

arts/entertainment

Promoter apologizes for blues concert problems

By Casey McCabe

Problems with last week's Great Plains Blues Festival have gone beyond the concert's poor financial showing. According to Martin Wood, University Program Council program coordinator, a series of misunderstandings with promoter Keith Wagner have necessitated cancelling a Nov. 4 campus appearance by George Thorogood.

Wood says he believes Wagner unfairly used UPC for the blues festival, citing a high ticket price that discouraged attendance, some unprofessional conduct and Wagner's videotaping of the concert, which was not stipulated in the contract. Wagner was also to be the promoter for Thorogood's show in the Nebraska Union Centennial Room.

"The whole videotape thing was never agreed upon," said Wood. "People ended up having cameras in their faces, and the delay in starting the show (nearly an hour and a half) was due to their video problems."

"UPC's only goal was to put on a concert, but the promoter was more into the videotaping."

Wood also pointed out that ticket sales had been bad all week and UPC had tried to get Wagner to cancel the show.

"He wanted to do the show anyway, but we didn't realize his motive," said Wood. "It was a financial disaster so his only possible gain was in putting together a videotape to sell in Europe."

UPC refunded around 30 tickets the night of the show,

and Wood says he is still getting calls from disgruntled people who want their money back.

"The bottom line was that UPC came out looking bad," explained Wood. "Based on what they saw, the concert committee told him (Wagner) they couldn't trust him. As of now there will be no George Thorogood because UPC has denied the promoter sponsorship of the show."

Wagner, reached for comment in Omaha, said a letter was on the way to the *Daily Nebraskan* that he hopes will serve as an apology for the inconveniences caused by the handling of the blues festival. He said he regrets that the incident would have such a bearing on future shows.

"I understand their (UPC's) concern because I was the committee chairman for two years myself," he said. "They were frustrated and I would have felt the same way."

But Wagner thinks the success of his past promotions, including the Muddy Waters appearance at last year's blues festival, should be taken into account as well.

"Mike Kappus of Rosebud in San Francisco (the booking agency that handles Thorogood) told me if he had to stop business with every promoter who started late, he wouldn't have any shows," said Wagner. "This is not the first show I've done with the university, but it's the first one that's run late."

Wagner said the delay in the show's starting time was not due to videotape problems, but in getting the sound system "100 percent effective."

According to Wood, Wagner was very apologetic after the show and admitted he had "taken" UPC on the deal.

Wood said UPC's dilemma was that it had no assurance something similar wouldn't happen again.

"UPC wants to do Thorogood very badly," said Wood. "But not with Wagner."

"It was a terrible decision to make, because I'm a big George Thorogood fan," said Steve Arkfield, UPC-City president, "but it had to be done. Because we have a responsibility to our audience, we couldn't allow another problem like the blues festival."

"It's ethics, it's our professionalism, it's the message we have to send to other promoters," said Arkfield. "We need it for our reputation and our ability to work with other people. I hope somewhere down the line we will be able to promote a lot more shows."

Wood cited that UPC was able to get the Dan Fogelberg concert because the promoter was impressed with how they handled last year's Linda Ronstadt show.

"I think UPC has done a good thing in taking their stand," said Wood.

According to Wagner, Thorogood's Nebraska appearance will be moved to Omaha Music Hall on the same date. He will still serve as promoter for the show.

"It's too bad because it hurts the students," said Wagner. "It would have been more intimate in Lincoln and it would have been a new market for George. I like to give students an advantage."

"I learned a good lesson at the blues festival, and I do understand their (UPC's) position," Wagner said, "but I don't think that they should preclude future concerts."

Zorro parody wastes shiny cast on dull blade

By Chuck Lieurance

To say that Medas' *Zorro, the Gay Blade* contains some of the most exhausted humor to be used on film since *Oz and Harriet* is a severe understatement.

The entire film comes off as an overly extended (90-minute) Carol Burnett skit, becoming a painfully baseless parody by the last half hour. As a short television sketch, all of this hamming, over-gesticulation and plot contrivance might have come across as funny, but as a film it is simply the atrocious abuse of talent by a troupe of fine performers.

George Hamilton as Zorro and as Zorro's offensively effeminate brother (thus, the gay blade. Do I hear laughter?) seems to enjoy his pathetic, unresourceful performance far more than an audience ever could. All of his lines, and the lines of the other characters seem stolen out of a pile of Mel Brooks' script outtakes. Hamilton, who was disarmingly funny in *Love at First Bite* is just a bad cartoon character here.

movie review

Lauren Hutton, as the revolutionary woman of means who has come to help the peasants and fall at George Hamilton's feet, misuses her talents to the fullest extent of creative masochism. She has proven before (in *American Gigolo*, for instance) that she can create a character as complex as Lauren Bacall in her prime, but in *Zorro* she is reduced to reciting generic litanies that never add to the already sparse satire.

