

# Editorial

## Anti-abortion law would be ignored

In 1983, 5,625 Nebraska women had abortions — most for social and economic reasons. In the United States in 1983, 1.5 million abortions were performed.

To combat the increasing number of abortions, the Reagan administration is expected to propose a constitutional amendment banning abortion.

The idea behind the ban is commendable — abortion is murder, and it should be used only in extreme cases, such as rape, incest or to protect the life of the mother.

But a constitutional amendment won't stop abortion. Even if the operations were illegal, unscrupulous doctors and other people still would perform them. People would resort to using coat hangers, as they did before abortion was legalized. More women would die during these illegal operations, thus defeating the right to life ideal.

In the late 1920s, a constitutional amendment was passed banning alcohol. The Prohibition amendment is the only amendment ever to be repealed. The law could not be enforced because people found ways to get liquor, just as people would find ways to get abortions. Social customs are sometimes more powerful than the law.

The Nebraska women who had abortions in 1983 were required to list their reasons for having the operation. According to the Nebraska Bureau of Vital Statistics, the results were:

- 5,472 women said they had abortions because of social and economic reasons.
- 119 said they had abortions because their physical health was poor.
- 10 said they had abortions because their lives would be in imminent danger if they had a baby.
- 236 said they had abortions because of mental health.
- three said they had abortions because they were raped.
- 1,658 listed "other" as the reason for the abortion.

The figures show women are abusing abortion. Most use the operation as a convenient form of birth control, rather than the last resort it should be.

But an absolute ban cannot solve the abortion problem. Decisions must be made on a case by case basis. If a woman is a victim of rape or incest, or if a woman's life is in danger, the abortion should be performed as soon as possible — definitely within the first trimester before the fetus is fully developed.

The solution to the abortion problem is responsibility. Men, as well as women, must be taught to take responsibility for their actions. In elementary and high schools, students should be taught about birth control and also about abortion.

By learning about abortion procedures and human development, people might realize that a fetus is a human being with fingers, toes and most importantly, a brain.

Abortion procedures also should be stressed. Children and young adults should know that a vacuum device sucks the child out of the womb arm by arm and leg by leg. They also should know of other methods, such as injecting saline solution into the womb to burn the fetus, kill it and eventually induce labor.

Peer pressure also must be used to decrease the number of abortions. If society took abortions more seriously, people would be more cautious and try to avoid them.

Abortion is wrong, but an absolute ban is not the answer.



## Two views rule today's music

Last week, while driving to school, I was struck by a song played on the radio. My radio was tuned to KUCV, "Lincoln's classical music station," and the Grand March from Verdi's rather famous opera, "Aida," was being broadcast. A large passage of this march is taken up by a trumpet solo accompanied by the orchestra. As I was listening, and driving, what struck me so about the passage could be summed up in one word: tasteful. The passage was simply incredibly tasteful.

**Jim Rogers**

As I reflected upon the passage as it was played, I grew somewhat sad; tasteful music seems to be something of a rarity today. More saddening, I thought, was that probably only several hundred other people, maybe a thousand tops, were listening to this example of tasteful music. The reason, I believe, so few other people were probably listening with me is because insular groups within society require music to serve some other end than that of the truly beautiful. Two views of music seem to predominate in popular society.

The first view is the most outrageous. It is outrageous because narrowness on the part of the popular mind is typically the least informed, as well as because arrogance on the part of the strong — in this case those who dominate the music market — rests solely upon the strength of numbers rather than any claim to truth, justice or, most relevant to this discussion, any claim to advance the truly beautiful.

An example of this view occurred last year when a Daily Nebraskan reader wrote to the arts and entertainment section of the paper complaining about a consistent bias against a certain type of music in the reviews. In the midst of this person's letter was inserted a most insightful comment. "Now, so you don't think I'm closed-minded: I have a wide variety of musical tastes. I love the Rolling

Stones and R & B. I like southern rock, Bruce Springsteen, Prince . . . I even like David Bowie!" Because the criteria for good music, according to this view, is the pleasure it provides to the person. We shall call this the hedonist view of music.

