

## arts/entertainment

## Omaha Ballet company forms 'student rush line'

By Penelope Smith

If you live in Omaha or the surrounding area you can satisfy your urge to pirouette into spring with the final season performance of the Omaha Ballet at 8 p.m. Saturday and 2:30 p.m. Sunday at the Orpheum Theater.

Tickets for the performances are usually \$4 to \$8, but the ballet has initiated a "student rush line." Twenty minutes before curtain, all full-time students with some form of student I.D. can buy a ticket for

only \$2.

"Young people seem to enjoy the ballet very much. In fact we have the youngest audience. Our median age is around 28, while opera goes on the average are about 45 or older," said Thomas Enckell, director.

The program will include four works that cover a wide range of styles and temperaments. Enckell describes his selections as "balanced."

For those who are romantically inclined or need to vent their pent-up aggressions

from school in a non-violent fashion, there's *Romeo and Juliet* danced by the ballet's principal ballerina Pamela Heston and Enckell, who also choreographed it.

"We're using the overture and other parts of the Tchaikovsky score. The piece will be 35 minutes long with seven men and four women. I only used the main characters, Romeo, Juliet, Capulet, Montague, Paris, Tybalt. . . so there will be no crowds. I want to concentrate on the drama of the star-crossed lovers and their families," Enckell said.

*Les Sylphides* is the second offering on the program. Enckell said it was choreographed first by Michel Fokine and presented by the Ballet Russe in 1908. *Les Sylphides* is a ballet blanc done in white-flowing dresses to the soft music of Chopin. As such, it is a remnant of 19th-century romanticism, but in its mirroring of the music and lack of theme or story

line it shows a trend towards 20th-century abstraction.

The "Pas de Trois" from *Swan Lake* is a dance for three from the first act of one of the most popular ballets of all time. The dancers are a friend of the prince, who falls in love with the Swan Queen, and two of the Swan Queen's swan maidens. It is a light piece done in classic tutus. It increases in tempo and is designed to show the virtuosity of its dancers. This dance has been set by international soloist Hans Meister in the tradition of its original choreographer Petipa.

The final piece, *Maple Street Blues*, was choreographed by Thomas Enckell. It is a blend of classical ballet and jazz.

Enckell says the Orpheum has 2,759 seats—a total of 5,400 for two performances. Except for the Christmas *Nutcracker* performances, the seats are never filled, he said.

## Good timin' Texas cowboy has legendary popularity

By Casey McCabe

It's really hard to dislike ol' Jerry Jeff Walker. There has always been something in this transplanted New Yorker that appeals to the rural sensibilities in everyone.

Walker is the man who can both throw the party into redneck bedlam, and then close down the bar with music to soothe and orient the last drunken stragglers. Most

keeps reminding the listener about his geographical preference, and the vast amount of dues he's paid, while with Jerry Jeff Walker, it goes unspoken. His voice and delivery assure you he's made the rounds, and the listener can fill in the rough spots.

The title alone on *Too Old To Change* provides the perfect focus for Walker, though it's doubtful anyone really expected him to turn to disco or heavy metal for his livelihood. Written by Billy Jim Baker, (with a name like that, how can you go wrong in country music?), "Too Old To Change" finds Walker at his drawling, baladeering best; half-speaking, half-singing the lyrics:

"I've just been too long ridin' that range.

Runnin' wild, without reins  
Howdy Doody travelin' against the grange . . .

And pretty girls deserve better . . .  
But I'm too old to change."

Like most of the album, the backing instrumentals are subtle support for the lyrics, but they are exceptionally fine on "Too Old To Change" with former Lost Gonzo Band sax man Tomas Ramirez, and Mike Mordecai on trombone giving the song a touch of New Orleans on its way to the high plains.

On "I Ain't Living Long Like This," Walker gives the song its harshest cover treatment yet, and provides the grittiest offering on the album, or on anything he has done for that matter. He shifts his voice into low, low, gear to drive in one of the band's few stabs at electric country on the record, and though playfully pushing the borders of his reputation, Walker makes it work.

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## album review

any jukebox in any tavern that plays "Redneck Mother" and "Sangria Wine" will find many happy, willing voices joining in the chorus.

Jerry Jeff's popularity (limited, though legendary) has always hinged on his ability to take the bar setting into the recording studio. His latest album *Too Old to Change*, provides a more intimate and down-to-earth look at Walker's romanticized Texas lifestyle than anything he has ever put out.

It is less of the foot-stomping whiskey-drinking material, and more of the music that inspires you to put your boots up on the table, nurse your Lone Star beer, and think wistfully of the simpler things in life.

