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Director to expand playhouse ideas



Photo by Mark Billingsley

New Lincoln Community Playhouse Director
Timothy Ryan.

By Alexander Germaine

Filling the need for a new director at the Lincoln Community Playhouse after John Wilson's resignation is an energetic young man from Cleveland, Ohio, Timothy F. Ryan.

The 30-year-old Ryan has already built quite a reputation for himself as a director. He is a graduate of the University of Dayton (Dayton, Ohio) with a bachelor's degree in theater and music. While in college, he was the president of a theater group and established an experimental theatre besides managing the Dayton Community and Children's Theatre.

Later he became associated with the Performing Arts Ensemble (Fine Arts Association located outside of Cleveland, Ohio) where he managed and was the artistic director for over five years. While in Cleveland he started a professional touring company, directing and appearing in over 200 shows of eighteen productions. He has freelance directed and has done shows ranging from "The

Taming of the Shrew" to "La Boheme".

Ryan worked with professionals and students in the community besides writing his own plays. In 1977 he helped to design and build properties for Universal Studios in Hollywood in addition to assisting the casting directors for the film "Harvest Home".

No changes now

"No changes will be apparent right away at the playhouse," Ryan said. "I want to look and see what the community wants that might be different."

In Cleveland, Ryan built the city's theater from a one-man operation, which he was in charge of, to one which now employs six full-time and three part-time people.

"I want to fill the need of the community that does not conflict with the theater and opera at the university," he said. "I hope to implement performances of a family nature because people are very open and interested in the arts."

This year the playhouse will open the season with "Man of La Mancha" According to Ryan the turnout for auditions was good and included some UNL students. "I would like to encourage all university students to get involved in our theater. At this time I have four students backstage that have been invaluable to me in this production."

Likes classics

Ryan says he likes new theatrical experiences, yet still enjoys the classics like some of the shows being done this year." He said the audience should be pleased with a production and that weeks in rehearsal can only be justified by him if the audience is going to like it too.

The plays of the absurdist and experimental theater (Beckett, Ionesco) can best be done in the university atmosphere, he said. New plays without preconceived emotions attached are his favorites.

After the season opener, the director's choice show probably will be an original script by Ryan. He has written seven plays and hopes to repeat "The Phantom of the Opera" originally performed in Cleveland which is a multi-media show using film, slides, sound effects and over 200 light cues. The technical demands of this kind of show will put a strain on the playhouse but he feels it can be done if he can find the right technical director, a position not filled at this time. The play is based on the original story of Gustov Leroux and remembered for the silent film starring Lon Chaney.

New things happening

"There is a tremendous level of activity and volunteers at the playhouse now. I feed off the energy around me, I only get low when nothing is happening," he said.

New things are planned as the building continues in the theater, with the new wing that will contain a versatile theater space.

Ryan is married and has two children. His wife Marilyn is an actress and puppeteer. They have both been very active in children's theater.

"I don't like to work with my wife on a play though, I like to get home and away from the theater to relax and come back fresh. It's tough to live with a show 100 percent of the time. It's also very difficult to have two people in the same artistic profession."

He says that at this point they are following his career. His wife will be active in Lincoln, which he believes could mean a big asset for the playhouse.

"I like Lincoln so far and I want to continue building here."

One drawback though.

"It's too hot here".

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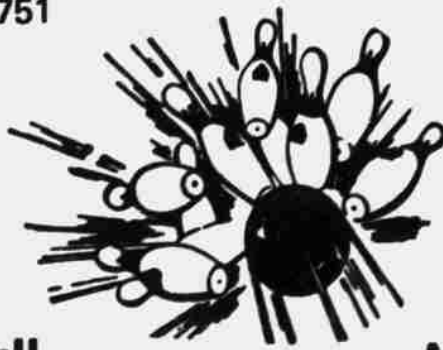
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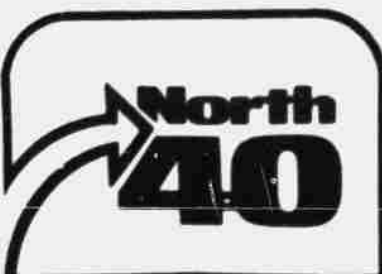
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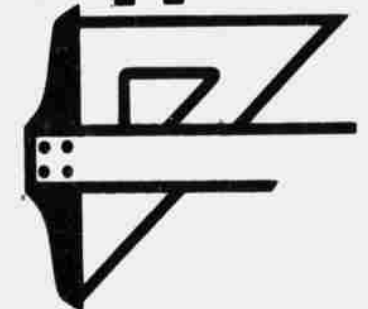
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