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Fulbright awarded to UNL organist

By Penelope Smith

To Joe Troxell, Northern Germany means a lot more than pretzels and beer. Troxell, an organist and graduate student at the UNL School of Music, has received a Fulbright Award to study his art in Germany, beginning this August.

Troxell is originally from Tennessee. Fourteen years ago, when he was 16, he became interested in the organ through church and has been playing it ever since.

"I want to study 17th-century North German organ music," he said.

Organ literature was profoundly influenced by this particular style of music. Compositional forms developed from this school into the full flower of the Baroque.

"In Northern Germany, which was predominantly Protestant, the larger organ forms developed, such as the fugue," Troxell said. A fugue is an ornate, layered piece of music. The theme is introduced again and again in various parts.

"The Northern Germans integrated Italian influences with their own innovations to form the *stilus fantasticus*, a style that juxtaposed highly improvisational elements," Troxell said.

Influenced Bach

This school of music died out at the beginning of the 18th century, but it highly influenced one of the great names of the Baroque, Johann Sebastian Bach.

Troxell said a reawakening of interest exists in the music and the technique that was used to play it because of a return to the mechanical action organ in churches and recital halls throughout the country.

"These organs are similar in design to those built by one of the most respected organ builders of all time who was also from north Germany, Arp Schnitger," Troxell said.

He will gain from his trip to Germany not only instruction but the opportunity to play on the original organs on which 17th-century Northern organ music was composed and played.

In a mechanical action organ, there is a mechanical connection between the valves and the wind channels. In the 19th century, electronic organs were (and still are) popular. The wind channels in these organs are opened and closed by electronic impulses.

True quality

Troxell said that playing the original instruments or a mechanical organ brings out the true quality of the music.

"With a mechanical organ there is a more intimate feeling with the instrument. In an electronic organ you are isolated from the pipes, with a mechanical organ you have an immediacy of attack," Troxell said.

Baroque music is finally being played as near as possible to the way it was originally, he said.

"The music sounds different on a mechanical organ. We are now discovering how the music really sounds.

A very important part of playing the music is the performance practice or how the music is played. This has by no means been uniform through the centuries.

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Photo by R.K. Hahn

Johnny (left) and Dee Dee Ramone had the crowd pogoing in the aisles during the Ramones' concert Tuesday night.

Ramones' polished punk concert keeps natives restless, rocking

By Bob Crisler

The natives were restless Tuesday night at the Omaha Civic Auditorium Music Hall as the Ramones brought their brand of polished punk to town.

The concert started on time, with Omaha's Skuddur opening with a choppy version of *Satisfaction*. Along with some original material, Skuddur did covers of the B-52s,

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Sex Pistols, and a particularly inane version of the blues classic *I'm a Man*. The crowd quickly became bored and began chanting "Hey, Ho! Let's Go!" the chorus of the Ramones traditional opening number.

During the intermission between bands, hard-core Ramones fans crowded the aisles in front of the stage. Anticipating what was to come, fans reached into their pockets for their 50s sunglasses and other punker regalia. It was a scene straight out of *West Side Story*.

After the equipment change, the theater went dark and

a single spotlight fell upon a huge Ramones banner as a military drumbeat thundered above the sound system. Through the darkness, Joey Ramone sneered "Yeah! One two three four!"

The stage lights went up, revealing the T-shirted and blue-jeaned band. A collective squeal for Joey, Marky, Dee Dee and Johnny rippled across the crowd.

The Ramones were tight. Joey's staccato vocals and the pogoing guitars of Johnny and Dee Dee layered themselves over the relentless percussion of Marky Ramone. The band is well known among New-Wavers for its hot stage shows and the Omaha performance certainly won them some new converts.

The band played songs from their fifth and latest LP, *End of the Century*. Rocking hard and fast, they had the crowd in the palm of their hand. People on the main floor stood through the entire concert, pogoing in place.