No one in recent years has been able to do this quite as well as Jerry Jeff, though Willie Nelson fans could justifiably argue the point. While country music has provided several artists with this Texas "outlaw" image, there seems to be a difference. Even a hardened veteran like Waylon Jennings



Photo courtesy of Jeffery Johnson

## Jazz jamboree

A local reggae group, J.J. and the Reggae Calypso Lafro with 'em All Stars (formerly J.J. and the Lafro Reggae with 'em All Stars) will perform at Gunny's pub, Thursday and Friday, April 4 and 5.

The group Traditional Jazz will play the first set with Dixieland and New Orleans jazz, and then the All Stars will take over.

Pictured is Jeffery Johnson, formerly of Traditional Jazz and currently a member of the All Stars.

## Honesty isn't best way to avoid spring breakdown

By Peg Sheldrick

With the dawn of spring break glimmering on the horizon and half the campus crouched in a ready-set-go position (the other half having gotten ready, gotten set, and gone), it seems a good time to reflect on the pleasures and pitfalls associated with this peculiarly student holiday.

Spring break in the student mentality is a paradoxical period, when one looks forward to partying down and dreads catching up. The desire to shuffle off to Buffalo (or Wisner or Van Nuys or Emerald) is somewhat dampened by the memory of having said, "Yeah, I'll do it over spring break" about every assignment since Christmas. The resulting pile of dusty, unopened books and blank reams of paper threatens to clutter if not inundate the semester's only real shot at a total escape from responsibility and deadlines.

So what's a student to do? If you opt for doing all the postponed paperwork, spring break may prove the cause of a spring breakdown. If, on the other hand, you choose to throw caution to the wind and your books into a corner, you face the necessity of explaining why the assigned coursework is not completed. It's a thorny problem.

Three solutions spring to mind. 1) Do the work and bite the bullet (probably a rubber one to match the room you'll end up in); 2) Have your fun and then throw yourself on the mercy of your instructors (but notify your next of kin first); 3) Lie like a rug.

Surprisingly, many find option number three the only way to go.

If you decide to indulge in mendacity to ensure your academic survival, your prime directive must be this: be creative. The old death-in-the-family routine isn't enough these days. (Most instructors will ask to be taken to the grave site, if not to see the body.)

You must razzle-dazzle them with the kind of whimsical nonsense usually reserved for essay tests and answering questions in class. The following are just a few sample lines you might consider trying.

## humor

*The Sympathy Approach:* "Well, I would have gotten my term paper in today, but I didn't remember the due date. In fact, I didn't remember much of anything after the train hit me . . . Who are you, anyway?"

*The Political Approach:* "I planned to get it done over break, really, but somehow between the Regents dinner party and that wonderful picnic with Chuck Thone and all those lunch dates with Uncle Ed Zorinsky, I just lost track of time. I hope you don't mind. I mean, if you were angry it would just throw my whole mood for my brunch with the chancellor . . ."

*The Naive Approach:* "Paper? What paper? You never said a word about it. Nope, I would have remembered. Those things are important to me. I wouldn't space off a whole term paper. Don't give me that—if you had assigned it, don't you think I'd have it? Come on, April Fool's was a week ago . . ."

*The Fantasy Island Approach:* "I had just started to work on it when suddenly, from out of nowhere it seemed, a band of gypsies appeared and stole me. Really. They threw me in their wagon with all my books and papers and rolled away into the night. Imagine my surprise.

"We rattled into a clearing in a strange black forest. They took me out of the wagon and handed me a tambourine. A fire was blazing in the center of the clearing.

"Dance for us, O Princess of the Stars!" they cried. I was confused. I began to dance—slowly at first, then faster and faster until everything became a blur. That's the last thing I remember. I awoke alone in the clearing this morning, a ribbon in my hair and tea leaves on my breath. Amid the ashes of the fire I found what was left of my paper. Here, it's in this bag. I knew that you'd want it. . ."

*The Heroic Approach:* "Oh, I'm so sorry I don't have it. I really am. I've been working on it really hard and I had it all done this morning. Darn! If only it hadn't been in my pocket when I jumped into the lake to save that poor little orphan . . ."

*The Tragic Approach:* "Well, I haven't done much with it, to be honest. I guess that's pretty rotten of me. Like a lot of things I do: I'm just not a good student—not even a worthwhile person. I probably don't deserve to live. How high is this window, by the way?"

*The Honest Approach:* "Um . . . uh . . . um . . . well . . . I . . . it's . . . I . . . No . . . I . . . didn't . . . haven't . . . un . . . How much does the final count?"

As you might surmise, the Honest Approach is *not* recommended.

What is recommended is a long, leisurely rest to assist your thought processes in preparing a truly worthwhile excuse, a literary triumph of verbal fertilizer laced with irresistible pathos that will get you off the scholastic hook. If by chance this seems like too much trouble, you might settle for actually doing the work.

But, like the Honest Approach, this course of action is not recommended, since few follow it and it tends to screw up bell curves. Remember that spring break may be your only salvation. Remember Christmas vacation. Remember the Maine. But above all, remember that a student saved is worth a spring break burned.