



Alvin Lee... lead guitarist and vocalist for Ten Years After, howls at the group's Friday night performance at Pershing Municipal Auditorium.

## Johnny Got His Gun - overdone

Review by  
Bill Wallis

Billy Jack lauds the American Indian and today's war-protesting, adolescent by uniting them in the fight against ignorance, bigotry and small-time criminals. *Johnny Got His Gun* shows the horror of war by dissecting the mind of a body decimated and made utterly useless by a war injury.

What do the two shows have in common? Both employ cloying sentiment. And both are blatant anti-war propaganda. In this regard *Johnny* is far more effective. Both shows tear at America's racial and international conscience.

But *Johnny* goes too far. The message is beaten into the audience's heads over and over. Too much is made of a good thing or, rather, of a very bad thing.

A YOUNG MAN leaves his mother and two small sisters (his father has just died), and an adoring girl to defend democracy in WW I, and is literally blown to shreds while burying a fallen German. Only his torso remains intact.

He is nursed back to "health" before the viewers'

eyes as a textbook case because it is assumed (due to extensive head injuries) that he cannot think, and so will not suffer the horrible existence his injuries condemn him to.

But the viewer soon finds out that he can indeed think--and imagine and remember. But he cannot communicate. As Johnny "heals" and "lives," between the world wars, we relive his life, experience his real and imaginary accounts of the war, and take a morbid look at what Johnny imagines his future to be.

WHEN JOHNNY finally learns to communicate by banging out Morse code with (what is left of) his lead, those who led him to war can offer him absolutely no solution to his situation. He only longs for death finally, and when deprived of that freedom, he is left between despair and madness.

Although parts of the show are technically brilliant and very effective (especially the imaginative nightmare sequences, which are effectively connected by images of emptiness and desertion), the premise of the show wears thin. Why? Several reasons.

First, one can only take so much horror before it becomes funny--such is the nature of

fear-producing contrivances in fiction. *Johnny* goes too far in this way.

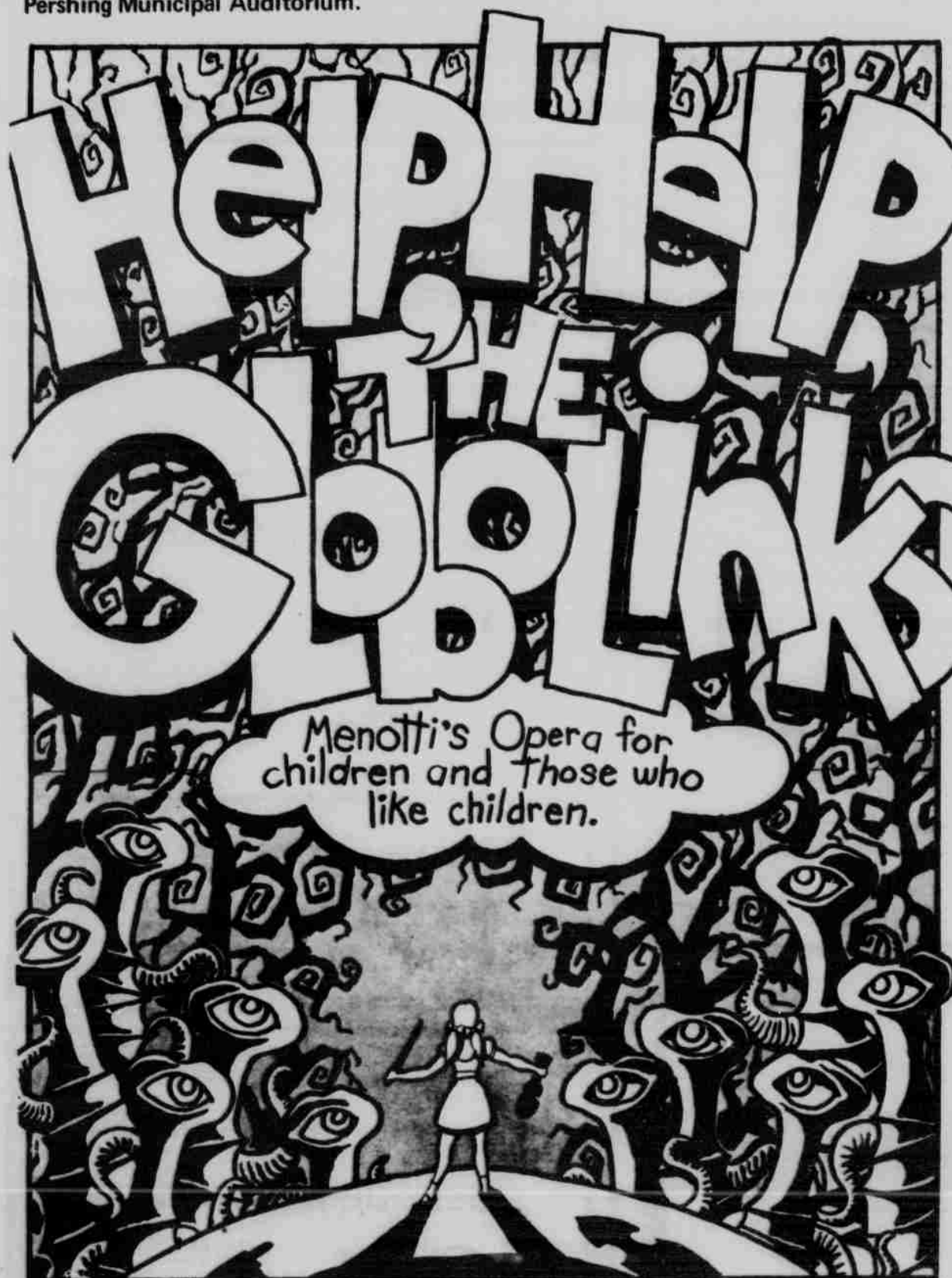
SECOND, THE plot possibilities contained in a story of the rebuilding of an unintelligent mind irreparably damaged appear to be rather limited. A slight occasional dullness is the result, and there is difficulty in putting together some of the pieces.