The other predominate non-beauty-based criteria for the worth of music is found primarily amongst evangelical Christians. Dutch theologian Gerardus van der Leeuw described the typically parochial attitude toward music — and art in general — found amongst many Christians: "There are Christians for whom the question of the relationship between the beautiful and the holy is exhausted by the question of the moral and pedagogical demands that must be made of a work of art."

"For them, a 'Christian' book is a book in which there is no swearing, but preaching; 'Christian' music is composition free from the blemishes which infect opera and dance; a 'Christian' picture is a work of art in which everyone is decently dressed, preferably representing biblical figures." We shall call the view outlined by van der Leeuw (but not subscribed to by him) the propagandistic view of music because the standard of the worth of music is limited essentially to the words associated with the themes.

The aesthetic absolutist seems to trace a rather precarious line around both the hedonist and propagandistic views. Yet it seems that his view alone is able to assert that it is the beautiful in music that makes it worthwhile.

Plato encompasses my objection to the hedonist view of music in his dialogue "the Laws" when he notes that "it is commonly said that the standard of rightness in music is its pleasure-giving effect. That, however, is an intolerable sentiment; in fact, 'tis a piece of flat blasphemy." Instead, Plato posits that music, which "is an art of producing likenesses or representations" is good not when it is productive of pleasure but rather when it "retains its likeness to the model of the noble."

Plato concludes that the opinion worthy of being heeded regarding the worthiness of a selection of music is that of the person who excels in excellence: "We may take it that the finest music is that which delights

the best men, the properly educated, that, above all, which pleases the one man who is supreme in goodness and education."

My difficulty with Plato's view, however, is that ultimately it reduces to simply a version of the propagandistic view of music. Thus he rejects the divorce of "melody and rhythm from words" because "it is the hardest of tasks to discover what such wordless rhythm and tune signify" and thus easily lends itself to "unmusical legerdemain."

Theologian van der Leeuw rejects Plato's view and instead asserts that great music can be much, much more than merely propagandistic. He sets forth the example of J.S. Bach as almost paradigmatic and concludes that Bach most appropriately "performed the awesome miracle of combining his service to the (church) congregation with his service to art, the liturgical structure of his work with its aesthetic structure. The artist is priest, is himself a theologian. A miracle was developed by him. Here art has become in truth a holy action."

Thus it does seem as though the position of aesthetic absolutism does have some rudimentary beginning point in the modern world with which to build a cogent popular position as against the artistic hedonist and propagandist.

I fear that, all in all, my meandering musical musings may smack all too much of a post hoc attempt to merely rationalize my own musical prejudices. However, such is not my goal. My desire is to see more careful reflection about the role and power of music in culture on the part of all.

Too often, it seems, the musical hedonist is all too willing to unimaginatively embrace whatever music the crosswinds of popular appetite blow his way. On the other hand, the musical propagandist is usually too quick to flatly condemn any music not verbally containing a message of which he approves. Neither was probably listening to the Grand March from "Aida" with me the other day. And if either were listening; neither were probably enjoying the performance because of their respective prejudices. Tasteful music deserves better.

## Letters

asked the general manager if the ad could be printed. He told me the ad could not be printed because of a new Publications Board policy, which finds such ads discriminatory. So I tried to place an ad stating, "Roommate wanted, no smoking, no pets, must be interested in homophile concerns, etc." (I find it strange that people do not view restrictions against pets and smoking as discriminatory.)

When the new board takes office, it should take a serious look at the "new policy" to decide whether it represents the entire board. I also would like to see all the members of the publications board be present so that student opinion will have adequate representation.

Michael Sinn  
freshman  
sociology

## Ad policy deserves new look by board

On Wednesday, I tried to place a roommate advertisement in the Daily Nebraskan. It read, "Gay male needs roommate. \$116.67 rent, one-third utilities. Call Mike at (phone number)."

After the receptionist read my ad, she

## Daily Nebraskan

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