

arts and entertainment

Street corner clown helps people forget and smile

By Kent Warneke

Wouldn't it be great to be a clown? Wouldn't it be great to be able to make children and adults forget all their problems, and sit back and look at the work with an amusing perspective?

Wouldn't it be great to be mystified, entertained, and amused all at the same time?

profile

Mark Willy thinks so. And what better opinion can you get than from a clown? Willy began acting as a street comic or "mime" about one and a half years ago on the street corners of Lincoln. He has only recently started a service called "Rent-A-Clown," which brings him the distinction of being one of Lincoln's few, if not the only full-time clown.

Full devotion

After having spent four years in UNL's Centennial college, taking courses in drama and psychology, Willy quit this past semester to devote all of his time to what he calls "a fascinating and sometimes powerful business."

And although on the exterior being a clown or mime may appear simple, when one dons the outfit and makeup of a clown, one also takes on another personality with it.

"When I put on my make-up and costume, it's like I'm leaving all my problems behind and taking on a clown's ideas and thoughts," Willy said, "And what's great about that is when it comes naturally to you, you know that you're doing a good job."

Mime clown

"The type of clown that I portray is really a mime character, or a clown that uses very few or no words during his

performance," Willy said, "and that can be a very powerful experience. Because when people can look at me and we establish eye

communication without having to say a word, that's the part I love best."

"It's hard sometimes to get people to

respond to you, but you just have to be light-hearted enough to enjoy it anyway," Willy said.

"It's usually more of a challenge to get a favorable response from adults or people who feel threatened and give off negative responses to begin with," Willy said. "Whereas children are usually a lot of fun to work with, they always seem to be so mystified by clowns."

"You have to have a lot of spontaneous ability to be a clown, a little music, some magic or the giving away of imaginary flowers to ladies can win over an audience," he said.

Willy's "Rent-A-Clown" service is just getting started this year and he still is promoting it.

"I usually try to go out on the streets and perform at least three times a week and I'm also trying to promote myself with Parent Teacher Association's and campus activities. In fact, I think it would be great working at a fraternity party," Willy said.

Willy's "Rent-A-Clown" service basically promotes Marco (Willy), a clown who brings a party with him. Marco also juggles, mimes, plays music, including an innovative original composition entitled, "I Want to be a Clown," uses magic and games.

Price varies

"My price varies a lot, depending on what kind of event I'm performing at. I've done performances for grade school kids, old folks' homes and one for a day care center, including some freebies," Willy said.

"Clowning, besides being a lot of fun for myself, seems to bring out the best in my audience, also," Willy added. "Quite a few times I've found myself sitting back and letting the audience become clowns themselves and just watching them."



Photo by Bob Pearson

Mark Willy makes a living clowning around with kids in "a powerful lifestyle."

PBS series portrays Curie as flawed human, not saint

By Pete Mason

As every schoolboy knows, Madame Curie and her husband discovered the element radium and laid the groundwork for the world's entry into the atomic era 40 years later.

What every schoolboy doesn't know is that Marie Curie was a driven woman who neglected her health, friends, and occasionally her husband and children in the name of science.

Public television has attempted to fill those educational holes and bring good drama to the small screen at the same time. So far it seems that it has done both admirably.

tv review

Marie Curie, which airs at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays on NETV, is the story of the two-time Nobel Prize winner and foremost woman scientist in history. Marie, played by Jean Lapotaire, is shown as single-minded, withdrawn and often indifferent to everything around her but the task at hand.

Social life zero

In episode one, Marie is presented as an over-achieving student at the Sorbonne in Paris, striving to be the best, often forgetting to eat, seemingly totally ignorant of most social amenities.

Lapotaire seems to have become totally involved in the character she portrays. For all practical purposes she is Marie Curie, from her taut, peasant's face to her shy,

brooding manner in the presence of strangers.

It was Madame Curie's shyness, her singleness of purpose, which was interpreted by others as snobbishness or intellectual superiority which made her unpopular among her contemporaries.

Lapotaire plays Curie in an appropriately subdued manner, shrinking back from those who wish to talk about the small things in life, pushing herself aggressively in those conversations about science, the only time she is truly in her element.

Marriage problems

In Pierre Curie, Marie found an anchor, a mature pillar upon which she could lean. He recognized early her alienation from the rest of the world, understood it, perhaps was even initially drawn to it.

In the PBS production, the Curie marriage is not painted as a particularly blissful union. Marie often dominates, guides the destiny of the relationship. It is her indomitable, her single-mindedness in her quest for the atomic weight of radium which forces Pierre to refuse a teaching post offered him by a Swiss university. It is the kind of post he has wished for all his academic life.

Pierre was concerned with the possible harmful effects of radioactivity and researched the possibilities. Through experiments he discovered that constant exposure to the radium he and his wife worked with daily was a real threat to their liver.

Search for knowledge

Marie ignored the warnings, even convinced Pierre to withhold the evidence of the harm radioactivity could generate, to

guarantee that they could continue their research unfettered by costly precautions or governmental interference. It was a clear example of how Marie Curie regarded her priorities. That decision spelled out her credo: the search for knowledge stands above all else.

So often the great people of history are portrayed as beings who are a step above the rest of humanity. We learn that George Washington never told a lie and Abraham Lincoln liked blacks and a hundred other misconceptions, many of which are never exposed. It's refreshing to see persons who helped mold our world portrayed for what they really were, extraordinary human beings with many of the same faults and weaknesses as all of us. *Marie Curie* manages to cut through the myths and shed some light on the real person behind the deeds.

Graham dance company to perform here

The Martha Graham Dance Company, one of the most celebrated modern companies in the world, will appear at Kimball Hall tonight.

entertainment

notes

Of all the dancers, choreographers, or artistic directors in the dance world today, none is considered better known or more admired than Martha Graham. She has created over 150 works, many of them undisputed masterpieces. She has trained generations of modern dancers, and her

present company consists of an international list of great dancers.

This attraction is financed by the support of the Nebraska Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts/Dance Touring Program, as coordinated by Mid-America Arts Alliance.

Four familiar faces and one new one will be seen on stage when the UNL "in-residence" Nebraska Woodwind Quintet opens its sixth season with a concert at 8 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 2 in Kimball Recital Hall, 11th and R.

The familiar faces, widely known by Lincoln audiences, are David Van de Bogart, flute; Robert O'Boyle, oboe; Wesley Reist, clarinet, and Gary Echols,

bassoon. The new face is French hornist James Wehrman, who comes to Lincoln from the University of Indiana and the Colorado Philharmonic.

The concert is free and open to the public.

There will be two student recitals this week, sponsored by the UNL School of Music. They are free and open to the public. Wednesday, DeWayne Hughes (senior, trombone); Greg Sprague (senior, voice) will perform in Sheldon Art Gallery Auditorium at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Ellen Jipp (senior, voice); Mark Dalka (senior, trumpet) will perform in Sheldon Art Gallery Auditorium at 3:30 p.m.