

Arts & Entertainment

Juggling rep plays take communication

By Lise Olsen

With the rest of the campus in a summer "resession," Howell Theatre is a flurry of activity as the Nebraska Repertory Theatre opens its 1984 season.

In its 17th year of production, the Repertory Theatre is well-established. More than 500 season tickets already have been sold and nearly all performances should sell out, according to Manager Pat Overton.

The success of the summer shows requires careful schedule planning and managements Overton said. "The chemical mix of your season is all-important but terrifically difficult," Overton said.

This year the repertory group is divided into two groups an adult and a children's show.

"Crimes of the Heart," which opened last night, is a light drama written by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Beth Henly. It will run June 29, 30 and July 3 to 7, and 10 to 14 at 8 p.m. The second play, "George M!," is a musical based on the life of George Cohan, the "Father of Broadway." "George M!" opens at the Omaha University Theatre July 6 to 8 and 13 to 15, and plays in Lincoln July 19 to 21 and 24 to 28 at 8 p.m.

Musicals like "Godspell" in the 1983 season and "Man of La Mancha" in 1970 have been the Repertory Theatre's most successful shows. Also popular in the summer, according to Overton, are light comedies like the company's third show this year, "How the Other Half Loves" (August 2 to 4 and 7 to 11, at 8 p.m.), which is filled with "funny comings and goings and misunderstandings," Overton said. "A Toby Show" is this year's touring children's production.

Repertory theatre differs from school year university theatre in one major way — it's a professional company, thus actors and actresses are paid, rather than simply receiving academic credit although mostly students and faculty members are involved.

Casting directors attend auditions in places as far away as New York and California to find performers and technicians for the productions. This year, however, about 85 percent of the company is from the UNL and UNO theatre programs, as opposed to only 60 percent in previous years, Overton said.

Charles Bell, a graduate student in fine arts at UNL who plays the title role in "George M!," said the professional atmosphere has positive effects on the company.

"People are working harder and really growing in nine hours of rehearsal a day," Bell said. "They are assuming a professional attitude instead of that of a student."

Also unlike school year productions, the Repertory Theatre often combines the crews and casts and even props and scenery in all productions. In fact, one of the biggest problems, according to Stage Manager Joette Pelster, is communication — coordinating the needs and efforts of three casts and three directors and their technical crews, and doing it all within the confines of a single theatre building.

This year's juggling of three play rehearsal schedules and the demands of casts and crews was complicated by the decision to perform the musical "George M!" at both UNL and UNO theatres. This was done to "expand the repertory and take it into new territory," as well as get the two drama departments working more closely together, Overton said.

Taking "George M!" on the road also affected the scheduling of other plays and the very nature of the company itself. In fact, the 1984 Nebraska Repertory Theater is not a repertory theatre at all. The term "repertory" means "in rotating performance" and this year the company has scheduled its shows in "stock theatre" succession. However, the name and the basic tradition of good summer entertainment remains the same. Tickets are still available for most performances of the Nebraska Repertory Theatre at Howell Theatre Box Office, for \$5.

Kimball show spoofs flapper era

By Chris Burbach

Fun, fun, fun is the tune at Kimball Recital Hall this summer — not surfs up Beach Boys banter but Roaring 20s flapper folderol.

Director Gregg Tallman has a twofold purpose for the UNL Music Theatre's one and only summer production, "The Boy Friend." "We wanted to provide an outlet for students in the new Music Theatre major program — give them a chance to perform, and provide the people of Lincoln with some pure entertainment."

"The Boy Friend" is a musical comedy spoof of the flapper era — rife with music, dance and, according to Tallman, laughs. "I particularly like it. It's a fun show, and perfect for the new majors" because of its combination of music, dance and acting, Tallman said.

The 2 hour musical is about a wealthy English girls' school on the Riviera. The girls all fall in love with French boys, and each has a different problem with her respective boyfriend in a sort of song and dance sit com.

What is director Tallman emphasizing in the Music Theatre's production of "The Boy Friend?"

"The style of 1920s acting. It's kind of silly and shallow. We're spoofing that style in which Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire used to break into song and dance out of nothing," Tallman said.

The major difference between Music Theatre in the summer and Music Theatre during the school year is in the atmosphere, according to Tallman. "It doesn't really differ — they (students) still get credit for it. It's just easier and more fun in the summer. We don't have other things pulling at us. It's easier to concentrate," he said. "Almost everyone has spent 5 or 6 hours a day for the last month rehearsing. During the school year, we have to spread rehearsals over three months."

