

From copy boy to clown

by Adella Wecker

Clowns don't just discover they're funny, according to Bob Langin; he spent 20 years doing comedy rolls for theatre before joining a circus.

"The guy who's a big wow in a lampshade at a party isn't necessarily the same person who can go in front of an audience and make them laugh," he said.

"I'm rather dull at a party," Langin boomed, "I sit in a corner and get smashed."

Bob Langin and his wife, Marji, are Bob-o and Bobbino, two circus clowns.

The Langins are funny just standing together, he at 6'3" towering over Marji's 5' frame.

Often their act is billed with the circus, but last week they were here promoting the Garden City International Circus and Ice Show with Bob-o and Bobbino's Cavalcade of Comedy. The circus has since had to cancel scheduled Lincoln performances.

In doing this "advance clown" work of store and television appearances and issuing press releases, Langin said he finally can combine his stage management and journalism background.

His interest in journalism started in high school when he worked as a *Detroit News* copy boy.

Journalism still interested him in college. Since he'd already had "the best possible practical journalism experience", however, he said he majored in English while pursuing a second interest: theatre.

Langin was editor of his college paper. He said he also managed the college theatre and worked in community theatre plays.

When Langin left college, he said, it was to be a stage manager.

He was managing circus tours when a friend interested him in the different kind of clown acts done in Europe. European clowns do comedy acts in the ring, Langin said, not fill-in and opening acts.

As producing clown for the Circus Hall of Fame in Sarasota, Fla., it was Langin's job to

put on five comedy segments for each show and develop new acts about four times a year.

While doing this, Langin appeared in 1,827 consecutive acts, he said.

Sarasota has been the home base of circuses, Langin said, ever since the Ringling Brothers tent circus days.

It was while he was there that Langin met Marji, and the two have been clowning together ever since Marji "dropped the bomb" on him shortly after their marriage. She told him she wanted to become a clown.

In those days of the circus, female clowns were unheard of, Langin said. So, former concert pianist and puppeteer Marji became the male pantomimic Bobbino, the fall guy in their act.

In the circus ring, silent Bobbino's innocent, childlike curiosity, not pranks, upstages Bob-o. They're somewhat in the image of Laurel and Hardy.

"Most of the things we do are burlesque—comedy takeoffs on situations," he said.

I think the most important thing in comedy is that you don't play it funny," Marji added, "you play it straight."

"You get out there, and you're trying your hardest to do the thing right," Langin said. "There are an awful lot of people wearing makeup and wardrobes, but not many comedians."

Langin said he emphasizes facial expressions with his clown makeup.

With his voice, Bob-o says he can sometimes fill an arena without a microphone.

Clowning is a craft, Langin said.

And making adults laugh—that's the challenge.

Kids are expected to laugh, he said, but the father sitting with his family is thinking about those braces and new shoes for the kids.

"There's just not so damn much in life that's funny to him," said Langin. "You've got to divert the adult—take him in and wrap him up in this situation."



Sex unifies 'Water's Running'

Review by Larry Kubert

Opening its season with a play which might be considered by some of their more stodgy, conservative patrons as rather risqué, the Lincoln Community Playhouse's production of *You Know I Can't Hear You When The Water's Running* is mildly entertaining.

Comprised of four different playlets, *You Know* has one unifying subject—sex. The runs the gambit from someone trying to talk an actor into doing a nude scene to a middle-aged couple discussing the advantages and disadvantages of twin beds to parents deciding how much to tell their children about sex to two senile oldsters recalling previous marriages and bed partners.

Roger Dickeson, who appears in three of the four playlets, is the main reason for any success the production achieves. Unfortunately, most of the rest of the cast leave something to be desired.

The first playlet, "The Shock of Recognition" is marred with bad timing, slow lines and no character involvement. It seemed as if the actors had learned their lines just the night before.

Dickeson was at his worst in this vignette, but then, the people he was playing with didn't help. Lee Lemon as "the dirty-minded author" had about as much character as the attache case he carried, and Pat DiNatale as

the desperate actor, still thought he was in a mellerdrammer.

"The Footsteps of Doves" was slightly better than its predecessor. But only slightly. The main reason for this improvement was Judy Dvorak, the replacement for an ill actress.

June Segal and Charles Pallesen as a middle-aged couple looking at beds gave fair but boring performances. It was only after the desirable Dvorak took the stage that the scene came to life. She understood her role and wasn't afraid to play it to the hilt.

"I'll Be Home For Christmas" was amusing, with Dickeson giving an Archie Bunker interpretation of his role. Sidney Johnson tended to be a bit too bitchy in her role as the progressive mother.

The last of the playlets, "I'm Herbert," by far was the most entertaining. Dickeson and Arline Kushner as aged swingers, both rocking in their rocking chairs to their hearts' content, gave the best performances of the evening.

The reason for its success was the timing and rapport between Dickeson and Kushner.

The set design and lighting were adequate, but nothing to rave about. And if the stage crews would learn to wear black clothes when they're shifting scenery, they wouldn't be so conspicuous.

Appeals court upholds board action on Rozman

The U.S. 8th District Court of Appeals Monday upheld the right of the Board of Regents to fire former UNL professor Steven Rozman for his part in campus disruptions in May 1970.

Rozman, contacted after learning of the decision, said he does not plan to take the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. "I'm just going to drop it," Rozman said.

Rozman is currently teaching at Tougaloo College near Jackson, Miss.

Rozman was fired by the Board early in 1971 for his part in campus demonstrations against United States' involvement in southeast Asia.

Rozman claimed his 1st Amendment rights to due process were violated when he was fired. The U.S. District Court dismissed his contention and supported the right of the Board to fire him in an earlier decision.

Rozman sought to overturn that decision through the circuit court.

Zumberge: 'we're in a time of change'

"We're in a time of change, now more than ever," UNL Chancellor James Zumberge said in an address to new faculty members Tuesday afternoon.

At a short speech at the Nebraska Center, he cited the merger with the University of Nebraska at Omaha, creation of the University Medical Center, a declining enrollment crunch and the effort to stretch the educational dollar as the main obstacles of the changing time.

He said that there is no effort to mold the three campuses to identical form, but to unify them.

The distribution of faculty resources and getting the most out of the educational dollar are part of the University's five-year plan, and are Zumberge's objectives also.

Zumberge said his main goal as UNL's chief administrator is to see that other members of the UNL staff dedicate themselves to the work of the university.

He also told the group of about 150 new faculty that his policy has always been to leave his door open to faculty, staff and students and that it would remain that way.

A panel discussion on special areas of the university followed Zumberge's address.