The only endearing character in the cast is the indomitable Ron Leibman (*Slaughterhouse Five* and *Norma Rae*), who has graced the most discouraging of films with his remarkably unique features and vocal inflections. Leibman even gives some credibility to Hamilton's performance when they appear together, but normally he seems to be the only one trying to please the audience and not just amuse himself.

Parody is a difficult kind of film to pull off successfully. The subject must be well chosen and take itself seriously enough to warrant the satire. The subject matter in *Zorro* is not nearly saturated enough in the American cultural mainstream to warrant such a slapdash treatment or, for that matter, any treatment at all.

This parody goes off on tangents that have no basis in the subject being satirized: the homosexual brother, the obnoxious but wretchedly unfunny Brenda Vaccaro as the wife of the tyrannical president (Leibman), and an unexplained relationship between Zorro's father deposed by Leibman and the old Zorro.

These elements are just useless baggage in the movie, attempting to give substance but merely detracting from things that might have been mildly humorous.

Needless to say, the subjects for good parodies are somewhat limited and there are few who are doing lampoons with any success. *Zorro* is the product of minds not capable of finding the humor in the original material. It is just the weak vehicle for a strained script of intolerably tired jokes. Thank God for Mel Brooks and the three great minds responsible for *Airplane*. They have new energy and an ingenious eye for all that is ludicrous and banal. *Zorro, the Gay Blade* is as ludicrous and banal as the original material it was intending to parody.



Photo courtesy of Twentieth Century-Fox and Melvin Simon Productions

George Hamilton stars in the title role of *Zorro, the Gay Blade*.

entertainment notes

The Joyo Repertory Company at 6102 Havelock Avenue will be holding individual interviews for possible upcoming productions. The scheduled time for the interviews is Saturday, Sept. 26, at 11:30 a.m. If you have any questions call 466-2441 and someone will return your inquiry as soon as possible.

Tickets for the 1981-82 Foreign Film Series are currently on sale in the North Lobby, in room 200 of the Nebraska Union, 14th and R streets, or at the door of the first film event. Series tickets are \$12 for UNL students and \$15 for the general public. All screenings will be held at the Sheldon Film Theatre, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, 12th and R streets, on Sundays at 3, 7 and 9 p.m. and on Mondays at 7 & 9 p.m.

The wheels of progress churn round and round this Sunday and Monday, Sept. 27 and 28, as Charlie Chaplin gets caught up in Modern Times, feature film at 7:30 p.m. each night in the KZUM Classic Film Series. Screenings are at the Joyo Theater, 6102 Havelock Ave. Admission is \$2 for the general public, \$1.25 for KZUM members.

Thirty-third Street Sessions, a locally produced contemporary music series featuring Nebraska groups, returns with five new concerts for public television viewers beginning Friday, Oct. 2, at 9:30 p.m. on the statewide Nebraska Educational Television Network. The programs are repeated on Saturdays at 4:30 p.m.

Opening the new series of concerts is an Omaha-based rock 'n' roll band, The River City All-Stars, performing a number of original songs, as well as Top 40 selections. Included in the 30-minute program—which was taped before a live audience in the Nebraska ETV Network studios are "You Really Got Me" and "Domino." Also performed are original pieces "Blue Suede Rock 'n' Roll Shoes," "He Never Called Her," "Stringin' Me On" and "Havanna Anna."

The five-piece rock group features Rich Walter, drums and vocals; Doug Fackler, guitar and vocals; Tom Jack, keyboards and vocals; Bucky McCann, reeds, piano and vocals; and Brian Sampson, bass.

Robert Penn Warren's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *All The King's Men* is the basis for Carlisle Floyd's new musical drama, *Willie Stark*, which marks the fall premier of Great Performances, Monday, Sept. 28, at 8 p.m. over the statewide Nebraska Educational Television Network.

Willie Stark is the story of a small-time politician who rises from a humble background to become governor of a state in the deep South. He is the grassroots champion of the working class, but behind his "country boy" image Willi Stark is also a shrewd politician, willing to stretch the law whenever he feels constricted by its boundaries.

Willie Stark is telecast with closed captions for hearing-impaired viewers.