

Kimball's opera premiere is praised

by BILL WALLIS
University Graduate Student

Opera in American colleges and universities is a dynamic concern today. Every university and most colleges present at least one production a year, often without appropriate production conditions and sometimes with as little musical accompaniment as a single piano.

I am convinced, after seeing several impressive final rehearsals of the University of Nebraska Opera Workshop's production of Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana," that this week Lincoln is being offered opera performances of the first calibre.

The university in Lincoln lacks no integral constituent necessary for producing the best amateur opera in the country: young beautiful voices are plentiful; sound musical and stage direction are present in Richard Grace and John Zei; and Lincoln theatre-goers are

well acquainted with the set designs of Dean Tschetter.

KIMBALL RECITAL Hall offers good acoustics and more extensive (and comfortable) seating than has ever before been available to Lincoln opera audiences. The opera is performed with English libretto, which is desirable.

All these resources make the rich, intense melodrama and sensuously beautiful music of Mascagni's opera of village life in nineteenth-century Sicily come to life brilliantly.

The one-act tragedy, since its premiere in Rome in 1890, has held its place as one of the most popular works of the operatic stage.

The action of the story centers about Turiddu, a young soldier, who has returned from the army to find his fiancée, Lola, married. He consoles himself of his loss by making love to another village girl, Santuzza. Before long he betrays and abandons her,

transferring his affections back to Lola, who willingly accepts his love. This tangled state of affairs exists when the opera begins.

The length of the performance is just over an hour. One can only wonder at the great musical beauty and dramatic tension created in such a short time.

Especially important is the pervading religious atmosphere of the play, the action of which occurs on an Easter Sunday. Sicilians are traditionally portrayed as passionate about three things: love, wine and religion.

In light of the basic importance of religion to the dramatic story of the opera (which is studded with Easter hymns, blessings and curses), it is evident that the set designer, Tschetter, has designed a symbolic structure which contributes to, if not determines much of the theatrics of the presentation.

THE SET consists of a massive and exquisitely-designed and decorated crucifix which towers significantly above the action occurring on the stage below. The most startling technical innovation is, however, Tschetter's use of a geodesic dome (the type designed by American architect-mathematician-philosopher R. Buckminster Fuller) to form a perfectly concentric rise in the centre of the stage. The cross sits on this rise.

The lighting design is wholly adequate and the opening sunrise sequence is effective. Festive costumes are also an excellent contribution to the production.

Musically, the production is sound. Richard Grace has much to do with the musical coherence of the performance. The orchestra is excellent and voices range from high quality to good throughout the triple-

Continued on Page 7



"Cavalleria" crucifix

Search committee

Continued from Page 1

Varner served as Chancellor of Oakland University.

The letter indicates that Varner was the only man of the final eight candidates to receive a unanimous vote of the committee. However, Moseman was quoted in the Daily Nebraskan of Oct. 20, 1969 as saying all eight names sent to the Regents received unanimous support.

This conflict was explained by Wittson, the committee chairman. "The final eight selections were all unanimously chosen by the committee," he said. "However, in an earlier ranking of candidates, Varner was rated number one by all nine committee members."

The letter says that names of the final eight candidates were submitted to the Regents in alphabetical order. The Regents independently decided to place Varner in the top spot, it continues.

Classifieds

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