



Peggy Cass and Susan Strasberg in *Agnes of God*.

Kimball Recital Hall

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'Agnes' lacks sincerity

Review by **Mona Z. Koppelman**

What *Agnes of God* lacked in genuine emotion, it tried to make up for in spit-and-polish theatrics. Sometimes the production succeeded, but more often, failed. The play was presented to a full house at Kimball Recital Hall Saturday.

Agnes of God by John Pielmeier spins a doubting-Catholic yarn about a naive nun who allegedly kills her own baby, a less-than-elaborate cover-up by the Mother Superior and an atheist psychiatrist who vows to get to the bottom of this nasty business.

The court-appointed psychiatrist, played by Susan Strasberg of TV's *Toma*, is an ex-Catholic with a chip on her shoulder. She lapsed into trite soliloquies that were less revealing of "Dr. Livingstone" than they were of Strasberg's inability to develop empathy for her character.

Pedagogy for piano teachers: dial UNCEAN

Piano teachers will be listening to the music March 2, 9 and 16 in a series of workshops offered via the University of Nebraska Continuing Education Audio Network (UNCEAN).

Joan Reist, a UNL piano instructor, will lead instruction from her studio at UNL, while participants gather in North Platte, Sidney, Scottsbluff and Alliance.

Reist will discuss a variety of topics for established and beginning teachers, including the teaching of reading music and selected literature.

UNCEAN is a system that utilizes telephone lines, microphones and speakers to carry instruction from the Lincoln and Omaha campuses to various sites across the state.

Orvid Owens, UNL coordinator for the program, described response to a similar series in 1983 as tremendous.

Peggy Cass (familiar from game shows *To Tell the Truth* and *The Match Game*) played Mother Miriam Ruth in her own belting barmaid baritone. Her characterization worked, but only because it didn't require much effort. A Mother Superior and a psychiatrist weren't really on stage; it was Cass in a habit and Strasberg in a double-knit suit.

Agnes was Agnes. A fine performance by Lynn Chausow as the innocent sister maintained a thread of sincerity that frayed only during the last half of the second act. Part of that was due to a sermonizing script. And Chausow may have just pooped out after a strenuous first act. She worked hard in the first act to maintain some chemistry among the three characters. The effort seemed to take its toll on her during the second act; she peaked too soon.

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