

## Absurdist comedy takes off on Hamlet myth

English Ambassador — *The sight is dismal;*

*And our affair, from England come too late:*

*The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,*

*To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,*

*That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.*

—Hamlet Act V, Scene II

Contemporary British playwright Tom Stoppard has taken the

characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and explored them carefully in the three act absurdist comedy *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.

University Theater will present *Rosencrantz* as the last play in the theater's 1973-74 season. It opens Friday.

Director William R. Morgan characterizes the play as "showing us the Hamlet myth from a worm's eye view."

Rosencrantz (George Hansen) and Guildenstern (Doug Brissey) are summoned to the court of Claudius, the king of Denmark.

Knowing only that they are to discern why Hamlet, the Danish prince, is melancholy, they proceed to Elsinore, the king's castle. Continually they ponder what their function at Elsinore is to be and exactly what they are expected to do for the king.

Claudius, as well as everyone else in the court, finds it difficult to distinguish which is Rosencrantz and which is Guildenstern. Their identities are fused and their individuality lost.

The set is a castle chamber with random columns and maze-like entrances. People come and go in a most unpredictable fashion, heightening Rosencrantz's and Guildenstern's confusion.

They are eventually dispatched to England with Hamlet. They carry with them a sealed document commanding Hamlet's death on his arrival in England. Although Hamlet is their close friend, they decide to fulfill their duty to the king. After all, they reason, they are just "little people and they cannot possibly understand the motivation and purpose of a king.

Pirates attack, abducting Hamlet, and leaving Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with a document that now has been altered, by Hamlet, to call for their deaths instead of his.

Their confusion is never resolved, as

Guildenstern reveals: "To be told so little . . . to such an end—and still—finally—to be denied an explanation."

The last scene is the finale of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in which all but Horatio eventually are killed.

According to Morgan, the play speaks to the condition of modern man. Men today have the appearances of purpose and identity: they are well educated, affluent, familiar with the arts.

Yet, ultimately, they are just ignorant pawns in a larger game. They are helpless when they "get caught up in the wheels of great people," Morgan said.

The tone of *Rosencrantz* is the biting and dismal humor often found in absurdist drama, Morgan said.

"It speaks wittily, in an urbane fashion, about the 'organization man' and how he is played on by the establishment," Morgan said.

*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* was written and first produced in 1967. Overwhelming critical acclaim both in London and New York has given Stoppard a prestigious position in contemporary theater.

*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* will run April 26, 27, 29, 30 and May 1-4. Curtain time is 8 p.m. Tickets, (regular \$2.50, students \$2) are available at the University Theater box office.



Doug Brissey (left) and George Hansen star in the University Theater production, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.

## British composer's work now in stereo

Reviews by Diane Wanek

*Sea Drift and A Song of the High Hills*, by Frederick Delius

Two stereo firsts are presented here of music by Briton Frederick Delius, which Sir Thomas Beecham helped to popularize. Surprisingly, not until the current revival of Delius' compositions, largely by Sir Charles Groves (who conducts on this release), have they been rerecorded with the sonic advantage that only stereo can give to the lush scoring of this unique English impressionist.

"Sea Drift" sets to melancholy sea sounds Walt Whitman's poignant poem of despair for a lost love. "Song of the High Hills" is an incomparable evocation of scenic beauty.

Angel also plans to release next month Delius' opera "Koanga," which should be a good one, too. So keep your eyes open.

*Song for Juli*, by Jesse Colin Young

We've heard it all before, but it's not so bad listening to it again. Young's group contributes nothing new musically, but they are good, solid musicians.

The solo work is probably the album's best feature, especially Jim Rothermel's soprano sax solo on "Ridgetop."

The harmonica player, named "Earthquake," is almost that. He's great, reminiscent of the style of Toots Thielman.

It's an enjoyable album, with a little jazz in the blues, and well worth the listening.

*Concertos by Sibelius and Tchaikovsky*, Jascha Heifetz

Many music lovers who grew up in the 78 r.p.m. era learned these great concertos from their fragile Victor Masterworks albums: Sibelius' *Concerto in D Minor, Opus 47* and Tchaikovsky's *Concerto in D, Opus 35*. They all were released in the mid-'30s.

Seraphim has just transferred them to this album, not only because they have been long-neglected performances, but also to reveal to a new generation the art of one of the century's greatest violinists.

Heifetz has gained status as a legend for his breathtaking technical assurance and readily-conveyed musical feeling.

## Marshall Tucker Band, others draw on country, blues roots

The last several years, rock music has been almost nondirectional, with thousands of new acts and even old successful acts merely treading water trying to get into or stay in the mainstream. They grasp at straws—outrageous make-up and clothes, acrobatics on stage, etc.—avoiding the fact that they're purportedly trying to be music makers. They fail to make the grade.

Not that there hasn't been some fine stuff coming down in the last few years. *Au contraire*. One of the most encouraging developments has been the rise of fine new white Southern rock bands. The Allman Brothers led the way for such groups as Wet Willie, Little Feat, Hydra, and, not least of all,

fillers as slow blues jams.

Toy Caldwell is the lead guitarist and composer of most of the band's material, and he plays and writes with distinction. Doug Gray, lead vocalist, sings convincingly—gritty but not strained, driving but subtle. Paul Riddle on drums and Tommy Caldwell on bass are inventive forces behind the band's force.

This is a band that's more than promising; with its first album they were close to the same league as the Allman Brothers. Try to catch them this weekend. Tickets are available at the usual ticket outlets.

Pershing Auditorium has also announced that this week opens the Lincoln Community Concerts series campaign. This next year's concert line-up is impressive: George Shearing Quintet, the New Christy Minstrels, Carnival de Mexico, James McCracken and Sandra Warfield, and the Spanish Radio-TV Symphony Orchestra of Madrid.

The Community Concerts Assoc. is a nonprofit operation; all money collected as dues is spent on the concerts and associated expenses. Admission to the concerts is by membership only and no single admissions are sold. Season memberships are good for all of the concerts and cost \$12 for adults, \$6 for students, and \$30 for families. Try to get your membership soon; the campaign closes May 4. Tickets may be purchased at Pershing Auditorium today through May 4 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. More information is available by phoning 435-6016 or 483-1515.



Pianist George Shearing will be one of several performers in the Lincoln Community Concerts.

## diane wanek out of my head

the Marshall Tucker Band.

The Marshall Tucker Band, one of the best of this genre, will perform for Lincoln audiences Saturday at Pershing Auditorium. Those who have heard its albums will realize the quality of this group, who had its debut on Capricorn records last summer. Its music is honest and driving, full of blues and gospel as well as country flavoring, but so full of ideas that they never have to rely on such space