

arts/entertainment

'Monster' jazz artist Ross to perform at UNL

By Sioux Braun

If you'd like to see a "very aggressive" musician who plays "hard be-bop" jazz and is a "monster" on sax, John Kirsch suggests you go to Kimball Hall Saturday night and check out Dr. George Ross, guest artist with the UNL jazz ensemble.

Director Kirsch is excited about his reunion with Ross, an ex-schoolmate from the Eastman School of Music. And he's anxious for his band members to work with Ross.

"I've seen him do it before," said Kirsch. "He has electrified a lot of people out of Eastman. He's just a clown and a great entertainer."

Ross also has been acknowledged by the Notre Dame Jazz Festival, winning the Outstanding Instrumentalist award at the festival in 1975.

Ross said he grew up with the sound of be-bop and has developed a passion for playing it.

Professor at Maryland

He is the coordinator of jazz studies, director of jazz bands, and assistant professor of music at the University of Maryland.

As a jazz saxist, he has played with Hubert Laws, Thad Jones, Sonny Stitt, and Ron Carter. He earned his doctorate degree from Eastman in music education, with an emphasis on bassoon. He also has performed with the New York Philharmonic and other orchestras.

Saturday night, Ross and the UNL jazz ensemble will deliver several arrangements composed by Ross, including one of his favorites, "Reflections in Ebony."

The composition supplies several moods that anyone can identify with, according to the composer.

"The first movement is slow and plaintive and develops to a fast tempo like a rocket trip," said Ross.

It's his pride and joy because "the audience appeal has always proven to be supportive."

"The band has a lot of interplay with the soloist. It's like a conversation. And it's that interaction that commands the good reception," he said.

"Ebony" is also responsible for Ross earning the Best Big Band Composition and Arrangement Award at the Notre Dame Festival.

Improved jazz programs

Since that competition in 1975, Ross has been traveling around the nation hosting clinics and performing with students. From his touring circuit he has noticed that jazz studies programs have increased in many of the

colleges and universities and have reached a high level of accomplishment.

"Bands are playing more difficult compositions and playing with wonderful time and feeling. This may be due to the fact that there are better teachers at the college level who can play as well as teach jazz," he observed.

Kirsch's efforts continue to bring guest jazz artists to UNL. After a few unsuccessful guest appearances by jazz artists, the students in the Symphonia Scholarship program relinquished their support for visiting jazz musicians.

The music department furnishes no financial support for these concerts, so Kirsch and the jazz bands have had to get their own funds to accommodate guest performers for the last two years.

Kirsch said guest appearances are beneficial for all students.

"It is a goal for most music students to play with someone really good. It's putting the musicians in a real situation, because once they start playing professionally, the musicians will have to adjust quickly to all levels of musicianship," said Kirsch.

Door receipts from Saturday night's concert will pay for the artist's expenses and possibly help the jazz ensemble get the necessary finances to compete in the Wichita Jazz Festival this spring. Tickets will be \$2.50 at the door.

Charlie Brown finds Union grief is not so good

There was tension in the air at the International Animated Characters Union Local 228 meeting, as the lovable Peanuts gang tried to initiate a strike vote. Charlie Brown, chairman of the local union chapter, took the floor to speak for the pro-strike faction.

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"Ladies and gentlemen of this benevolent union," began the chubby little spokesman, "we're at the end of our rope."

"Good grief, he sure gives a pompous speech," whispered Linus in the audience.

"If I had my blanket right now, I'd throw it over my head."

Charlie Brown continued speaking through the intrusion, saying, "As you know, the unemployment rate among animated characters is increasing every year. The secretary of our local informs me that some of you are so strapped for money that you've been unable to scrape up the bucks for our modest monthly dues."

"So what are you going to do about it?" came a shout from the audience. It was Schroeder.

"With the voting approval of this union, we will strike, and the strike will begin at midnight after the showing of *She's a Good Skate, Charlie Brown*."

A clamor of discussion arose from the crowd, until finally Peppermint Patty stood and said, "Hey, Chuck, I don't think that's the proper time to strike. I mean, it's the first starring role I've ever had in a Peanuts special..."

Future security

"I can understand your concern," said Charlie Brown, "but you stand to benefit as much from this strike as anybody."

Antiques sale set for March 13-15

The 4th annual Lincoln, Nebraska Area World Wide Antiques Show & Sale will be "one of the nation's finest," manager Van D. Crowson announced Thursday.

The 4th Annual Show & Sale will be held March 13-15 at the lower level of Pershing Municipal Auditorium Exhibition Hall.

Displaying merchandise in almost every antiques category will be more than 40 exhibitors from 10 states, including Nebraska.

