

arts and entertainment

Dylan changes his tune and rock n' rolls in full force

By Joe Starita

His tambourine man may crash through the jingle-jangle mornings these days with a thundering guitar in tow, but few are mourning any changing of the chords.

At least that was the vote of a roaring, hand-clapping, match-lit Omaha Civic Auditorium crowd Saturday night after Bob Dylan and company had rock and rolled the last blast of "Forever Young" through the sold-out arena.

The image of an earlier Dylan alone on stage with only his harmonica, acoustic guitar and words to protect him was not Saturday night's fare.

For nearly three hours he unleashed the full force of the current Dylan show.

concert review

For 9,600 persons that meant watching Dylan marshal guitars, keyboards, saxophones, mandolins, violins, drums and three backup vocalists into the concert's lowest common denominator: simple, straight ahead, blasting rock and roll.

Wall of sound

Dylan let the backup musicians set up a wall of sound, then sent his familiar voice snaking through the cracks in a variety of arrangements that ranged from gospel to heavy metal.

"Tangled Up in Blue" got strung out in a long, nasalized ballad, carried along by thumping guitars and a pounding organ.

"Tambourine Man" and "Blowin' in the Wind" unwound from the stage in a bath of blue and red lights with Dylan and his three female backup vocalists welding the song into swaying, spiritual numbers.

"I Shall Be Released" emerged in Southern Baptist drag. "The Times They Are A Changin'" got the big band treatment, with electric violin and mandolin hovering about the rocking foundation of guitars and brass.

"Like A Rolling Stone" ushered in the second half of the show and an unrelenting standing ovation.

Dylan up front

Like a man in control of a roller coaster gearbox, Dylan smoothly stepped in whenever the sound seemed overpowering, downshifting the concert into a series of poignant collages that sent his musicians into the shadows and Dylan to stagefront.

Perhaps the biggest response came when Dylan sent his 12-member group into the shadows and quietly stepped forward with an acoustic guitar.

Under a single white spotlight, Dylan bent low over the microphone, strapped on harmonica and ran off a series of riffs written 15 years earlier.

When he looked up and added the words to "It Ain't Me Babe," the applause reminded one that this was the image of Dylan most of the older crowd had cut their musical teeth on.

Lonesome troubadour

Dressed in white pants, shirt and shoes broken by a black leather jacket, Dylan looked like the lonesome troubadour of coffeehouses past.

His chalk-white face framed in a bush of frizzy brown curls brought home the earlier concerts, but Dylan finished the song and wouldn't allow the image to linger.

He chatted to his musicians, to the audience, struck a few rock star poses and kept the energy level high and wide.

"Like you to meet my ex-girlfriend, my current girlfriend and my fiancée," said Dylan, introducing his three backup vocalists.

He paced back and forth, turned to face the drummer, strode off for a word with the violinist launched into rousing upbeat arrangements of "All Along the Watchtower," and "It's All Right Ma," without missing a beat.

Wedged between his high-voltage pacing and driving guitar riffs, Dylan broke off a smile here and there and clearly seemed to enjoy himself.

"Thank you. Thank you, very much," said Dylan, smiling sheepishly. "I think I'll have to make it back here again."



Photo courtesy Mahoney Wasserman and Associates.

Bob Dylan changed his tune as he rock and rolled to a sellout crowd at the Omaha Civic Auditorium Saturday night. Some of the floor-stompers he turned out on his guitar included hits "Like a Rolling Stone," "It Ain't Me Babe," and "Tambourine Man."

Entertaining 'Phantom' at playhouse

By Richard Weigel

Undertaking a new production always is a risk and has more often than not proved to be a flop rather than fantastic. But the Lincoln Community Playhouse has created an entertaining show in its recent production of *The Phantom of the Opera*, even if it never reaches national prominence.

The story is an adaptation of the old movie with the script written by the director, Timothy Ryan. The play begins with the debut of promising new soprano

played by Paul R. Davie, that the phantom means to have Christine for his own. As in the movie, the phantom abducts her to his underground hideaway and tries unsuccessfully to persuade her to love him. Rescue attempts by Raoul and the Persian (Rod McCullough) prove unsuccessful when suddenly... But one can't give away surprise endings so easily.

Multi-media usage

True to the form from which it is taken, Ryan introduces multi-media usage to indicate time lapses and the thoughts of the characters when they are alone. These flashbacks and thought sequences done on tape and film help keep the set simple and utilize the 'remembering' concept from the original script.

The party scene is the most effective of the film shots with the characters at a costume masque in the Orpheum. (Sorry, it just doesn't look like the Paris Opera House). Some nice moments are created when the phantom makes his first public appearance during this sequence.

As a whole, this production has a great deal of merit. Ryan did fine work pulling together all the technical demands and the eleven-member cast. The new technical director, Mike Kraft, did an especially fine job with his crew in set changes, which were done quietly and efficiently.

The concept of the show is somewhat ambiguous because of the interweaving of a presentational, to dramatic, to farce, to presentational style. Characters, such as the

phantom, were believable, but then Monsieur Armand and Philippe were out in left field.

The set is one of the best there has been at the Playhouse and makes good use of the depth and the many levels.

Costumes designed by Ginnie Dzerk were effective and makeup by Maire Muffley extraordinarily fine.

Fresh delivery

The standout in the acting department belongs to David Shellner as the phantom. His delivery was fresh and animated at all times and he had the energy in his character to make it work. Some of his work in the last few scenes couldn't have been better for an actor of his age.

The rest of the acting was not at such a high level but some fine performances were turned in by Cedric Gibb as Pampin, and Bob Esquivel as Joseph Buquet.

One wants to believe the acting of Maralyn Ryan but having seen many real prima donna's, hers was unreal. It would be less of a show without Kenneth Killman as Mr. Armand. He was extremely funny in his characterization.

It is an entertaining show, which is something that can't always be said even for professional theatre. The freshness of a new show combined with the well-known plot to make the production pleasurable, though not charismatic.

The phantom continues Nov. 10, 11, and 12. It makes for a fine evening at the theatre. "So spake the grisly terror."

theater review

Christine Daae, played by Amy Hinds, who has just sung her first lead at the Paris Opera House.

She replaced the aging La Carlotta who was missing because of a mixup staged by Christine's "angel of music" known more accurately by the stagehands as "the phantom."

The two impresarios are taken aback by this phantom, and despite his warning, they prefer to have the older prima donna, La Carlotta, (Maralyn Ryan), sing the role the next time. But opera hath no fury like a phantom's scorn and he kills her in the middle of the show.

It becomes painstakingly obvious to Christine and Raoul, her young suitor