

Arturo Ui terrifying, funny theater production

Review by Nelson Potter

The University Theater's production of Bertold Brecht's *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui* is a play that, amazingly, manages to be terrifying and very funny at the same time. This superb production of one of the great Brecht's more effective plays may be seen at the Howell Theater through Oct. 20.

Brecht didn't want the audience just to be entertained by his plays; he wanted to teach them, and he wanted them to be moved to action.

The play tells the story of Adolf Hitler and his henchmen as a story about how gangsters in Chicago took over the vegetable trade (specializing in cauliflower) from "legitimate" business interests. In case anyone misses the parallels, (and much of today's audience might), from time to time actors carrying portable screens march onto stage and historical photographs and brief descriptions of the events are flashed onto them.

Characters in the play exactly correspond to their Nazi counterparts. Ui wears a Charlie Chaplin mustache. Emanuele Giri (Goering) is fat. Giuseppe ("The Florist") Givole, like his counterpart Goebbels, looks like a slick, skinny undertaker. Dogsborough, an old-time politician whom the gangsters corrupt, is Hindenberg.

Ernesto Roma is Ernst Roehm, one of Hitler's closest friends and associates until Hitler had him and about 2,000 of his followers killed on June 30, 1934.

after he lost out in a power struggle with Goering. In the play, this is done as a St. Valentine's Day Massacre.

The Reichstag fire, which Hitler used as an excuse to move from the constitutional head of government to dictator, is a fire in a cauliflower warehouse.

When Ui gets bigger ambitions, he decides to move into neighboring Cleevo (Austria). To become a more effective speaker, Ui (as did Hitler) hires an actor to coach him.

Ui's henchmen murder persons who know too much, and then Ui in speeches decries such crime in the streets and promises to provide "protection." A truck-driver (Communist) victim of a gangster-set explosion, cries for help; Gibola (Goebbels) come out, kicks her in the stomach, and says that she is "disgusting" and that she gives him the "beebie-jeebies."

The play in the first instance is about Hitler, of course, but Brecht and those who created the present production, inspired a broader reference to any attempted rise of a tyrant. In defense of the corrupted politician Dogsborough, notes his honest-looking face, and asks "Is this the face that could have launched a thousand dirty tricks?" The gangster Giri looked to this viewer not only like the historical Goering, but also like the historical John Ehrlichman. Ui at one point denounces "Jews and bicyclists."

At the end of the play Donald Johnson, who plays Ui, comes forward, now without his mustache, and tells the audience that it should learn to "see the horror in the heart of farce," and warns "Don't yet rejoice in his defeat, you men! Although the world stood up and stopped the bastard, the bitch that bore him is in heat again."

The performance of everyone in the large cast set a high standard; no one was noticeably weak. Roger Johnson in the title role was especially fine; he underwent a transformation from a down-at-the-heels gangster at the beginning to a sometimes powerful demagogue in the latter part of the play.

His main sidekicks, Ernesto Roma (Roehm) (George Hansen), and Giuseppe Givola (Goebbels) (Donovan Diez), Emanuele Giri (Goering) (Jerry Homan), had the movements and manner of gangster down to terrifying and amusing perfection. All of the technical theatrical elements—the use of slides, lighting, sets and costumes—effectively contributed to the production without being obtrusive.

What brought all the elements of this complex play together and gave it direction and inspiration was the direction of William Morgan. One expects inspiration and excellence from a Morgan production. For power, for humor, for effectiveness, this production matches Morgan's finest accomplishment of recent years, the summer 1972 production of *House of Blue Leaves*.

Piano recital

"Le Festin d'Esop," a piano piece by Charles-Valentine Alkan, will be featured Tuesday in a recital by Thomas Fritz, UNL instructor of piano.

This piece is a series of variations representing different animals from Aesop's fables, such as barking dogs and hunting horns, 8 p.m., in Kimball Recital Hall.

Folk singer Seeger to perform Tuesday

By Diane Wanek

"Some songs mainly help people forget their troubles. Other songs help people understand their troubles. A few songs inspire people to do something about their troubles."

—Pete Seeger, "The Incomplete Folksinger"

The long road of Pete Seeger brings him to UNL Tuesday. The legendary folk singer will perform at the Sheldon Sculpture Gardens at noon.

The folklorists of the 30s were the original catalysts to Seeger's interest in folk music, but it was his father, in particular, who sparked his enthusiasm.

