

Abe...

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Traveling problems aren't new to Mitchell. He's been a performer and he's traveled long enough to expect small catastrophes. So, he carries everything he needs in three containers: a suitcase for his tape recorder and clothes, a garment bag for his costume, and a square, black box for his tall hat and other props.

But when he unpacks his gear and appears onstage, Mitchell's voice, mannerisms and physiognomy transform into Abe Lincoln's. Mitchell says the response is remarkable.

"People are strongly attached to a historical person like Lincoln," he said. "My physical resemblance and Lincoln's world make it real."

Background for Mitchell's truthful performance stems from his extensive research. He said he has read every book and article about Lincoln he could find. In addition to those 5,000 readings, Mitchell said he talked to historical scholars and traveled to museums and places where Lincoln lived.

He said he first became interested in Lincoln through living in Indiana and Illinois but the major stimulus for his research came from his wife, a southern

Indiana native. The Lincoln impression followed.

Mitchell said the most important source of material was writings by William Herndon, Lincoln's law partner. Mitchell said Herndon's reference to Lincoln's "kind of high-pitched, nasal drawl" helped compose his vocal style. Herndon also mentioned certain mannerisms, Mitchell said, like running his hand through his hair and Lincoln's lanky way of walking.

Mitchell said his wife helped him work on his authentic drawl since she came from the same area as Lincoln and could recognize the regional twang.

After compiling his materials, Mitchell formed his script. He said the show can last from 15 minutes to over an hour, depending upon where he's performing and the audience's expectations. Mitchell said some convention performances have to be short because of tight time schedules.

Mitchell's work is busiest during the school year because most of his appearances are on college campuses, he said. In the summer he works for an advertising agency in Kansas City. His travels have taken him all over the United States. He said he'd like to try his act in foreign countries such as England.

'Real thing' in 1900s jazz to visit Orpheum in Omaha

Traditional New Orleans jazz is coming to Nebraska.

The world-famous Preservation Hall Jazz Band will appear at the Orpheum Theater Sunday, Feb. 26 at 8 p.m.

The group improvises the bandstand antics and Bourbon Street bounce of true New Orleans jazz, a sound which has its roots in the marches, quadrilles, blues, spirituals and ragtime of the early 1900s.

Called simple in technical terms but complex in performance, the group features an ensemble of musicians known for improvising on jazz melodies with a loose, relaxed beat.

New Orleans' Preservation Hall, the

band's home, originally was a base for musicians who got together to play for their own pleasure. Today it's a place where jazz lovers from all over the world flock to hear the "real thing."

The band is led by Percy Humphrey on trumpet and includes Narvin Kimball, banjo, Frank Demond, trombone, James "Sing" Miller on piano, Allan Jaffe, tuba and Willie Humphrey on clarinet. Cie Frazier is the drummer.

Most of the Preservation Hall band members are in their late 60s and early 70s.

Tickets for the Preservation Hall Jazz Band's performance can be purchased at all Brandeis outlets and the Omaha Civic Auditorium box office.

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