

arts/entertainment

Solos and traditional jazz highlight Corea concert

By Michael Zangari

Chick Corea returned to Omaha's Music Hall Friday with an apparently young band and vocals by Gail Moran. The "with friends" tease on the tickets raised the traditional slew of rumors about who was going to show up as a surprise guest. The rumors ranged from the unlikely (Herbie Hancock and Stanley Clarke) to the hopeful, (Joe Farrell), but as is usually the case with such things, they were quickly put to rest when the lights dimmed.

The show itself was a straight ahead no-frills affair, with a minimum of lighting and a simple stage setting. Corea and band, which consisted of two horn players, drummer, and electric bass player, started off the evening in an almost traditional jazz mode. Playing three songs off his new album *Halfstep*, the band took turns soloing in a strong Charlie Parker-Miles Davis vein.

concert review

This in itself wasn't surprising—everybody borrows from Bird and Miles, but it is definitely a departure for Corea, whose Latin-based rhythms (*My Spanish Heart* et al), have dominated his efforts in the last five years. This apparent return to jazz roots may or may not have been inspired by the acoustic tour Corea recently completed with Hancock. At any rate, there was no mystery to it, as one of the songs was dedicated to Parker.

Song dedicated

Corea also dedicated a song, "The Embrace" to Robert Shuman, a song which provided his only solo outing on acoustic piano. It was a soft delicate number reminiscent of his improvisation albums. The noise level in the hall, as is almost always the case with quiet songs, was frustrating. I'm not sure what it is about quiet songs

Lincoln Symphony to play Tuesday

The Lincoln Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Robert Emile, is to present a program of Twentieth Century music at 8 p.m. Tuesday at Nebraska Wesleyan's O'Donnell Auditorium. The all-orchestral concert will feature the work of Robert Beadell, professor of music at UNL.

While characterized as a contemporary piece, Symphony No. 1 by Beadell is not atonal. It is traditional in form and content.

Also on the program is "Romeo and Juliet" Suite No. 2 by Prokofiev, taken from the ballet by the same composer. The music follows the story line of this famous Shakespearean play.

"Hary Janos" Suite by Kodaly is a folk tale set to music, reflecting the Hungarian background of its composer.

A limited number of tickets are available for the performance and may be obtained by calling the symphony office at 474-5610.

Singer weaves refreshing characters and ideals

By Scott Kleager

Sometimes reading recently published novels can be like looking out the same window at lunch. For some reason O street "Gatsbys" keep showing up in one form or another, as if all modern writers ever see are prosperous, morally burned-out characters.

book review

Isaac Bashevis Singer's new publication, *Old Love* just appeared on the best seller shelf and it makes up for all the recent boredom. It's the best writing to grace the market since *Jailbird* by Kurt Vonnegut.

In Singer's writing characters are wealthy but somehow they get away with it without looking sickeningly upper class. The people of these stories are far removed from any American writer's character.

That's because his characters are not

composed of "American Ideals" paper. They are, instead, fresh, comical and everything one wishes a character to be from the points of view of a reader and a writer.

Nobel Prize winner

The author, a Polish Jew, is a recent winner of the Nobel Prize for literature. The stories in *Old Love* are set in pre-Holocaust Poland. There is the overriding power of combining scholarship and experience that gives the narrative force and straightforwardness.

It seems that the tales contain everything because the author expresses himself through a tradition much older than America, much older than World War II.

Add to that a belief in predestination and feelings for the "occult" and you've come close to describing Singer and *Old Love*. In a way this collection makes one wonder if "occult" is another unfriendly name given Hebrews by the not-so-friendly Christians of Europe at the time of the Holocaust. It will be interesting to see how long the book stays on the front

shelf—it may be too much for Gentile Americans.

Strong beliefs

In the story "Two Weddings and One Divorce" a character says: "A prayer in such circumstances can split the heavens. Or perhaps the cure had already been decreed. That day Reb Pinchos became better." This is one such example of Singer's people and their beliefs.

Exemplified is a life dictated by tradition where all follow the laws of their religion. When a woman is divorced by her good husband, for example, because he is dying and doesn't want her to have to be with his worthless brother (which is in accordance with tradition), she is bitter. But when her husband is suddenly cured, she still refuses to remarry him (which also is in accordance with tradition).

"It is quite possible," she says to him, "that I am barren, not you. Heaven wanted you to bring forth a generation, therefore this affliction was visited upon us." The affliction is the sickness that caused the

point, much to the delight of the audience.

Toward the end of the first set, Gail Moran came out and provided some vocal and visual focus to the music. She was dressed in an unusual outfit, making her appear like a 19th century china doll.

She has a beautifully ethereal voice, soft, breathy, and crystal clear. Although I bit my tongue when I thought of it, there is room to compare her voice with Barbra Streisand—only Moran has twice the subtlety and range of the former. She sang scat during most of the show, but did do some lyrical vocals on a few songs. Her lyrics are almost intolerably saccharine, but her style is such that she could be singing her grocery list, and I wouldn't mind.

Arguably her longest and finest solo, in a scat style, was covered up by a poor mix. Straining to hear her solo over the band, I could still catch bits and pieces of her fine range. Her upper register is particularly fine. She hits sublime high notes and holds them—rare anymore with the noded-out singers who dominate the charts.

Corea and Moran are remarkably relaxed on stage. Corea had an easy rapport with the audience, playing off shouts and noise. At one point he played a microphone solo by buffing it with a towel in time with audience reaction. Moran also talked easily about getting into town early and going to see *Cruising* at a movie theater. She gave a low-key review.

Corea's relaxed and entirely competent performance was immensely enjoyable. Subtle rhythms and driving solos made the show flow evenly. Although I was left with the feeling that Corea wasn't pushing his talents the ones he showed were more than enough.



Photo by Colin Hackley

Chick Corea and friends livened up Friday evening in Omaha at the Music Hall for those who attended the concert.

husband to divorce her to begin with.

Devil trapping

In "A Cage for Satan" a Rabbi sets a trap for the devil that has on its screen "... incantations written in scribal hand on parchment, as well as a ram's horn and a prayer shawl that had once belonged to the Kozienice Preacher. On its floor lay the chains the famous St. Joseph della Reyna had used to shackle Satan."

In "One Night in Brazil" a woman suffers from a dead man's remanifested head in her stomach. "The Psychic Journey" deals with psychic research, mysticism and travel on astral planes. All the tales are mystical.

This is only one aspect of Singer's work, but it throws all the action and situations into a fantasy that makes each tale go places that American readers have probably never been before.

Old Love's stories are far from Stephen King's county fair in *The Dead Zone*, they are less horrific and less pagan, and at the same time more human.