

# arts/entertainment

## Music, humor float from Harper Hall window

By Bob Crisler

The desire for fame has caught up with two UNL undergraduates and prompted them to form the Alternative Broadcasting Society.

Headquartered in Room 428 Harper Hall, the Society's two partners in crime, Jay Gatz III and Dr. Caligari Jones, "Broadcast" via soundwaves out of a neighbor's window (The studio faces away from the courtyard).

"We got started one day when someone cranked up their stereo and played REO Speedwagon's live album continuously for three hours," Gatz said. Their broadcasts include "our music the way you want it" (the ABS slogan), banter between Jones and Gatz and pre-production parodies of commercials.

Their commercials range from a "long distance is the next best thing to being there" parody (a vacationer receives a call and finds out that his business has gone bankrupt, his wife has left him, he has been disowned and aliens have stolen his dog) to a marvelously precise satire on the Slim Whitman advertising genre. And this is the innocuous stuff.

Material that could raise a Husker fan's ire is also unflinchingly sent through their system. One commercial concerns the crime of the century, when a sidekick and "spiritual advisor" named Allister Truffaut steals Memorial Stadium and demands 30,000 shoes and Tom Osborne as ransom. Another publicizes Igor's Head Shop in the East Stadium (Big Red bongos, pipes and a free screen just for stopping by). Dr. Jones realizes that these ideas might not be too popular with elder Nebraskans, but "Nebraska football is taken way too seriously," he said.

Musically, the pair is oriented toward "fairly broad and enjoyable" music in their shows, consisting of late sixties and early seventies rock plus a sampling of Devo and the Talking Heads. Jones confesses to once having a desire to play a Sex Pistols record, but backed down at the last minutes.

"We've got to be careful with that because we're kind of force-feeding them. They can't turn it off," he said.

To get the sound out of the window, the ABS studio is equipped with two microphones, reel to reel and cassette tape equipment and a good-size mixing board, plus a keyboard synthesizer that Jones (a music major) plays for sound effects. The pair cites The Marx Brothers, Kurt Vonnegut and Buster Keaton as their chief comedic influences.

Dr. Jones, who claims his major is demented psychosis, started his performing career as a member of the Fifth Avenue Comedy Workshop, doing their show weekly on Comedy Night at Oliver's Back Alley in Omaha.

"I got down here and my creative outlet was just cut off. Out of total luck Jay and I were assigned to the same room, and this just sort of evolved," Jones said.

The two recently came up with an idea (yet to be tested) for a regular weekly skit. A play on the *Starsky and Hutch* theme of machopolic, *Belchski and Bruce* concerns itself with a pair of partners in law that are kicked

off of the New York City police force and eventually find their way into the open arms of a large midwestern university's force.

Jones sees more in his humor than meets the eye. "Even with the Marx Brothers, there was something else there-on a more cerebral level than its slapstick surface, between the lines," Jones said.

Even if Dr. Galigari Jones and Jay Gatz never make stardom, they consider themselves famous as soon as this article is published. "This is just a small stepping stone to greater things," said Jones.



Photo by Kent Morgan Olsen

Fame-hungry undergraduates Dr. Caligari Jones, Jay Gatz III and sidekick, Dim pump parody and their brand of music from a fourth floor Harper Hall window.

## Laughtrack stays heavy on columnist's mind

A laughtrack. Of all of the sounds that stay in my head; the sound of my mother saying, "No, not as long as you live in my house," Gershwin songs on the piano, the lyrics to "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch," my favorite noise remains the laughtrack.

I don't mean the sounds of laughter from the modern "videotaped before a live audience" sitcom with the inevitable lone baritone voice thundering out its har-deehars during the poignant (poignant? maybe less sophomoric) part of *One Day at a Time*. I mean the true laughtrack, the canned giggles; not just canned, but hermetically sealed, homogenized for your safety, no voice off cue or too loud or even off key.

pat clark

A laughtrack has its advantages, and I should like to hire, say, twenty or twenty-five people to walk around town with me and laugh. I mean, if Lucille Ball can be made to seem funny simply by dint of the sound of laughter, imagine what it could do for the rest of us? The humor does not create the laughter in sitcoms, rather, the laughter creates and pinpoints what was intended to be the joke. I can see a use for it, as those times when I am not at my best, and have absolutely nothing funny to say.

I wouldn't have to; as long as my laughs did their bit, it wouldn't matter what I said.

Maybe an example. Let's say that I have been to the doctor, and he says that I have to have over \$10,000 worth of surgery next month to remove each of the 25 tumors have acquired over the years. This news doesn't put me in the best mood. But when I go home, everyone is in high spirits, and I don't want to tell them my tale of woe and bring down the mood. With the laughtrack, there's no problem:

"Hi Pat, how's it going?"

"I have to spend a month in the hospital." (Light chuckles come up from the background.)

"Hey that's great!" my roommate said. He's seen his

share of sitcoms before, and has learned that when you hear the laughtrack, all is well, no matter what message is spoken.

"It's going to cost me \$10,000." (The light chuckles grow a little louder and prolonged.)

"Let's go have a beer and celebrate!" my roommate says.

"My doctor says if I drink beer it will only aggravate the problem and I run the risk of death." (The laughter grows into a crescendo, with 15 of my 25 chuckling champions rolling on the living room floor, scarcely able to catch their breath.)

"Pat, you crack me up," my roommate says.

My hired voices could serve other functions, too. For

## KUCV to feature Beethoven

Radio station KUCV is having a "Beethoven Bash" Oct. 25 through Oct. 30. Beginning Saturday night, Beethoven's works will be featured throughout each broadcast day. A Beethoven piece will be heard hourly, nearly every hour of the day.

Running currently with the Beethoven features are nightly "Bernstein-Beethoven Specials." Leonard Bernstein conducts the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in Beethoven's nine symphonies. These specials are already underway, with a different symphony broadcast each night at 10, concluding with the Ninth (Choral) Symphony Oct. 31.

The Bernstein recordings were made in love concert and released by Deutsche Grammophon earlier this year. Bernstein's unique quality is in generating intensity in live performance. This intensity is captured in the performances rising on KUCV during each special.

In addition to feature recorded works, KUCV will broadcast a number of live mini-concerts during the week.

example, if a laughtrack, why not a crytrack? Too many times I have come bounding into a room only to find it full of downcast faces and funeral quiet. At such times, I hate to ask what happened, because it starts everybody crying again. With the crytrack, I could seem like part of the group without having to know the problem.

Or maybe an applausetrack. Television sitcoms use the applause track to signify the first appearance of a major character, or the walkon of a recognized star in a cameo role.

With my applausetrack, life would always seem like stepping out from behind the curtain to talk to Johnny Carson about my new movie. With the laughtrack, the crytrack, the applausetrack, my inherent dullness can be glossed over, and I, like those television stars from whom I steal the idea, can be made to seem almost likable.

These will take place during the early evening hours.

On Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. KUCV will broadcast a recording of the Nebraska Chamber Orchestra concert at Union College during the inauguration of its new president earlier this year. It features the world premiere of a work by Lincoln resident Robert Walters, commissioned especially for the occasion. The concert closes with Beethoven's Fantasy in C Minor for Piano, Chorus and Orchestra, Op. 80.

Though it does not include any works by Beethoven, another special event takes place during the week. The local broadcast of "Ceremonial Music for Royal Occasions" will be at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday. This concert recording was made at the conclusion of last season's "Abendmusik: Lincoln" series at First Plymouth Church in April.

During the Beethoven Bash, KUCV will be conducting a new membership drive for financial support of Lincoln Fine Arts Radio.