The near-perfect acoustics of the Music Hall and the monolithic sound system numbed the ears of the uninitiated, but, urged on by the stage antics of the guitar players, the crowd began pogoing more energetically through three encores, until Joey Ramone shouted, anticlimactically, "Nebraska is the best. Good night!" It was what rock 'n' roll was meant to be.

Charming remake refuses to live down to image

By Peg Sheldrick

Last year about this time, a cloying, moronic embarrassment of a movie entitled *The Champ* was released. It was a remake of a Depression-era film and starred a heavy duty box office draw (Jon Voigt) and a cuddly newcomer (Ricky Schroeder). It was, in a word, *horrible*.

movie review

This year another remake of a Depression era film has been released—*Little Miss Marker*. It stars a heavy duty box office draw (Walter Matthau) and a cuddly newcomer (Sara Stimson). The viewer, burned by last year's flaming trash, approaches with caution, expecting yet another cloying, moronic embarrassment of a movie. But for once, the remake fails to live down to one's expectations. *Little Miss Marker* is, in a word, *charming*.

The film's main character is a bookie named Sorrowful Jones, and he probably

wouldn't like the odds on a period piece comedy in a year when the big releases have been celebrity romances and adventure extravaganzas. But even if it's a longshot at the box office, it's a sure bet for light-hearted fun.

The story itself is an old Damon Runyon tale about a tight-fisted, flinty old bookmaker—the afore-mentioned Jones—who in a weak moment agrees to take a horseplayer's 6-year-old daughter as an IOU or marker. Jones also is in dutch with a tough-guy gangster named Blackie who wants backing for a crooked casino. Add to that romantic complications, courtesy of Blackie's high class object of affection, the disappearance of the horseplayer, and the kid-hunt the authorities are staging to put the winsome marker into the orphanage, and you begin to understand why Jones is sorrowful.

Curmudgeon's curmudgeon

Walter Matthau is splendid as the dour hood who has a hard time keeping his head of gold a secret when dealing with the kid. Matthau has a face like a bag of russet potatoes, a voice like a cement mixer, and a delivery that makes even his nastiest lines irresistible (as when, looking at his deces-

ed pooch, he harumphs "See what you can get for the fur"). He also demonstrates a flair for physical comedy in a little scene where he prepares dinner for his charge (dry cornflakes and day-old donuts). He is a curmudgeon's curmudgeon and a delight to watch.

Sara Stimson as the Kid (never named) is appealing but not overwhelming in her movie debut. She was the winner of a big talent search the markers initiated to fill the title role; to their credit they did not select a Shirley Temple replacement or imitator. Stimson has her own brand of charm; her main problem is holding her own among people who are not only three feet taller but years more experienced than she. Though she isn't given much to do, she handles herself well.

Bob Newhart, Tony Curtis, Julie Andrews and Lee Grant are on hand for support. Curtis is very much in his element as Blackie, Bob Newhart has some nice moments as Jones' long-suffering assistant, and Lee Grant has a very funny cameo. But Julie Andrews seems slightly out of place in this setting and one wonders why she is settling for yet another girlfriend role.

She does very nicely, but the question is why she does so little when it would seem

she could find more challenging roles.

Warm heart below

The film was written and directed by Walter Bernstein and he has done an excellent job of updating the comedy—not so much by changing the story but by adapting the style. The 1934 *Miss Marker* is, like as not, a markedly different movie in tone and treatment. The present edition blends *Front Page* cynicism with *Sting* hijinks and *Paper Moon* banter for snappy humor and shameless good times. It remains true to the spirit of Runyon, with a warm heart beating beneath the tough talk. In addition to the wisecracks and silly bits, the film offers a hilarious fixed horse race that nobody wants to win.

Henry Mancini's score is as smooth and jazzy as the film itself. Outside of two or three glaring anachronisms the production is stylishly authentic, like a series of Norman Rockwell paintings. The story is pure foolishness, but the performances and script are pure gold. *Little Miss Marker* won't win any Oscars but it's solid entertainment that may just win a few hearts.

The film is playing at the Cooper Plaza.