

arts/entertainment

Local talent enlivens Traditional Jazz night

By Bill Graf

Once again it's time for the Traditional Jazz night at O.G. Kelly's.

Jeffery Johnson, drummer for the Traditional Jazz Band, said they will be playing the blues, dixieland, bebop and ragtime.

"We really don't know what will happen Wednesday night," he added. It all depends on who comes down to sit in."

He explained that the basic band, Mac McCune on trumpet, Randy Snyder on bass, Del Whitcombe on guitar, and Johnson on drums, will be responsible for the basic format. But, he said, the bi-weekly jazz nights are meant to be a "sounding board" for other area jazz musicians.

In the past, clarinetist Charlie Phillips, vocalist Kathy Marrow or Chancey Blakely and a host of other local talent have sat in with the Traditional Jazz Band, giving each gig a flavor of its own.

"We try to know a wide variety of tunes, so we can play what the guest musicians know, so everyone can perform to their potential," Johnson said.

"One night we had a tap dancer come down, so we did 'Me And My Shadow'."

Johnson went on to say that "not only do we follow the loose format to suit the guest musicians, but we also do it for ourselves."

He explained that many times musicians get stuck with a format that isn't flexible.

"The jazz night gives the band a chance to stretch out, not just do the job. We've got all kinds of tricks, and you

never know what's going to happen until the night is over."

Traditional Jazz night got started when Jek Kelly, owner of O.G. Kelly's, wanted a night made up of popular jazz to which people would respond.

Johnson explained that much of today's modern jazz has evolved to a point that it has begun to leave the audience behind.

"There is a fine line between jazz as an art form and jazz as a commercial commodity," he said. "Sometimes you've got to sacrifice the pure forms to get a more economically successful sound."

However, he said, "I think our format is working. The first night we only had 15 people in the audience but since then it's grown considerably."



Waiting in white

Rose Pickering, as Kate, anxiously awaits the arrival of her tardy fiancé hoping to make it to the church on time. Even though he is late, he does arrive. The wedding that does insure is a wedding like no wedding you've ever seen before, in the Milwaukee Repertory Theater's production of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Photo courtesy of Kimball Recital Hall

'Shrew' Kate captures audience attention at Kimball

By Penelope Smith

"There must be a trust in the text. The beauty of the text must be preserved," said Robert Knoll, UNL English professor, of the Milwaukee Repertory Theater's Version of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Thursday and Friday night at Kimball the Milwaukee Repertory Theater performed Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, set during World War II in Italy. The audience obviously loved the play. They were thoroughly amused and an atmosphere of delight pervaded the theater—yet there was something missing. That the Milwaukee Rep's production was a work of Shakespeare's seemed incidental.

The text was often lost in a barrage of screaming that was interspersed with Italian. Because of the action, the audience could follow the plot, but the play as Shakespeare lost a vital element.

"The beauty of the text," for all its ribald innuendo

softens the physical violence of the play, without it the play is rough in the extreme. It is as if Dillon, the director, liked the charming story but did not care for the rest. Because he cut the induction from the beginning of the play we are drawn more deeply in and the text is needed more than ever to lessen the effect of the obvious abuse of Kate on the audience.

Characterization, the subtle shading of a string of words to create humanity, was often lacking. In their one-dimensionality, the characters could evoke amusement but not emotion. The audience was entertained, but Shakespeare should also touch the heart. One could laugh at the gestures and at the old man, Gremio, as he drank the water from a flower vase, but no deeper feeling was attained.

Kate is a virago; she is violent and she does scream, but there is another softer Kate, a Kate ignored and a Kate trembling for recognition and approval. Rose Pickering's Kate was capable of true verbal abuse in the sense of

lung power, but the softer Kate, the one that brings the audience a sympathetic comprehension of her behavior, was not in evidence.

Kate's complexity is a key to the meaning of the play. Lacking it the play has no realization. It ends but Kate's final speech is really not relevant. She has not visibly become a secure loved woman but merely a woman who has ceased to scream.

The treatment of such characters as Hortensio and Bianca was distressing. Hortensio became a hairnetted fop of questionable masculinity whose accent bore an unsettling similarity to a Steve Martin impersonation. Shakespeare's Hortensio is excusably young; Dillon's has a taint of degeneracy.

Bianca, the gentle, dutiful daughter was not present. Dillon's Bianca possessed no discernable fascination or attractiveness. Shakespeare's Bianca was shallow but she was an expert at concealing it. Dillon's Bianca was unattractively absurd. With her harlequin glasses, bouffant hairstyle, chewing gum and fan magazines she was a gauche young girl not convincingly capable of controlling men however doubtful their intelligence.

The production was enjoyable and professional but it could have been much more. *The Taming of the Shrew* is a farce but a farce with a heart. There is nothing wrong with a change in time or place; the danger lies in a loss of meaning and a loss of respect for what a plan consists—words.

Atwood's talk cancelled

Canadian poet and novelist Margaret Atwood, scheduled to speak at UNL Tuesday and Wednesday, has cancelled her visit, according to Linda Pratt, UNL English Department.

Pratt said Atwood had cancelled the appearance because of illness in her family.

She had been scheduled to speak at the English Department library, Tuesday at 3 p.m. and at Sheldon Art Gallery at 8 p.m. Wednesday.

Grammy-winning chorus to visit Lincoln

The Gregg Smith Singers touring professional chorus, will perform at 7:30 p.m. Sunday at First-Plymouth Congregational Church at 20th and D streets. Their visit, sponsored by the Abendmusik Lincoln community concert series, is a project of Mid-America Arts Alliance and the Nebraska Arts Council.

The group will perform a varied program including standard choral literature, multi-media, theater, love songs, ragtime tunes and marches of Charles Ives, and songs of Stephen Foster.

The group has toured Europe five times and appeared in the United States in concerts with musicians Igor Stravinsky and Leopold Stokowski.

The group has recently completed a collection of 20 albums of historical and contemporary American vocal music. This collection, called *America Sings* was produced

for Vox Records. Three of the chorus' records on the Columbia label have won Grammy awards: "Charles Ives: Music for Chorus," "New Music of Charles Ives" and "The Glory of Gabrieli." The Singers also collaborated with Igor Stravinsky in the 1960s to produce over a dozen albums of his music. Smith was asked to prepare the chorus and orchestra for the composer's funeral in Venice in 1971.

Smith will lead workshops in choral techniques and choral music problems with the Lincoln Public Schools and at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Advance tickets are on sale at Kimball Hall Box Office, Hospe's Music Co., both locations, and at First-Plymouth Church. Advance tickets are \$3.75 for adults and \$2.75 for students. At the door, tickets will be \$4.75 for adults and \$3.75 for students.