

arts & entertainment



Photo by Mark Billingsley

Ravi Shankar and his sitar entertained a crowd of 600 concert-goers at Kimball Hall.

Shankar gives intense performance

By L. Kent Wolgamott

The sound was captivating. Two talented and sensitive musicians played ancient classical music passed down to each student by his guru as Ravi Shankar and Alla Rakha gave an intense performance at Kimball Recital Hall Wednesday night.

About 600 people attended the two hour concert which was sponsored by the University Program Council's Concerts Committee.

concert review

Shankar began the concert with an evening raga which was divided into a solo portion by Shankar on sitar and two gats, one slow and one fast.

The raga is the heart of Indian classical music—a melodic form upon which the musician builds his performance.

Exploring the raga

The gat is the fixed composition of the raga based on a rhythmic structure.

With incense wafting across the audience from the stage, Shankar began the alap section of the raga slowly exploring the raga with long lingering notes played on the upper portion of the neck of the sitar.

Occasionally pausing to dip his fingers in a small container which held a waxy substance, the tempo gradually increased into the jor portion of the raga and Shankar's playing became more rhythmic as his left hand traveled up and down frets on the neck of his handmade sitar.

Come together

On Shankar's right, Rakha began to stir, removing his

vest and rolling up the sleeves of his shirt, preparing to join Shankar.

After a short pause to tune the instruments, the tabla (two piece drum) player joined Shankar and played the drone tamboura throughout the performance.

The two then began the extraordinary communication they share in their music as the sounds of their instruments interplayed with almost unbelievable coordination.

The gat moved slowly, gradually increasing in speed as the musicians worked improvisations which make up 80 percent of Indian music, around the central pattern.

Enjoying music

The acceleration continued with Shankar and Rakha obviously enjoying their music, smiling at each other as the raga rushed to the jhala, its final movement and climax.

Shankar's right hand became a blur as it strummed the seven main playing strings of the sitar while his left hand again moved up and down the entire length of the instrument.

Rakha's hands were also blurs creating the rhythmic, melodic percussion associated with Indian music as the raga reached its intense frenzied ending. Shaking hands as they finished, Shankar and Rakha raised their peaked hands to their foreheads in appreciation of the audience's applause and left the stage for intermission.

Indian seminar

Following the break, the concert became a bit of a seminar on Indian music as Shankar spoke about the music and demonstrated with Rakha the voice note coordination of the tabla. Each sound made by the tabla player has a single syllable which reflects it.

Taking his small, silver hanner and tapping the

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Death becomes ultimate opponent in 'Shadow Box'

By R.A. Weigel

Fighters walking down the street or working out in the gym are often seen sparring with an imaginary opponent. Toning up and getting ready for the big moment when they meet that adversary, they practice what is known as shadow boxing.

In the play *The Shadow Box* by Michael Cristofer, now playing at UNL's Studio Theatre, the characters are working out with a very real opponent, getting ready for a final decision by the referee. But the fight has been fixed and they must take a dive. There is no way out.

theatre review

Death is the subject of the play and not boxing. Yet the circumstances are still the same. Three people have been told that they are going down for the count and there isn't too much for them to do things that life promises a human being. All three are located in a community of scientists or doctors who are studying the effects of the limited life problems.

Depth of classics

A beautifully written play, *Shadow Box* contains the depth that classics have shown in their long life. Only one year since it won an award for best play, it tells the story of not only those who are about to die but also those who are interwoven in the lives of those people.

In cottage one, Joe (Dale Wilson) has resolved himself to the fact of death. His wife and young son also are coming to visit him for the first time in many months. His wife, Maggie (Loreda Shuster) refuses to accept the fact that he is dying and besides not going into the cottage (somewhat symbolic usage by Cristofer) she wants him to come home. The son (John Thew) has not yet been told.

Cottage two has Brian (Scott Lank) who is elated by the fact that he is going to die. He does all those things that he has always wanted to even though he lacks talent to do them well. The people who touch his life are his boyfriend (Scott Boughn) and his former wife (Marla Harper). The conflict is obvious and the dialogue sometimes incessant.

Dying wish

Felicity (Shana Higgins) is an old woman who defies death as profanely as possible. She holds onto life by the hope of seeing her daughter, Clair. But Clair died many years ago and her daughter Agnes (Catherine Lang) has been writing letters in Clair's name for years for her mother. Agnes needs to be free of the burden of her invalid mother.

Again the intimate atmosphere of the studio theatre brought this show right into the laps and emotions of the audience. The acting was on a high level and professional performances were turned in by Dale Wilson and Loreda Shuster. Their portrayal of an overweight, middle class couple was touching and beautifully done. Wilson has talent streaming from every line and nuance.

Scott Boughn played a convincing homosexual without any of the common stereotypes. Marla Harper, as the ex-wife was adequately bitchy but not completely filled out in her characterization. The tender moments seemed to be her best. Scott Lank showed good versatility throughout his performance.

Something about invisible walls that surround Agnes made Catherine Lang come to life. She reminds one of so many old maids who are always doing something for someone else and eventually just wither up. Shana Higgins knew her character well and her portrayal of the old, pain-stricken woman was done with style.

Larry Petersen played the interviewer and served as the link between the three cottages in this hospital community. He was appropriately sterile in the role.

Reality of death

Communication is the key and the play achieves this. Some think death is better left undiscussed, yet the show deals with the reality of this fact in nine different ways: the behavior of the nine people who are affected. The directing was good and never got in the way of the

script. The use of the set was marvelous and many excellent moments were created by the directing of the *denouement*.

The set and lights were well designed by Steve Probus. He created nice levels and areas to give a spacious feeling for a small stage. It's hard to put eight actors on a set at one time and not make them look crowded but his modern cottage and outdoor scenes made it much easier.

Costuming was appropriate and the makeup was just as it should be. Felicity's makeup was strong in the sense that it made a young actress look older using her own features.

The play is an emotionally power-packed show that has the ability to touch everyone. The few weak moments are so overshadowed by fine work that the evening is well spent. The potential is there to be a tear jerker and this could realistically be achieved before the show closes.

The Shadow Box will be showing tonight through Dec. 3 at the Studio Theatre in the Temple Building, 12 and R streets.

entertainment notes

Marguerite Fishman and Irene Wachtel, performers of "Dances for Passers-by," will be giving a free performance for the public at the Sheldon Art Gallery, Sunday at 3 p.m.

The two women have been rehearsing two months in preparation for their dance concert in Sheldon's main lobby. Guitarist Leroy Critcher has composed a special piece for the "Kinetic Acquisition" modern dance numbers.

Due to the interest in the current planetarium program *Laser: The Light Fantastic*, additional presentations of this program have been scheduled for this weekend only.

Programs will be presented tonight at 8 and 9. The museum will not be open this evening, but entrance to the planetarium lobby will be available by the west museum entrance only.

Saturday and Sunday, the program will be presented at 2, 3, and 4 p.m.

The Best of Laurel and Hardy will present the comedy team's movie *Out West* and short subject *Tit for Tat*, Saturday at 9 p.m. on the Nebraska Educational Television Network.

Other programs of interest on NETV will include *Christmas Eve on Sesame Street*, in which Big Bird tries to find out how Santa Claus gets down all those chimneys. It airs Sunday, Dec. 3, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, December 10, at 6 p.m.

Maria Callas is remembered by friends and associates in the two-hour program *Callas*, about the life of the fiery opera singer, airing Sunday, Dec. 3, at 9 p.m.



Photo by Gary Goldberg

Marguerite Fishman and Irene Wachtel will give a free dance performance at Sheldon this weekend.