

Arts & Entertainment

NDT provides new interpretation of 'Godot'

By Eric Peterson

The Nebraska Directors' Theatre production of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* will use the experimental play in ways new to Lincoln. Four of the five male characters will be played by females, and at least part of the production will be seen by prisoners at the Nebraska state penitentiary, in director Michael McAlister's effort to try a different interpretation and reach a neglected audience.

Waiting for Godot will show Thursday through Saturday, at 8 p.m. at the Nebraska Directors' Theatre, 421 S. Ninth St. Tickets are \$3 for students and senior citizens, \$4 for others, and seats are always limited at the small NDT space.

McAlister said using female actors was part of his first concept of the play. "I made a very conscious decision that I wanted to play it with mostly female actors, and have it played androgynously," he said.

Lynette Welter will play Didi, Cassie Moore will play Pozzo, Cil Stengel will be Lucky, an unnamed boy will be played by Diane Pitzil, and William Schutz will play Gogo.

For McAlister, female actors playing traditionally male roles is not only important to his thematic interpretation but a way to achieve balance.

"I feel that women in the theater, especially in Nebraska, haven't got the opportunity men have, particularly in the number of roles," he said.

McAlister said he thinks his production of *Waiting for Godot* gains feeling from having women play male characters.

"I think the women in the cast bring a really genuine intelligence and sensitivity that in some ways is not touched on when you don't see women onstage."

McAlister noted that an absurdist play like *Waiting for Godot* lends itself very well to this kind of experimentation, and said he has heard of two other productions in which women actors formed part of the cast of Beckett's play.

The last production of *Waiting for Godot* in Lincoln was directed by UNL professor William Morgan in 1967, McAlister said.

McAlister said returning to existentialist classics like *Waiting for Godot* could be helpful to people who have run out of logical and rational answers in a world of impending nuclear war.

"I don't think people are getting enough of the answer from *Laverne and Shirley* or *Raiders of the Lost Ark*," he said.

For McAlister, going back to Beckett and Ionesco

demonstrates a renewed interest in metaphysical searching. He has dedicated this production of *Waiting for Godot* to the late UNL philosophy instructor Hardy Jones.

Unfortunately, the entire production of *Waiting for Godot* cannot be shown at the prison because of insurmountable scheduling problems. However, either a cutting from the play which can stand by itself or at the very least a videotape of this production will be shown April 15 at the penitentiary. McAlister worked through the Nebraska Civil Liberties Union to take *Waiting for Godot* into the prison.

McAlister pointed out that Beckett's play has been very effective in a prison setting, and prisoners have traditionally shown great involvement. "I think the success with prisoners derives from this knowledge that people in prison have over people out here of what it is like to wait, or what it is like not to be able to get out of a situation...It brings out a response sooner."

A question and answer session will follow the prison performance. "The actors would like to do this very much," McAlister said. "We're very anxious to see what the reaction is...and hopefully get a feeling of what it's like for the prisoners."



Fictional hard rockers Spinal Tap: Their album features selections from Rob Reiner's satiric new film, *This is Spinal Tap*. Polygram Records

Spinal Tap reveals illness in music

By Toger Swanson

This Is Spinal Tap, but is this music?

The soundtrack from the new movie *This Is Spinal Tap* is bad heavy metal and excellent satire. Pity the listener who only samples the bland, highly cliched rock of this quintet of comics. The album is packaged in an ominous but tongue-in-cheek, black cover. Its titles are as wonderfully absurd as any release from Saxon, Axe or Motley Crue. "Hell Hole," "Heavy Duty Rock and Roll," and "Rock and Roll Creation," could be from any of the demonic, macho heavy metal bands.

Sex, of course, is given an equal billing. "Sex Farm," from their 1980 album *Shark Sandwich* features typical heavy metal, macho lyrics:

*Sex farm woman
Don't you see my silo rising high
Working on a Sex Farm
Hosing down your barn door
Bothering your livestock
They know what I need*

With lyrics like these how can one keep a straight face? Unfortunately they are no more outrageous than those written by bands which take themselves seriously. Its believability is what makes the album such good parody.

Endless solos and growling conceit are not the only characteristics of Spinal Tap. It is the latest in an evolution which the album traces through three decades. The band's early efforts contain a tranquil, sweet ballad about a mother's tea and cakes and a breezysimplistic anthem, "Listen to What the Flower People Say." Apparently, the band made the transition from the flower power generation to the overtly commercial, smash-and-bash heavy metal music of the 70s and 80s with other cuts such as "Tonight I'm Gonna Rock You Tonight" and "Stonehenge," a dreary, confusing song from their concept album *The Sun Never Sweats*. The mystic lyrics of "Stonehenge," followed by crashing synthesizers and then a bouncy Scottish folk tune are a very confusing mixture.

Records

Spinal Tap is unique, however, because they don't mean it. They're only having fun with the entire overblown, commercialized, glittery, glorified world of heavy metal music. The band lays it on thick with bass drums and screeching guitars in a pounding, trouncing barrage which tortures the eardrums. The guitars and keyboards are ridiculous in their zealous solos and repetitious riffs. Vocals are growling and without musical quality, perfect for an album stuffed with gaudy excesses.

The lyrics are the best part of the album. They exalt rock and roll to a divine state in the song "Rock and Roll Creation," which features a harmony just enough off to make one doubt the sincerity of the band.

Slick's 'Software' LP over-synthesized failure



RCA Records

Grace Slick's *Software*: A musical generation gap?

By Stew Magnuson

Jefferson Starship singer and former hippie Grace Slick is the latest performer to jump on the syntho-rock bandwagon. And, unfortunately, like the former hippies and yuppies currently working as stockbrokers, *Software* (RCA), Slick's latest album, just doesn't seem right.

To write the music and provide the synthesizers for Slick's fourth LP, a German, Peter Wolf (not the former singer of the J. Geils Band) was imported to add the European synth-sound that the album strives for.

However, all one hears musically is a bunch of synthesizers. There are guest musicians listed like Jefferson Starship guitarist Paul Kanter, but all I heard was the repetitious dronings of the synthesizers.

As a concept, this album is a dismal failure. Slick adds to the synthesizers her anti-west and anti-technology lyrics which are meant to create a juxtaposition, but instead just makes this album seem like a trendy offering to a younger audience she will never have.

Who is going to buy this album? Certainly not a younger audience who have never heard of Grace Slick. And certainly not her old fans who remember her soaring voice from her days as a member of the Great Society and Jefferson Airplane.

So this album is just sort of a quirk, stuck somewhere in the middle of the ever increasing gap between the new and the old wave. *Software* doesn't bridge any gaps, it simply points out the miles between new music and the early rock that parented everything on the radio today. This LP is symbolic of a musical generation gap.

There is one high point to Slick's latest work. Her voice seems fine and the keyboards make no attempt to drown out her distinctive voice like the latest Starship offerings.

But her voice could have been used elsewhere. Her sarcastic tone could have been used with an equally hard musical.

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