



Staff photo by Dave Bentz

Margaret Cheng

TICKLING THE KEYS

Pianist wins contest; will play solo with symphony

By Marcia Warkentin

When Margaret Cheng entered the Omaha Symphony's Young Artist's Competition Feb. 5, she didn't expect to be performing with the Omaha Symphony this week.

"I thought if I won, the performance would be over spring break," she said. "After I won, he said, 'Well, you're playing next Tuesday.'"

Cheng, who won first place in the contest, played Beethoven's "Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major" as a piano solo during the Omaha Symphony performance at the Orpheum Theatre in Omaha, Tuesday and will also play it tonight. She said she has practiced the 30-minute piece for almost a year.

A UNL junior math and music major, Cheng has taken piano lessons since she was six years old, but started playing scales on a toy piano when she was three or four.

"I did pick out melodies by ear, but other than that I don't think I was any genius at that point," she said. "But I wanted to play so I started taking lessons."

"When I first started, my mother would sit down with me at the piano every night for a half an hour," she added.

Cheng performed her first solo recital when she was in ninth grade. She also won the Nebraska Junior High Artist's Competition that year.

She has studied in Colorado at the Rocky Ridge Music Center in Estes Park and the Aspen Music School in Aspen where she studied with the internationally known pianist Brooks Smith.

As a high school senior, she won the Nebraska High School Artist's Competition

and won second place at the regional contest. She has entered several music contests while in college, including the Nebraska Collegiate Artist's Competition in November 1982, in which she won second place.

"I had a whole string of alternates last year," she said, "which kind of made this one (the Omaha Symphony contest) feel good after being an alternate four times in a row."

Besides practicing piano, she manages to teach two sections of beginning calculus at UNL, serves as vice president of the professional music fraternity Sigma Alpha Iota and maintain a 4.0 grade point average.

"I find it really hard to fit everything in," she said, "and yet I wouldn't feel complete without doing everything. . . . The problem is I'm tired just about every day."

Cheng said many math majors also are involved in classical music.

"I feel like there's something aesthetically nice about both subjects," she said. "Most people think of (math) as what we call 'number crunching,' but when you get into advanced math, it's quite abstract."

Cheng's parents, who are originally from Taiwan, both teach at UNL. Her mother, Nellie, teaches Chinese and Japanese and her father, Peter, teaches political science. Her two sisters, ages 11 and 17, also play the piano.

"My parents have had to put in a lot of time and be patient to let me and my sisters develop to whatever stage we're at now," Cheng said.

Action Party calls for directing funds to UNL computers

By Jann Nyffeler

The problems of the UNL computer science department found refuge in the hearts of Action Party candidates at an open forum in the East Union Tuesday.

A quick show of hands indicated that most of the 20 students present had used university computers at some time in their college careers.

Laura Meyer, Action Party presidential candidate, said, "Nebraska cannot afford to neglect computer technology. More and more farms and ranches are implementing computers into their operations. If we do not learn to use computers in college, we won't be competitive with those who do."

"If you aren't required to take even a basic computer class, you should be," she said.

Meyer said that studies have compared computer availability among some Midwestern universities. She reported that the University of Iowa has one computer terminal for every 26 students, Iowa State has one for every 52 students, and UNL has a ratio of one computer for every 100 students.

Meyer said that just 10 years ago, UNL had one of the leading computer science facilities in the country. In the late 1960s, the system was used primarily for computer science and administrative purposes, she said. "For this, the system was adequate," she said. "But today, (students in) nearly every major need to use computers. Our system has not grown with this demand, nor has it been updated."

"The obvious cause of the computer problem is a lack of funding," Meyer said. The Action Party proposes getting finan-

cial assistance from the Nebraska Legislature and the NU Foundation.

Action candidates suggest that part of the funding could come from the foundation in the form of a bond issue. Meyer said that in four days, about 700 students have signed cards supporting this proposal. These cards, which address the "archaic and insufficient" nature of UNL's computer network, are being sent to D. B. Varner, chairman of the foundation, she said.

Action candidates also anticipated legislative contributions from a proposed \$3 million discretionary fund for the university. According to Meyer, a certain amount of this would be earmarked for the computer science department.

The party is seeking support for this fund in the form of cards similar to those sent to Varner. These cards, which outline the problems faced by students who need to use the computer system, are to be sent to state senators, encouraging their support of the discretionary fund.

Action also sees LB570 as an aid to the department woes. The bill would give tax incentives to Nebraska businesses that train college students. Such a bill program would give students training that might have otherwise been inadequate, Meyer said.

She said she anticipates that most of the money will come from the foundation.

When asked whether she would support a \$15 to \$25 computer lab fee, Meyer said, "only as a last resort. It's (the lab fee) a drop in the bucket" in relation to the entire amount the computer science department claims it needs.

Action's next public forum is scheduled for Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. in the East Union cafeteria.

Sen. Morehead addresses variety of statewide topics

By Pat O'Leary

Freshman state legislator Patricia Morehead told members of the Government Liaison Committee at their Tuesday breakfast that she will not allow herself to be pigeonholed.

"I am concerned with agriculture, the schools, taxes, even protecting hunting and trapshooting," she said.

As a freshman senator, she said she had to determine if she was elected to represent only her district or to represent the entire state.

"Now, I believe that the people elected me with the faith that I would represent the entire state," Morehead said.

Her proposed bills reflect that philosophy.

First among these bills is LB291. The bill was drafted for Fairbury, which recently saw its population slip below 5,000. The decrease, Morehead said, changes the city's status from a first class to a second class city. A second class status can leave the city pension plans and civil service program unprotected, and may soon affect communities throughout the state, she said.

"Cities like Ralston are as likely to see population shifts as did Fairbury," Morehead said.

A bill that would eliminate sales tax on food consumed in the home, as defined by the food stamp act, also has been proposed

by Morehead. Although, she said, she recognizes that it takes money to operate the state, she said necessities like air, water and food should not be taxed.

"We have to weigh the two M's, money and moralistic problems," she said. "It's time moralistic questions are faced."

The proposed sales tax bill, LB363, is accompanied by a similar bill, LR15, which calls for a people's referendum to amend the state constitution.

Although she said it is hard to determine the amount of state revenue this bill could cut, Morehead estimated it would be approximately \$4.5 million.

A services tax, which has been proposed by Sen. John DeCamp of Neligh, does not have Morehead's support yet, she said. The bill proposes that a tax be placed on certain services like haircuts. Although Morehead operated her entire campaign against the services tax, she said she is beginning to understand the need for creative ways to raise state revenue.

"At this point, I'm not for it, but I am keeping an open mind to necessary changes," Morehead said.

She commended her constituents and UNL students for actively participating in government. She said she read 20 letters on just one topic last night.

"The biggest contribution one student can make to the others, is to transmit political involvement," she said.