

Entertainment

Musical beguiles, enchants audience

By Debra L. Miller

"A Little Night Music," which opened Thursday night at the Kimball Recital Hall, is a beguiling two hours of sheer entertainment, with enough visual beauty and musical enchantment to make the sultriest of summer nights seem but a minor irritation.

Review

This is not to say that this production, jointly presented by the UNL School of Music and the Nebraska Repertory Theatre, is not without a number of minor flaws and problems, but this commendable cooperative venture attempts to give theater and music lovers the best of both worlds, and for the most part succeeds admirably.

Based on Ingmar Bergman's 1956 film "Smiles of a Summer Night," "A Little Night Music" was transformed into a brilliantly successful Broadway musical by Harold Prince, with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by Hugh Wheeler.

Winner of three Tony Awards, the show is a delight, wickedly witty, sophisticated and undeniably adult.

The show deals with the romantic foibles and foolishness of four couples in turn-of-the-century Sweden on one of those northern summer nights when the sun never quite sets. The principals come together and separate into different pairings throughout the play, to the lilting waltz-based score that is one of Sondheim's best.

Stage director Rex McGraw and vocal director Robert Grace do a fine job of in-



Staff Photo by Janet Hammer

Singers Judith Bauer, Joseph Manley, Connie Crom, Peter Schroeder, and Nancy Olson introduce upcoming events in "A Little Night Music."

terweaving these elements of the show without losing the graceful flow of mood, although some of the witty intricacies of Sondheim's score are lost through occasional lack of clarity.

The chorus in the play serves also as narrator, commenting musically upon the action as well as directly joining it. Jo-

seph Manley, Connie Crom, Judith Bauer, Peter Schroeder and Nancy Osborn manage these key roles well and add greatly to the vocal luster of an overall strong cast.

Chip Smith is outstanding as lawyer Fredrik Egerman. Smith is polished, assured and vocally in command of the dif-

ficult score. Jacqueline Riggs is delightful as the scintillating Desiree Armfeldt. The slightly husky, earthy timbre of her voice provided pleasant variety in the predominantly operatic style of the piece.

Riggs' rendition of "Send in the Clowns" is a triumph of interpretation. Review continued on page 3

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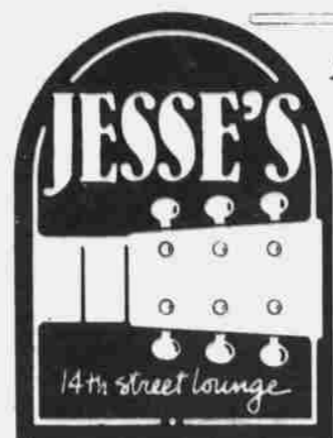
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