

# 'Take Me Along' lacks polish

Review By Betsie Ammons

Take Me Along, the second musical in the 1979 Nebraska Repertory Theatre season, is a slice of American pie. Warm and human, it tries hard, but lacks polish -- the crust just isn't quite flaky.

Based on Eugene O'Neill's *Ah Wilderness*, take Me Along is a nostalgic look at romance and life in Small Town USA on a Fourth of July in the early 1900's. Victorian morals and changing society are seen through the eyes of citizens in Cerverville, Connecticut.

It tells the story of the Millers -- Nat, a newspaper publisher, his wife Essie, his unmarried schoolteacher sister Lily, and the children, Richard the dreamer, Arthur the Yalie, and Mildred and little Joey.

Lily is in love with Essie's brother Sid; a neer-do-well newspaper reporter with a "bottle problem" and Richard also fancies himself in love providing the play's romance.

Although the acting generally was good, and the settings were innovative and versatile, technical problems kept the finish off the final production.

Michale Bautista's set conveyed the feeling of summer and small-town hominess, with its bright colors and Victorian patterns. However, some things, such as paper streetlights which did not quite reach the stage floor and swayed back and forth, detracted from its believability.

Although outside scenes lacked realism, the Miller's home was excellent -- built on a rotating platform center stage it enabled quick changes between rooms in the house and the front porch.

Director Rex McGraw used the set to his advantage. At one point, the Millers walked to the front porch while the set was rotating to bring the outside center stage.

Eileen Ramsey's costumes had their good and bad points. The women's outfits were stunning, glowing and totally, femininely Victorian; in light fabrics and colors fitting with the summer heat.

The men's costumes, while well-designed, were made of heavy wools and corduroy, hardly the attire for Independence Day.

Also, Essie's hair presented a small problem. A hairpiece was used to give her the stylish pompedour, but it was a couple of shades from her natural hair color, and it was all too evident under the bright stage lights.

In a cast of excellent actors who were mediocre singers, and vice versa, Stef Kallos of Lincoln gave the evening's best performance. Kallos, as Aunt Lily, was consistently prim and proper as the role demands.

Kallos has a nice voice and warm delivery, especially in the tender ballad "Slight Detail". She combines with Steve Houser as Sid, for a bright and funny number "I Get Embarrassed."

The evening's other high point was provided by UNL student Danny Johnson as Wint Selby, a Yale friend of Arthur's. Johnson sang "Pleasant Beach House" combining exaggerated, hysterical actions with an above-average singing voice.

Caron Buinis as Belle and Joe McNeely as Richard both UNL students, also deserve special mention. Buinis plays Belle, a fallen woman, with a convincing cheap Eastern accent. McNeely gives the pseudo intellectual, deep-thinking Richard just the right tongue-in-cheek touch, although his singing voice is nothing special.

Take Me Along, music and lyrics by Bob Merrill and book by Joseph Stein and Robert Russell, will rotate in repertory with "Kiss Me Kate" at UNL's Howell Theatre through July.



Enjoying the spring."

photo by Gordon Johnson

## Quintet . . . .

The quintet sounded the most unified when playing the blues. The beat was familiar and sounds seemed clearer because of it.

Ward is an exciting lead guitarist. His sounds are clear and precieves and tie the other instrumental sounds together in a less than obvious way.

The band's first professional engagement was two weeks ago at the Glass Onion. Each member performed professionally and the effect was organized sound.

However the group was hindered by a relatively poor sound system. The Glass Onion does not have good acoustics and coupled with system, the quintet encountered some harsh sounds that slighted their potential effectiveness.

## Movies

Cinema 1: "101 Dalmations" (G) 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00.

Cinema 2: "Rocky II" (PG) 2:30, 4:50, 7:20, 9:40

Cinema X: "Potpourri II" (X) "School for Sex" (X) Continuous 24 hours.

Cooper: "Moonraker," (PG) 12:15, 2:35, 4:55, 7:15, 9:35.

Douglas 1: "Escape from Alcatraz" (PG) 1:40, 3:40, 5:40, 7:40, 9:40.

Douglas 2: "The Main Event" (PG) 1:20, 3:20, 5:20, 7:30, 9:30.

Embassy: "Seven Into Snowy" (X) "My Sister Eileen" (X) 10:11, 12:12, 2:25, 4:38, 6:51, 9:04, 10:24.

Joy: "Norma Rae" (PG) 7:00, 9:00.

Plaza 1: "Inlaws" (PG) 2:15, 5:10, 7:25, 9:35.

Plaza 2: "Butch and Sundance: The Early Days" (PG) 2:50, 5:10, 7:25, 9:35.

Plaza 3: "Bloodline" (R) 2:40, 5:00, 7:15, 9:40.

Plaza 4: "Manhattan" (R) 2:04, 3:55, 5:45, 7:35, 9:20.

Starview: "Butch and Sundance: The Early Days" (PG) 9:15, "Silver Streak" (PG) 11:00.

State: "Alien" (R) 7:15, 9:40.

Stuart: "Prophecy" (PG) 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30.

84th and O: "Escape from Alcatraz" (PG) dusk, "Heaven Can Wait" (PG) 10:40.

West O: "Phantasm" (R) 9:15, "Manitou" (R) 10:45.

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