

# Singers' concert daring, spirited

By Mark Kjeldgaard

In the beginning, all they had going for them was excellence. The Gregg Smith Singers walked out and started briskly, and their volume was thrilling, their diction perfectly clear. That is nothing special, however; one should expect no less from a professional group of their reputation.

The voices are all great, and they have recorded and performed with more stars than you could name. Nevertheless, as satisfying as mere excellence might have been, Smith risked failure and tried some unconventional things Monday night.

About half an hour into the program, he moved his 20 vocalists off the stage and placed them at various spots around the Kimball auditorium, including the balcony, for what he called "music for multi-dimensional choirs." The idea is to surround the audience with voices in a super-stereophonic manner.

In this sort of extraordinary approach one risks ruining the music rather than enhancing it. For example, those seated to one side might hear an overbalance of the nearest singers.

Happily, Smith knew what he was doing, because it all turned out to be quite listenable, and although I sat to one side the entire chorus was clearly audible, and the new arrangements of performers elevated some well-chosen pieces.

One song, "Consonance" by William Billings, handsomely explained itself in its lyrics and described the overall effect of the unusual placement: "Then rolls the rapture through the air around/In the full magic melody of sound."

The purely aural potential of the multi-dimensional idea was demonstrated in Earle Brown's "Sound Pieces," which uses whispers, hisses and grunts in addition to dissonant chord variations manipulated by Smith through signals to the choral sections. The varied kinds of sound coming from all directions emphasized the expanded musical space.

Smith's own "Sound Canticles" casts echoed among the voices from side to side and from front to back, with themes and patterns drifting around the listener to vanish here and reappear there.

The most beautifully executed piece for the new spatial setup was the last one, "Plains 16" by Charles Ives. The lyrical themes from around the auditorium joined coherently overhead, with melodic church bells tinkling exquisitely to an unresolved close above the final "Amen."

Smith's dimensional techniques are not particularly avant-garde as modern music goes, but they don't need novelty. With these pieces, at least, the spatial effects served as valuable parts of the music, by strengthening the contrasts and harmonies within it.

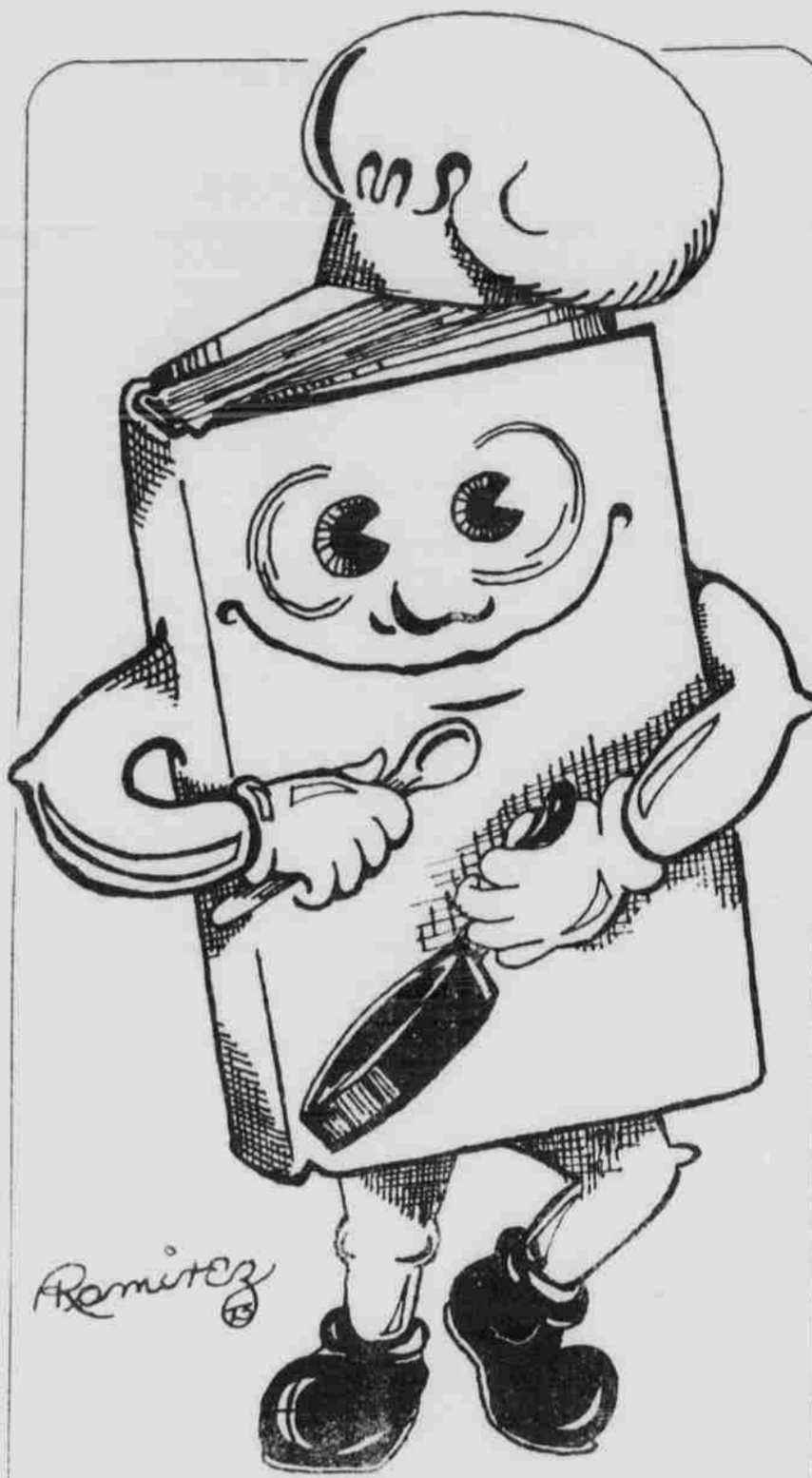
The latter half of the concert, done in the conventional stage arrangement, was much lighter but entertaining. The important criterion in light music is not so much virtuosity as spirit and zest, and the singers had enough of both.

