

arts/entertainment

Neoclassic performance emphasizes mellow jazz

By Cydney Wilson

Monday evening, at Plus X High School, the Neoclassic Jazz Orchestra presented its first in a series of three concerts.

Two pieces were featured at the concert, the first was a number written by Rex Cadwallader, a member of the group entitled "Costa Brava." The second piece, "Rhapsorhynchus," is by Randy Snyder, an associate professor in UNL's School of Music.

The piece was named after a type of dinosaur, and the solo in it was supposed to sound like dinosaurs. Matt Wallace, a tenor sax player with the orchestra, said the piece is very "warty."

"There's a little solo in it where the only direction is to sound like a bird," Wallace said. "The number also calls for a solo as they're going to bring in a cellist for the piece. It's an extremely difficult piece, and perhaps different than most of the things that Neoclassic usually performs."

The concert provided a mix of mellow, funk and fast

numbers, perhaps with the mellow side being predominant.

"We're known for playing high, fast and loud, yet we'd like to think we can come down, as much as going up," Wallace said. "Some of the pieces on Monday night's program exhibited unusual time signatures as in 'T.S.T.S.' which moves from 4/4 to 3/4 in the jump. A traditional number on Monday's program was 'Take the A Train' an old Duke Ellington standard, arranged by Don Menza."

The orchestra consists of musicians from Lincoln, Omaha and the surrounding area, ranging from college age on up. Two members are students at UNL. Wallace on tenor sax and Bill Rollmeier, who recently joined the group as a drummer. Other new members include Dave Polson on tenor sax and Jerry Boster on alto sax. Boster played with the band several years ago and recently re-joined the group.

Auditions for potential orchestra members are conducted when openings are available. Presently Ed Love is musical director, Steve Henderson is personnel director and John Tavlin is financial director, arranging the group's

bookings.

Several things are coming up in the orchestra's future, the first being their performance of Christmas carols arranged by the Stan Kenton band. The Kenton carols will be performed at the Lincoln Community Playhouse, Dec. 4 through 6.

The orchestra will complete their concert series in Lincoln next semester, giving performances Feb. 2 and May 10.

Next summer the orchestra will tour Europe in July and August. They will play in major European cities such as London, Paris and Rome. While they are there, they will play some paying jobs, in addition to members supplementing some of the costs incurred on the tour. While touring they may perform at the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland, which is considered the biggest jazz festival in the world.

The last time the orchestra made a European tour was during the summer of 1978.

'Life on the edge' painted in one of fiction's best

By David Wood

In the fictitious Central American country of Tecan, the lives of three Americans—an anthropologist, a gunrunner and a nun—meet in the fever of Third World revolution and circumstantially are crushed beneath the boot of history.

Robert Stone's *A Flag for Sunrise* isn't a war story, and it's more than a probe into post-Vietnam political psychology. What it is, is the best new fiction in some time.

review

Stone has the elements of greats. He can braid social history from the strands of individual lives in the fashion of John Dos Passos. The smoldering, volcanic depths of his characters and his south-of-the-border intensity remind one of Malcolm Lowry. He has Traven's sense of micro-history and Graham Greene's knack for political intrigue. His hard-drinking, mazel-level view of war is reminiscent of Hemingway, at sea, the dangerous mystery of close company evokes Crane.

Stone isn't derivative. He just borrows the best from the best, then paces it with a thriller's suspense. The force of events begins in the unreasoning brutality of the opening scenes, never relents until cruel war brings senseless reality. *A Flag for Sunrise* is a novel about persons and a people on "the edge."

Imported ugliness

The human condition is pressed to the limit by the political and commercial presence of Americans in Tecan. Much of the country's ugliness is imported, Frank Hollwell, the anthropologist, explains:

"American pop culture is often laughed at by snobbish foreigners—as we call them," Hollwell, at the brink of alcoholic collapse, tells a panamerican conference on cultural affairs. "But let me tell you that we have had the satisfaction of ramming it down their throats. These snobbish foreigners are going to learn to laugh around it or choose to die."

"In my country we have a saying," he said. "Wicked Menace will see you dead."

Hollwell, who formerly was an intelligence operative in Vietnam, is approached before leaving for his conference. He is asked to unofficially look in on a failing Deceonist mission on the Tlacanecan coast. Arriving in Central America, he is asked the favor again to a dimwitted Hollwell declines but is driven to the setting sun by a meretric curiosity that defies anthropology.

Young Sister Susan lives at the edge of spiritual despair. The mission has failed to elevate inmates of sin, and revolution makes martyr appeals to her self-sacrificing idealism.

