, waving their expensive hats and yelling "Who-woo!" whenever a young woman walked across the dance floor.

The occasion was an appearance by Asleep at the Wheel, a nationally known 11-piece band instrumental in the revival of the style of music known as western swing.

The members include: Ray Benson, lead guitar and vocals; Leroy Preston, second guitar, vocals and writing; Lucky Oceans, pedal steel guitar; Andy Stein, sax and fiddle; Chris O'Connell, vocals and rhythm guitar; Floyd Domino, piano; Tony Garnier, upright and electric bass; Link Davis, Jr., sax, accordion and fiddle; Bill Mabry, fiddle; Pat "Taco" Ryan, sax; and Chris York, drums.

Western swing is more of a sound than style of music. Asleep at the Wheel's material covered ground from Count Basie tunes to old-style rockers like "Route 66." The crowd loved it, packing the dance floor with whooping, clapping couples.

Crazy people

"They're great," Benson said later of the crowd. "They're out of hand, you know, having a good time. You get crazy or try to, with a bunch of crazy people."

Benson did his best to get crazy. With his cowboy hat pushed back on his wildly frizzy hair, he grinned maniacally, rolled his eyes, waved and eventually jumped off the stage onto the dance floor. Guitar in hand, he joined the enthusiastic dancers—then back-somersaulted onto the stage again.

"We play music to play music, and the rest is entertainment," Benson said.

"We like doin' what we do—we do some tunes to please us, and some tunes to please the crowd, and some tunes to make money."

Benson wouldn't say how much Asleep at the Wheel makes at places like the Grove, just that it wasn't enough. But although Asleep at the Wheel, widely credited with almost single-handedly reviving western swing, does big-time television and album work, the band still puts in 250 days on the road each year, sleeping on a converted Greyhound bus.

Heavy schedule

"It ain't the best," Benson said of the heavy road schedule. "I can't say I dislike it, or I wouldn't be out doin' it."

"I'd like to make a lot more money and do a lot more things, but I like to be where people can enjoy us."

"Being a legend is hard because you don't make any bread," he said.

The group plans a new album in four to six months, with more contemporary material than was on past releases, Benson said. He also said he's thinking about a comedy album—"... that's yet to come."

It was two o'clock. The college cowboys were staggering home, except for the ones who got thrown out for fighting during the break. And an awful nice bunch of Texans were bedding down in their bus, heading for Hutchinson, Kansas.

### Rose Garden portrayal of suffering fails to sustain interest

I wonder what it is about mental illness that attracts people. The portrayal of suffering seems to bring in the audience, or at least that's what the makers of *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* think. The advertisements show Kathleen Quinlan with a pained look on her face—well, that's entertainment!

*Rose Garden*, based on Hannah Green's novel, is set in the fifties at a mental institution. Quinlan, as Deborah, is committed by her parents.

It seems that she is under the influence of a whole

Second, there is no effort to give justification for her change. One day—Poof! She's cured. The next day she's at a party and soon she's in a field shamelessly imitating the girl in Andrew Wyeth's *Christina's World*. I wonder what other gems are on the cutting room floor.

The character of Dr. Freid, played by Bibi Anderson, is another puzzler. Page probably wanted her German accent and trip to Austria to establish her Freudian connection. Instead, she ends up sounding like a Nazi "experiment" doctor.

But how can Page expect us to think Deborah could trust Freid when it's hard to believe a single word she says.

Only Sylvia Sidney as Miss Coral manages to establish any sort of real character. Her defiance has a person behind it, not the nonsense that's passed off as psychosis in the others.

Her screaming at the "vermin and lice" carrying her into her room is one of the few flashes of life *Rose Garden* rises to.

Preposterous effects

But the film prevents itself from sustaining this interest because of its preposterous special effects.

In this age of *The Exorcist* and *Carrie*, the sound effects and drama sequences of *Rose Garden* appear amateurish at best. There also is a curious use of some terrible dubbing in some scenes.

After an effective opening—bars crashing down between Deborah and Dr. Freid—the effects are limited to hokey noises and very stacy tribal rituals shot somewhere in the southwest. Hardly the stuff of schizophrenia!

Unfortunately, the filmmakers also must suffer from some mental illness—perhaps amnesia. They must have forgotten that just two years ago the movie they thought they were making was released.

Neither the female cast nor the unlikely ending can hide the fact that this is a witless, downbeat and often inept imitation of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

*I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* now is showing at the Cinema One.

Just a note: this week's midnight movie, Woody Allen's *Love and Death*, is a wonderful film. It's Woody at top form—don't miss it.

### out on the weekend

Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery

Paintings by Arron Pyle.

Three Nebraska Sculptors: Leslie Bruning, Lee Lubbers and Jim Schwartz.

Art Shop

Paintings and Drawings by Glenn Johansen, North Platte, and Ceramics by Robert Anderson, Ames, Iowa.

Sheldon Film Theater

*As You Like It* by Paul Czinner (Shakespeare Film series) Friday and Saturday, 3, 7 and 9 p.m.

*Women in Love* by Ken Russell (Foreign Classic series), Sunday, 7 and 9:15 p.m.

Kimball Recital Hall

Faculty Recital, Quentin Faulkner, organ, Sunday, 4 p.m.

Ralph Mueller Planetarium

*A Man's Reach Should Not Exceed His Grasp* and *Universe*, Saturday, 10:45 a.m.

*Borders of Infinity*, Sunday 2:30 and 3:45 p.m.

Lincoln Community Playhouse

*Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*, music by Jacques Brel, Friday through Sunday, 8 p.m.

Music

Doc Severinsen concert, fashion show benefit for Lincoln General Hospital, Lincoln Municipal Pershing Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

Art

Norman Rockwell art exhibit, Gateway Gallery Mall, ends tonight.

### J. marc mushkin private showing



flock of peculiar gods (who are a cross between American Indians and central casting). She maims herself in various ways and attempts suicide at their command.

The sexual undercurrents in her case are given only superficial treatment by the director, Anthony Page. It is never quite clear whether Deborah's gods have sexual origins, although Deborah says she can remember the sexual repression her father enforced in her childhood.

But Page leaves it at that. What are we to make of Deborah's illness? The film tells us that she acts nutty because, well, she's nutty.

Blank stares

Why some reviewers have equated these blank stares with acting eludes me. She mopes around throughout the film with no hint of depth or character. Only at the end as she breaks away from her gods does she come alive.

But this moment is clouded by the unlikely circumstances surrounding it.

First, the scene where she burns her arm and feels pain is unintentionally hilarious. She touches a lit cigarette to her arm—with an audible sizzle—and jumps with a wide grin on her face.