First came songs from "the Great Sentimental Age," beginning with a Civil War medley and about "Marching Through Georgia" with General Sherman, gloriously annihilating our way to the sea.

Stephen Foster's ballads and love songs came next. Smith called Foster "the American Schubert," which seemed heroic but gratuitous. Foster's "Beautiful Dreamer" and "Gentle Annie" are delicious compositions; however, the sincere solo performances rescued them from their usual undesired campiness.

The encore was a raucous drinking song planned by Charles Ives, a sort of musical party wherein the singers come down to chatter with the audience, and rattle the last chorus on kazoos.

The evening had progressed from the pious to the irreverent with comfortable taste, in an unmeritingly skilled performance. If you someday get another chance to hear the Gregg Smith Singers, pay your money and go.



## Wives plan cookbook

By Tam Meheron

As part of a scholarship fund-raising drive, the Faculty Women's Newcomers Club and the Faculty Women's Club is to publish a self-compiled cookbook, according to Newcomers Club chairwoman Anne Manning.

"The Faculty Women's Club has provided scholarships for deserving Nebraska women for several years on the basis of need and scholastic achievement," Manning said.

Last year the Club held an autumn spring garage sale which netted \$240. From a total of \$840, four scholarships of \$210 each were given to UNL women.

The 200 page cookbook will contain favorite recipes collected from as many people as possible, including favorites from Mrs. J.J. Exon, Mrs. James Zumberge and Mrs. D.B. Varner.

Manning said the club is charging \$3 per book, \$1.90 of which will be going to the fund and the rest for printing costs.

Manning said that 125 recipes have been collected, and about 300 are expected to be in the cookbook.



# SKI SHOW



The University of Nebraska Ski Club in cooperation with Frontier Airlines is sponsoring a bus trip to the Omaha Hilton for the biggest ski show in the west. The latest fashions, equipment, movies, and every major ski area will be there.

The bus will leave the Nebraska Union at 6:00 p.m. October 3 and arrive back in Lincoln at 11:00 p.m. The cost is \$2.50 which includes admission to the show.

Buy tickets at Union South Desk 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. or contact Pat Scanlon, 472-2458.

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