Playhouse presents one-acts

The Galleries Theatre of the Lincoln Community Playhouse will present three of Lanford Wilson's early off-Broadway one-act plays at 8 p.m. Nov. 27 through 29 and Dec. 1 through 3. Tickets are \$4 for adults and \$2.50 for students.

The plays are *Home Free*, an exploration of a brother's and sister's twisted love as they struggle to avoid the harsh realities of the world "outside"; *Like, Like, Nye, Nye, Nye*, a vignette about an obscene phone caller and the switchboard operator at his father's company, and *The Great Nebula in Orion*, about two girlhood friends.

"I didn't come down here to see the world or make my fortune or be educated," she intimates in the moments after her symbolic loss of virginity. "I came in my simple-minded way to help people. I'm not going to pull out now."

Freak makes three

The final strand in the trilateral scenario is Pablo Fabor, a hennie freak who jumped ship with the Coast Guard and hires on with gunrunners, tying the fatal knot, his drop-off point is in the waters off the mission.

Pablo has an uncontrollable fear of being "turned around," of being confused by urgency. His reflexes are fierce, like an animal's. Unlike with the others, Stone has some difficulty plumbing Pablo's psyche, and he uses Pablo instead somewhat as a naturalistic construct akin to Frank Norris' brute.

Much of the novel is darkened eerily with such overtones. The silent, submerged presence of sharks at the edge of a reef or brain coral, for instance, or the ancient ruins of pyres erected for human sacrifice are, like the plot, crafted expertly.

A Flag for Sunrise is Stone's first novel in the six years since his National Book Award-winning *Dog Soldiers*, a novel that brought Vietnam back to America in the shape of drugs. *A Flag for Sunrise* is the third novel in a 40-year-life that includes such experiences as riding with Merry Pranksters. The book is his best.

Stone's prose can be criticized as overwritten at times. Yet the intimacy of his characters and his half-spelled philosophy, combined with the headlong sequence of scenes, rivets one's imagination to the dramatic end and



Photo by Kelly Wise courtesy of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Robert Stone

reasonates with one's sense of the world at the pitch of fine literature. *A Flag for Sunrise* is a masterly, moving view of history from below and within.

Capt. Reagan addresses pilgrims

One must consult historical evidence to indicate that one year after the establishment of Plymouth Colony by the Pilgrims, a winter group from the colony built their own sun-sailed south along the coastline of the New World, then sailed in the Plymouth until they sat aground in a swampy area far uptown. Making the best of their plight, his band of expatriate established Congress Colony there in 1622.

clark

The first year was hard, of course, as first years always are. The Congress Colony Pilgrims thought it might go a little easier this time; after all, they had learned how to plant corn and things like that from the Indians in Massachusetts the year before. But because of the swampy and around the colony, the crops were not nearly as successful as those they had planted the year before in Plymouth. Congress Colony was forced to find other means of survival.

(The scene: Thanksgiving Day at Congress Colony. The elders of the colony are all meeting in a special session to determine how they are going to survive. The acting president of the colonial government, Captain Ronald Reagan, addresses the meeting.)

"As you know, last year at this time we were sitting around eating turkey dinners with the Indians and watching the Lions-Bears game," Reagan said. "But a lot has happened since then. As your acting president, I have taken the initiative to take the fat out of Plymouth Colony, leading us in the trickle down from Plymouth to the Congress."

"I did not promise that when we got here it was going to be easy. And even now I am not willing to turn back one step from the course we have taken, and I still think we can balance the colonial budget by 1984. Of course, that's not for 360 years or so yet. But now, down to more immediate concerns."

"As we sit in this meeting trying to decide the fate of our colony, I think it is important to relate to you something that my wife Nancy and I were talking about this morning."

A few of the elders sighed heavily at the last statement. One, a man named O'Neill, started to feign sleep. Soon, he wasn't feigning.

"Nancy and I looked out the window of our little house," Reagan said wistfully, "and she said to me, 'You know, even though the people around us are unemployed and some of them are starving, we have so much to be thankful for.'"

"The comment took me by surprise," Reagan said. "I didn't know anybody was unemployed or starving. And Nancy said, 'Sure honey, that's what all of those protesters are out there for.'"

"So I said, 'Protesters?' And Nancy looked up at me, and smiled in that vacant way she always does and said, 'Of course, dear. Why, there are some people who have become totally destitute since you took over. And they're mad.'"

"Then Nancy left to get the turkey for our Thanksgiving feast, and I was left to think about everything she had said. And the more I thought, the more I realized we really did have a lot to be thankful for."

As if on cue, a distinguished elder stood up and said, "What have we got to be thankful for. I'm dying to know."

Reagan wiped a tear from his eye and said, "We can be thankful that we are not them."