An added attraction to "The Boy Friend" is the orchestra, "a typical 1920s jazz band," Tallman said.

According to Kimball Box Office Manager Amy Meilander, "The Boy Friend" is just right for summer audiences' taste. "People love to come to light musicals in the summer — just go out on a summer night and walk on over to Kimball. It's easy to sell tickets for something like 'The Boy Friend,'" she said. Ticket sales for opening night are going quite well, according to Meilander; but there are still some tickets left.

"The Boy Friend" opens Saturday night and repeats July 6 and 7, all at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$6 or \$5 regular, and \$4 or \$3 for students, children and senior citizens.

Celebrate July 4 with a picnic lunch

By Judi Nygren

The Fourth of July promises to be a fun filled day. Independence Day traditionally means a day off from summer classes and work, a day spent with friends and family and a day of celebration at one of Lincoln's parks or lakes.

This year the Lincoln Jaycees are sponsoring festivities at Holmes Lake. Activities for both children and adults include boat races, puppet shows, concerts and fireworks. Activities begin at 8 a.m. and fireworks begin at 9:30 p.m.

To add to the fun, pack a picnic basket with the following delectables.

Pecan Chicken

1 cup finely ground pecans
½ cup bread crumbs
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon dry mustard
¼ teaspoon pepper
½ cup butter

2 tablespoons mustard
8 assorted chicken pieces

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In large plastic bag, combine pecans, bread crumbs, salt, dry mustard and pepper. Shake bag to mix ingredients. Set aside.

In small saucepan, melt butter then mix mustard in with a whisk. Remove from heat and continue beating for three minutes until well blended. Pour butter mixture into a shallow bowl.

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Dave Trouba/Daily Nebraskan

"Where's 'The Boy Friend'?" At the Kimball.

'Tattletales' emcee fights stupidity

Editors note: This article is unadulterated fiction.

It's recently come to my attention that a great injustice is being perpetrated on the afternoon television-viewing public. All those faithful to this unique genre know what I'm talking about. First they take away our "Brady Bunch," and now, our beloved "Tattletales" is gone.

"Tattletales" started out in 1957, with a pilot originally titled "Those Silly Stoolpigeons." Ace game-show host Bert Convy, (the show's sole master of

Billy Shaffer

ceremonies during its 27-year run) has epitomized the definitive emcee. His suave blend of smooth patter and curt retorts has consistently proven to be a real crowd-pleaser. Convy's personal grooming habits and extensive wardrobe have also helped make the show the stunning success story it's been.

In a recent phone interview, Convy described the final days of the show's demise.

"I showed up at the studio one day, and my parking space was gone. I walked to my dressing room and there on the door where my name had reigned for so many years, were the words "Tom Kennedy." Needless to say, I was devastated. They booted us — after only one week air time of my new French perm. No warning, nothing." Convey turned to drugs and alcohol.

"I was on the verge of losing everything — my swimming pool, my wife, my girlfriend, my guest spots on the 'Tonite Show.' I even blew off a few episodes appearing on the "Love Boat." I'd reached rock bottom," he said.

Convy's personal climb from his depths of despair and self-degradation is a story of courage and intestinal fortitude.

"I was coked out one day, and tried to strangle Sparky, our cocker spaniel, for barking at the pool cleaners. In the middle of this devious act, I realized just how sick I'd become, and that maybe there is life after 'Tattletales.'"

For Convy, there may be hope for the future, but television audiences the world over will have to learn to cope without the afternoon hilarity and hi-jinx that were the trademarks of "Tattletales." Surely, the powers that be (i.e., network executives) should see fit to return this classic to the airwaves. But then, network exec's are, on the one hand, next to God, and on the other had exceedingly stupid and incessantly wrong.

The only redeeming aspect for this sad debacle is that "Tattletales" replacement "Body Language" could prove to become a show with as high standards of quality programming as its predecessor. Only time will tell on that matter, of course. And after all, we still have our "Eight Is Enough" in the meantime. But don't rule Mr. Convy out quite yet.

"I'm gonna fight this thing," he said.

"We're thinking of pulling a Mike Douglas and going into syndication. The country needs 'Tattletales' and, by God, I'm gonna give it to 'em."

Go get 'em, Bert.