



Machine to save mankind  
... a smoking contraption  
that Tom is lead to believe  
will make bread out of  
stone.

Photos by Dan Ladely

"Tom Rakewell," ...  
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fortune in the houses and  
taverns of 18th century  
London

## Music department produces opera extravaganza

BY CHARLIE HARPSTER  
Staff Writer

Some people are going to call *The Rake's Progress* an opera.

They might as well call *The Ten Commandments* a documentary, or *Around the World in 80 Days* a travelogue.

*The Rake's Progress* is an extravaganza.

With characters called Baba The Turk (a bearded lady), Mother Goose, Nick Shadow, Tom Rakewell and Ann Truelove; and with a set design out of Dante's *Inferno*, *Auntie Mame*, and the inspiration of

set designer Dean Tschetter, the word "opera" becomes inadequate.

It might be better to think of words like "slapstick," or "bawdy," or "lavish," or "tongue-in-cheek."

*The Rake's Progress* is a modern opera, as operas go, written in 1953. It is actually a parody of operas, making fun of opera conventions, Tschetter said. Directed by John Zei, it is put on by the NU school of music.

The music is by Igor Stravinsky, whose music is said

to have influenced the rock opera "Jesus Christ, Superstar," and the music of Frank Zappa.

The theme is the moral deterioration of Tom Rakewell. Through the encouragement of Nick Shadow, who is actually Satan in disguise, Tom "squanders an entire fortune in the bawdy houses and taverns of merry old 18th century London."

The set cost more than \$1,200, and costumes cost about \$1,000, according to Tschetter.

Tschetter said the ideas for

the settings came to him while listening to Stravinsky's music. And, his ideas came to life through the work of Steve Rippe, the technical director, who built the sets.

As a result of their work, one scene has a satire of a nude bacchanalian couple the size of King and Queen Kong, and an immolation scene of Nick being swallowed by the gaping jaws of Hell. Another scene has "the machine to save mankind," a smoke-puffing contraption that Tom is lead to believe will make bread out of stone.

The production is set apart in other ways.

Each major role has two actors, who perform on

alternate nights to allow more music students to participate and to give performers a breather between shows, Tschetter said.

And although Tom progresses to a tragic end, an epilogue is provided where the performers come back on the stage, remove their makeup and supply a happier ending.

Tickets for the performances, running Wednesday through Saturday at Kimball Recital Hall at 8 p. m., are on sale in 123 Westbrook Music Building. Reservations can be made by calling 472-3375. Students \$1.50, non-students \$2.

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