

New opera program includes musical

Audiences at UNL's production of *Showboat*, Oct. 16 to 19, will view the results of two major changes in the UNL opera program made by Roger Stephens, who became opera theater director three years ago.

A musical, instead of an opera, is being produced. Also, the cast includes students who are not music majors. Open auditions let nonmusic students get involved in a show, Stephens said. About 100 students auditioned for the 65 parts in *Showboat*.

Showboat was adapted by Oscar Hammerstein and Jerome Kern from the novel by Edna Ferber.

"I don't feel we have to do all grand operas to have a worthwhile program," he said. "I do try and pick shows which require good choral singing."

Stephens said he thinks musicals appeal to more students, as performers and viewers.

Both operas and musicals are dramatic productions, Stephens said. He added that he chose students who are good actors over those who had no acting experience, but sang well.

Opera class

To develop stage presence and gain experience in nonverbal communication, an opera performance class is offered by the UNL School of Music.

The students mime the actions of a character against a background of instrumental music, Stephens said.

Students must learn when they stop singing, they stop acting, he said.

They must realize that everything they do on stage adds or detracts from the character they are trying to portray," Stephens explained.

Stephens held a position similar to his present one at the University of Northern Michigan at Marquette for six years before he came to UNL.

Singers learn to act

In Michigan, Stephens had his first experience with staging and he said he developed a system similar to that of Boris Goldovsky's, which is "based on teaching singers how to act."

Goldovsky, a leading figure in American opera, has been moderator for the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts and has directed several opera workshops.

Stephens studied for two years with Arthur Schoep, who he refers to as "Boris Goldovsky's right hand," at North Texas State in Denton.

Before Stephens went to Michigan, he had been a performer, director and conductor of operas and musicals at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, and East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C.

UNL advantages

He said the major advantages UNL has

over Northern Michigan are its larger size and budget, which allows three shows a year. He also cited the comradeship among the UNL music faculty members as a factor in his decision to come to UNL.

"I have never been at a school where everyone pulls for everyone else like they do here," he said. "Usually there is rivalry and jealousy between staff members, but here there seems to be the attitude that if we can put on a good show, it will benefit everyone."

He also said UNL has talented students, particularly singers, and a large, appreciative audience in Lincoln.

He attributes UNL's audiences to a lack of opera-musical productions in the Lincoln area, in addition to the reputation of UNL for "putting on a show you don't want to miss."

The opera theater program, along with two other programs in the music school, is receiving extra funds from the "Areas of Excellence" program.

In addition to paying production costs, he said, the money will go for scholarships to singers and orchestra members, graduate coaching assistants and others.

Program to be reviewed

The program will be evaluated after *Showboat* performances by what he calls "prominent individuals in the area." Future funds depend on the success of the program.

It will cost about \$12,000 to put on *Showboat*, Stephens said. The show is unusually expensive because it covers the time from the 1880's to the 1920's, and requires 65 cast members, he said.

"We want to put on a spectacle as was done when the show first opened in 1927," Stephens said.

"I think of this production as a sort of Bicentennial tribute—an example of typical American musical theater," he said.

Stephens said he has cut *Showboat's* running time from three and one-half to two and one-half hours and has removed some language which might be considered offensive.

"While we can't ignore the period of this piece, we can avoid the blatancy of some of the racism in the play," he said.

Words such as "nigger" have been removed, and in some places, "white folk" as contrasted with "colored folk" has been changed to a comparison of "rich and poor folks," he said.

The production is intended to be educational, Stephens said. "The first thing a high school music teacher will have to do is put on a Broadway musical—we want people to have the experience to do this."

Stephens teaches a summer class for teachers in musical production, and says he gets students "who have already sponsored a show yet don't know the basic techniques."

ATTENTION STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Please be advised that the Center for Students and Organizations will be conducting its fall orientation on Thursday, September 18th, 1975, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. It will be conducted in the small auditorium located in the basement of the Student Union Building.

This meeting will be important for all persons who are actively involved in their organizations. We will cover all aspects of the treasurer's responsibilities plus the requirements and procedures to follow relative to activities and events conducted by student organizations. Please plan to attend.

DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE Announces Super Wednesdays

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University of Nebraska SKI CLUB

Meeting-Party TONIGHT

Chateau Lafleur Clubhouse

1025 No. 63rd

8 to 1 a.m.

The UN-L Ski Club invites anyone even remotely interested in a.) skiing; b.) socializing; c.) both a and b to attend our first get together of this year at the Chateau Lafleur Clubhouse tonight, beginning at 8:00 p.m. If you have a night class, come afterwards—everyone will still be there. If you already renewed your membership, or paid your five bucks at the Activities Mart in the Union last week, admission, naturally, is free. Those wanting to become members should bring five bucks for your year membership. If you're not sure you want to join, a buck will get you in, then we'll convince you to reconsider. Of course, you can join anytime in the school year, but the sooner you do, the more you'll get for your money.

Wednesday, Oct. 15 8:00 p.m.	"Boogie and Beverage" at the Radisson-Cornhusker Ballroom.
Wednesday, Nov. 12 8:00 p.m.	"Reeling and Rolling." First a get together at the Thomasbrook Apartments Clubhouse, and at 10:00 a mass migration to the Holiday Roller Skating Rink.
Wednesday, Dec. 3 8:00 p.m.	"Chine and Weese" is a yearly traditional event of the UN-L Ski Club to be held this year at the Chateau Lafleur Clubhouse.
Wednesday, Dec. 17 8:00 p.m.	This is our final meeting-party to wrap up the details before we go on our winter ski trips—one of which is to Snowbird, Utah.
Spring Parties	To be announced.

For More info:
John Schulling, Pres.
489-2178

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