

'Dresser' characters debate whether the show will go on

By Chuck Jagoda

"The Dresser," a play by Ronald Harwood, presented by the Nebraska Directors' Theatre in cooperation with the University Theatre, welcomes both praise and criticism. In other words, it's a mixed bag.

The NDT, a cooperative venture of UNL graduate students will split its income from this show with the UNL theatre department to supplement

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funds for graduate assistantships. Local actors David Landis and Nancy Marcy, Rex McGraw, theatre department chairman, and university graduate and undergraduate students and staff are contributing their talents and time to the fund-raising production.

The play is set in January 1942 in a theater in an English province. There is a Nazi air raid, an aging actor-manager, his valet, a leading lady, other actors, a house manager and of course, a show to put on. And therein lies the central question of the play: Will the show go on? Or, more specifically, will Sir, the actor-manager, played by McGraw, be able to pull himself together enough to remember his lines and perform the very demanding part of King Lear?

Sir himself faces a number of problems: the inroads of age and deteriorating health, sympathetic madness brought on by identification with the part he is playing and his own demons.

Kimball...

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Ticket sales make up a third of the funding for the Kimball Performing Arts Series, and the remaining money must come from other sources. Although some financing comes from the university, from special endowments and from government grants, funding from private sources has become a concern.

Kimball could not survive without private contributions, Meilander said, so the search is always on for more patrons. Kimball and Company was formed last year to get contributors involved with the Kimball Performing Arts Series and the UNL Music Theater. To become a member of Kimball and Company, a person must contribute \$25 or more. UNL students may join for \$15. Meilander said Kimball is trying to get away from federal funding, and instead is looking for better ways of including the private sector.

Meilander said she would like to see Kimball Recital Hall expanded to

The play has potential and the cast at times reached those levels.

In the first act the players, especially Landis and McGraw (the former as if imitating Stan Laurel on amphetamines, the latter like Willy Loman on an express streetcar to the Elysian Fields) needlessly hustled and bustled along as if late for something. By intermission, they were taking time to enjoy themselves, which allowed the audience to do likewise.

The pre-show music, lighting effects and set were all effective and beautifully done.

The acting should have been either more believable to involve the audience or more exaggerated to take advantage of several comic opportunities and subtle jokes that were in the script but went unnoticed by those on and off the stage.

The staging, by director Lindsay Reading Korth, was flawless. Actors were never hidden from any part of the audience for more than a few moments, not always easy in the round.

Nancy Marcy and Julie Uribe (as Irene, a young actress and object of Sir's flirtations) brought sparkle and vitality to their roles. William Schutz, J. Christopher Wineman and Constance Hill played their supporting roles well, albeit with moments of superfluous intensity.

The actors and crew did an excellent job of creating the off-stage and on-stage effects. The storm was especially rousing.

The play will run Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Studio Theatre, in the Temple Building, 12th and R streets.

accommodate bigger audiences and larger productions. Kimball's seating capacity is 850, and Meilander said she would be delighted to have the capacity increased to perhaps 2,000. For some popular events, it has been necessary to turn away people wanting to buy tickets, and as a box office manager, Meilander said, she hates to see that happen.

A concert by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra recently was added to the Kimball Performing Arts Series schedule. That performance will be Sunday, Sept. 11, at 8 p.m. The St. Louis Symphony is a popular attraction among Lincoln residents, and the Kimball box office will be open Wednesday from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. to sell tickets for the event. Regular box office hours are Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"Gertrude Stein, Gertrude Stein, Gertrude Stein," starring Pat Carroll, will be presented Sunday, Sept. 25, at 8 p.m. to officially kick off the 1983-84 Kimball Performing Arts Series.

The DRESSER

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