The figure of Jesus (played by Donald Sutherland) is handled inventively and portrayed well, but poorly integrated into the imaginative sequences. The special effects are sometimes weak. For example, the howling voices are vaguely comical rather than horrifying--as they were surely meant to be--in the Jesus and prayer sequences.

Jason Robards (as the father) and Diane Varsi (as the nurse) deliver excellent performances, although the character of Johnny is unevenly portrayed, possibly because several different actors (of several different ages) portray the role.

*Johnny Got His Gun* is powerful and effusive drama, but borders at times on the melodramatic. Director Trumbo has demanded too much of his script. The ineffectually ludicrous is a short step beyond piercing tragedy. Trumbo took the step.

Photo by Gail Folds



University of Nebraska School of Music presents Help, Help, The Globolinks! 3 Performances Only! November 12 & 13 at 8:00 p.m. November 14 at 3:00 p.m.

Children \$1.00  
Students \$1.50  
Adults \$2.00

Kimball Recital Hall  
Call 472-3375 for tickets  
Box office open 8-5 weekdays



I saw the Bob Hope Show Saturday night, but before I say anything about it, I must commend the members of the Nebraska Coalition For Peace and Justice who demonstrated against the Hope show in front of the Coliseum. They acted in a mature and dignified manner, making their point without hurting their cause.

In any case, the Hope show itself was plagued by many, many problems.

Opening the show was a group of UNL students called The Good Time Singers, who reminded me of a bad copy of The New Christy Minstrels. They butchered several songs including "I'll Never Fall in Love Again," "Everything is Beautiful" and "Bill Bailey."

Perhaps they're good for singing at luncheons for the League of Women Voters, but they're not material for shows like the Hope show.

Next on stage was vocalist Helena Jackson, a "professional" member of Hope's show who was as bad, if not worse, than the Good Time Singers. Hoping to come across as a sexy, sultry vocalist, Jackson failed-- instead she sounded like a poor country-western singer.

She ruined so many good songs that I was actually happy to see her leave the stage.

Following Jackson was the introduction of the officers of Corn Cobs, which was completely out of place in an entertainment situation.

Finally Hope made the scene and quipped about UNL football coach Bob Devaney, the team and Nebraska, Okay, Hope can be funny, and he's truly a professional.

His comic timing is one of the best in the business, but Hope has one problem. He can be funny in a ten or fifteen minute monologue, but after an hour he becomes tiring. It's the same set-up, the same material over and over.

Then, topping off the entire evening was the presentation of 10 coeds with whom Hope "joked." It certainly was a joke--as well as the most boring part of the show. It was nothing more than a fashion show for a Lincoln store.

The only redeeming factor of the show was Bob Beadell and his band of UNL department music faculty and students. Considering the conditions they were forced to work under, they did a good job.

I'm sorry Corn Cobs and everyone else who liked the show, but basically, the entire evening reminded me of a poor example of a high school talent show, with all of the worst possible cliches present.

"Thanks for the memories," but...

### Cooperation. . .

Continued from page 1.

approve," he said. "If students work for that, we're going to get something."

In a parental survey taken last year for a proposed CSL-approved visitation policy,

56 per cent of the responding parents approved. That visitation policy was turned down by the Regents last summer, on the recommendation of former UNL Pres. Joseph Soshnik.