



Jazz boogie, blues guitar, rock beat, country-flavored harp. . . all these elements fall together. Result, Canned Heat, who will be appearing at Pershing Auditorium on Friday, 8 p.m. with the James Gang and Jimmie Speeris.

Shakespearean players troop to area schools

Shakespeare is on his way to Nebraska high school classrooms.

The University Theatre at UNL, has organized a company of actors to perform scenes from Shakespearean plays for Nebraska high schools, according to O.T. Larson, coordinator.

"The program will be directed primarily at the small high school in the class B, C, or D category," he said. "Performances will cover a 90-mile radius to as far as Homer, Neb."

The goal of the program lies in the belief that the best way to teach Shakespeare is for the students to see the play onstage, he commented.

"Full-length productions of Shakespeare are relatively infrequent and often an inconvenient luxury in the average high school situation," he said.

Larson said the object was classroom performance while the class is studying the play.

First performances were in Beatrice and Ashland on March 23, according to Larson. He said 26 high schools had responded to letters announcing the "Shakespeare in the Classroom Company."

"Our schedule is pretty full until May," Larson said. "We go out twice a month and hope to keep on doing this next year."

Thirty students are involved in the performances, Larson said. Most of them are undergraduates gaining experience for no class credit, he explained.

These people have had to work hard and fast, Larson said, as the company was just organized in early February.

It's hard to get everyone together but practices are held most afternoons from 3 to 5 p.m., he said.

"I'd like to make it so you can take the class for credit so we could have a set hour to meet," Larson commented.

He said the company was performing four plays, each about 20 minutes long. The length allows "for classroom discussion with the actors following performances," Larson said.

"All scenes will be presented in a style similar to what we assume was prevalent in Shakespeare's day," he said, "productions without scenery or elaborate lighting. The emphasis will be upon the spoken word and dramatic action."

The scenes used were recommended for high school use by the Nebraska State Board of Education, according to Larson.

"Like the first Shakespeareans, actors in our company will assume several roles in each play," he said. Most actors are cast in two roles and most productions require no more than six actors.

The high schools pay transportation and insurance costs only, Larson said.

"I expect we will have more interest next year," he said. "The biggest problem now is getting the basic direction down."

'Caine Mutiny Court Martial'— success, but critical failure

Review by Jim Gray

If audience reaction was the only thing to base a review on, the Lincoln Community Playhouse's (LCP) version of *The Caine Mutiny Court Martial* would be at least a qualified success. The larger-than-usual LCP audiences, composed of an assortment of be-minked and bejeweled nouveau riches, have, in fact, been enthusiastic in their praise for the performances.

Unfortunately, however, there is more to a critical review than that. And on the other counts, the production falls flatter than an unsuccessful soufflé.

The main problem with the production is the acting. On the whole, the cast is an extreme disappointment.

Britt Davis, cast as the defendant in the court martial, has to be seen to be believed. As Lt. Maryk, who is accused of wrongfully relieving his commanding officer of duty, Davis gives a dull and uninterpretable performance.

In the role of a reluctant defense attorney, Robert Stuewig is a little bit better. His performance would be passable if it wasn't for a constant overuse of gestures and, no doubt, overdirection. He also comes across sounding much like Henry Fonda, for whom the role was originally designed.

Better than either of the two is Wallace Richardson as the prosecuting officer. Richardson succeeds in beautifully undercutting his role, making it extremely believable and refreshingly sincere.

Even Bob Leinberger, as the presiding officer of the court martial, is not half bad. In a role which depends more on voice than action, Leinberger operates well verbally.

Taken together, the four are not too bad. If they were the entire cast, the acting might have been even better-than-average. Unfortunately, there are more members of the menagerie.

Veteran actor Sam Davidson, as the deposed captain, more than deserves this month's Overdone Ham Award for extreme overacting in his worst performance of an actor.

In a role that requires a change from a semi-respected figure near the beginning of the trial to a pathetic, beaten hulk near the conclusion, Davidson plays the part like a flat, pompous Bozo the Clown.

Equally bad is the rest of the parade of

witnesses to the stand. Especially horrible is Roy Mahmken's melodramatic-pompous performance as the defendant's treacherous friend. In the play's closing scene, his unbelievable overheld stance makes him appear so much like a pillar of salt one wonders if Sodom and Gomorrah aren't waiting in the wings.

The only bright spots in this sad parade are Steve Agnew and Roger Dickeson whose natural performances stand out as bright spots in an overdone vaudeville-land.

Technically, the play is spotty. The set's arrangement is nothing short of excellent. Turning the traditional courtroom scene around, the presiding officer and the judicial board occupy the first row of the audience, while the prosecution, the defense and the witness stand occupy the stage.

The interesting use of the thrust stage in lieu of the usual proscenium treatments proves, if nothing else, that the new LCP facilities are versatile.

In execution, however, the set was somewhat plain and lack-luster, which may reflect the play's tone.

Lighting and makeup were both excellent and costumes were as good as could be expected. The most notable technical problem was the play's blocking, or overblocking as appearances indicated, which not only made the characters' actions awkward but inane. This is, no doubt, the cause of some of the overacting.

Last, but not least, the play itself is a rather poorly-written monstrosity. Throughout its entirety, one gets the feeling that playwright Herman Wouk didn't know whether he was writing comedy or tragedy. And he doesn't combine the two well.

It is indeed quite easy to find oneself laughing at not only the comic characters and portions of the play, but the tragic ones as well. And that's not funny.

Structurally, the play would have been all right, if only Wouk had not taken it upon himself to add a final scene for no other reason than to lambast his literary generation's "shortsighted" attitudes. This type of irrelevant editorializing has no place in a good drama and destroys the unity of Wouk's play.

All in all, the LCP's *Caine Mutiny Court Martial* is acceptable as light entertainment. But as creative drama it fails miserably.



Weaving a thread of visions through ageless mountain ballads. . . Doc Watson and his son, Merle will be performing in a free concert at the East Campus Union 8 p.m. Sunday.