Included will be displays of art glass, cut glass, sterling silver and silverware, china, jewelry, music boxes, porcelain, food molds, and french cameo glass, in addition to outstanding antique furniture from all periods and styles.

"We're pleased to have so many fine exhibitors for this show," said Crowson. "Both beginning and long-time collectors can learn something from our show."

"How so?" said Peppermint Patty.

"Because right now you are a star, but what about five years from now? We are in this to attain a little job security for everyone in the Peanuts gang, and for animated characters everywhere. Just look what has happened in the last five years. In 1976, we were doing a couple of special a year; real quality stuff, with a big holiday viewing audience. Then look at the show last night, Schroeder didn't even get cast. Lucy and Linus got on for about 10 seconds in a crowd scene; they might as well have been at a celebrity tennis tournament for all the air time they got. Sally and Pigpen didn't even make the auditions. I was only in one scene, and my name was in the title!"

"We have checked out the animated characters who performed in *She's a Good Skate, Charlie Brown*, and except for Snoopy and Peppermint Patty, and the brief aforementioned appearances by some of us here, those were all non-union animated characters. I see this as a blatant attempt to kill the union."

"Okay, Chuck. I see your point. I'm all for the strike,

but what demands are we going to make?" said Peppermint Patty.

Charlie's list

"I have prepared a list," said Charlie Brown. He read from the list. "Point one. The union considers the use of non-union characters illegal, and will take legal action if this practice continues. Point two. The union will return to work only if we are allowed to appear in at least one new special every year, and that such specials will make speaking roles available for at least five members of the union. Point three. That the following animated characters Charlie Brown, Lucy Van Pelt, Linus Van Pelt, Schroeder, Pigpen and Peppermint Patty will be allowed to matriculate through elementary school, as we feel that the burden of trying to look like elementary school children is unfair and unnecessary."

"Well, there's the list of demands. What's your vote, ladies and gentlemen?"

The voices spoke in unison at the union hall. "We're striking, Charlie Brown!"

Play depicts Whitman's beauty

By Penelope Smith

The people involved in the University Theatre-Experimental season's presentation of *A Whitman Portrait* say they are intent on presenting the rejuvenating joy of one of America's greatest poets.

A Whitman Portrait is a recreation of Walt Whitman's life and times by four actors who portray the poet and people affected by him.

Tom Mitchell, director of *A Whitman Portrait*, and Willy Wood, who will portray Whitman, spoke of their approach and perceptions of the production.

As an undergraduate, Mitchell had done research on Whitman and had dreamed some day of writing a play about him, he said. *A Whitman Portrait* more than amply filled his desire and also his budget. The play has a small cast and didn't require a lot of what Mitchell calls "technical gimmicks" to make it work.

Without the gimmicks, though, the play required a great deal more time, attention and craftsmanship, not only because of its total reliance on the actors to retain the attention of the audience, but also because of the play's format itself.

"It's not a plot line play and it doesn't have a lot of drama so the rehearsal process has been pretty long," Mitchell explained. "It's a hard script."

"*A Whitman Portrait* could be presentational readers theater, but we've chosen to give it plot, we want to explore the effect Whitman's ideas had on real people. Each member of the cast has created a specific character and we've worked on real relationships so that something is happening on stage."

According to Mitchell, *A Whitman Portrait* has involved a great deal of cast collaboration and exchange as to how various aspects of Whitman should be approached.

"For example, because some of the words are archaic," Mitchell explained, "we've spent a lot of time understanding what we want to say and how we can act it out, demonstrate it to the audience so they understand."

After having worked with the play and Whitman's work, Mitchell thinks the audience will see the simplicity of what they were trying to convey and the beauty that was Whitman himself.

"Whitman had gentleness, the ideal quality in a man. He talks about the glory of sensuality, being with women, being with men, both glorious. I think the meaning of the whole play is simple; each individual is important, love between individuals is the important thing."

Willy Wood, a senior theater major, also is affected by Whitman and dedicated to portraying him. His dedication is apparent when one discovers that he spends 22 hours a week on one hour of credit.

Wood said he has not done outside preparation for the role but has preferred to approach it in a different manner. He compares himself to John Hurt among others.

"For *The Elephant Man*, Hurt was sent reams of paper but he didn't read a bit of it, he let the script affect him," Wood said. "The script for *A Whitman Portrait* and history mesh beautifully together, it's all in there."

"The play and Whitman are speaking to us now in the 80s. It's like John Lennon's song 'Clean Up Time.' Whitman said that from the beginning: clean it up and care. In the rehearsals it is like exorcising all the terrors we see during the day, in three hours we're revitalized."

A Whitman Portrait continues tonight and tomorrow at Wesley House at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$1 in advance and \$2 at the door for students.