In 1935, at the age of 16, Seeger accompanied his father, a musicologist at Juilliard School of Music in New York City, on a field trip to North Carolina to gather local folk music.

"At the Asheville square dance and ballad festival, I fell in love with the old-fashioned five-string banjo, rippling out a rhythm to one fascinating song after another.... Compared to the trivialities of the popular songs my brothers and I formerly harmonized, the words of these songs had all the meat of human life in them." (Seeger had been playing tenor banjo in the school jazz band prior to this.)

"They sang of heroes, outlaws, murderers, fools. They weren't afraid of being scandalous instead of giggly or cute. They weren't afraid of being tragic instead of just sentimental. Above all, they seemed frank, straightforward, honest."

Folk singer Woody Guthrie taught him there was ever more of this to be had west of the Hudson. "Pete, you ought to see what a big country it is."

Thus began a life of hitchhiking and hopping freights across America. The first train he ever hitched a ride on was bound for Lincoln.

"When we finally pulled into I broke my banjo jumping off. Inexperience. This put me in a spot. It was the only way I had to make a living," he said.

"I hooked a small camera I had for a five-dollar guitar and started playing in saloons. In three days I was able to get the camera out of hock and continued west, exploring one new city after another," he said.

In 1941, he arrived in New York. He met Lee Hays, with whom he and Mill Lampell started the Almanac Singers, a group which recorded peace and union songs.

"In the 30s many of us thought the folk music revival would come through the trade union movement," Seeger said. "We couldn't have been more wrong. It came through the camps and colleges. But it came anyway. It was a logical development of pop music."

Pete Seeger attributes the popularity of folk music in the



Folk singer Pete Seeger

early 60s to five things: the desire by Americans since World War II to rediscover their roots, a general increase in do-it-yourself activities that included playing the guitar, LP records making it possible to hear folk music, being far away enough from our past to be able to pick and choose the good folk music from the bad and, maybe the most important reason, it enabled young Americans to make social comments.

In addition to work in the antiwar movement he has become interested in conservation and ecology during recent years and now is working with the Hudson River Sloop Group, a New York-based conservation organization.

Seeger's visit is sponsored by the Nebraska Union Concert Committee. In the event of rain, the concert will move from the Sculpture Gardens to the Nebraska Union Ballroom or Centennial Room. Admission is free.

Foreign series offers 1958 Bergman film

This week's Foreign Film Series offering is Ingmar Bergman's *The Magician* (1958). Bergman certainly is one of the most discussed, and possibly overanalyzed, film directors of the past 20 years, but a few words on him still are in order.

Bergman, born in Sweden in 1918, had a deeply religious upbringing as the son of a Lutheran pastor. It is because of his life-long wrangling with theological thought that so many of his films, especially those of the 50s, deal with religious themes, conflicts between the soul and flesh and man's questioning of the existence and influence of a god.

Unknown to many, Bergman also has been prolific in the Swedish theater and on radio and television. He attended the University of Stockholm, where he first entered the theater.

He directed his first film, *Crises*, in 1945 and since then has directed 33 other features.

The Magician was the last film he made in the 50s and continues the themes found in *Smiles of a Summer Night*, *The Seventh Seal* and *Wild Strawberries*. These were made during the years prior to *The Magician* and were the films that rocketed him to world prominence.

The Magician is the story of a traveling mystic and mesmerist during the middle 1800s. It deals with sexual and spiritual antics, human foibles and a man's search to make contact with the dark powers.

It stars Max Von Sydow, Gunnar Bjornstrand, Ingrid Thulin and Bibi Anderson, all of whom were employed extensively by Bergman throughout his career.

Monday-October 15
9:00 P.M.

PEP RALLY and
SNAKE DANCE
(Introduce candidates)
Burr-Fedde Hall
East Campus

Tuesday-October 16
ALL DAY
OFFICIAL GO BIG RED DAY

(Everyone wear red.)
Cather-Pound.

Wednesday-October 17
9:00-12:00 P. M.

Flicks (MOVIES)
WRH

Thursday-October 18
9:00-12:00 P.M.

Polka Dance
Engineering Parking Lot
(if weather permits)
Abel-Sandoz

Friday-October-19
9:00-12:00 P.M.

Big Al and the Hi-fis
Concert-Dance
\$1.50

Union Ballroom.

Yell Like Hell
Pep Rally-6:00
p.m.
R street side
of Union.