

# Arts & Entertainment

## Amorous musical opens tonight at Kimball hall

By Cindy Rohren  
Staff Reporter

When Americans think of France, three things generally come to mind: wine, berets and love. Spain leads France in wine exports, the beret is more common in Italy, but amour is a repeating theme in the chansons of one of France's best known song writers, Jacques Brel.

"Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris" will be presented by the UNL Music Theatre for seven performances beginning tonight at Kimball Hall, 11th and R streets. This non-traditional musical is actually a collection of 25 storytelling songs by singer/guitarist Brel compiled and translated by Eric Blau and Mort Schuman. Few spoken lines, no scenery changes, and simple costumes and make-up add to the simplistic uniqueness of this production.

"A lot of people go to the theater and they think, 'Ah, the scenery and costumes!' director Mark Jolen said. "Well, these people are in black."

Jolen, a visiting free-lance artist from Maryland, said he wanted to emphasize the underlying message rather than the spectacle of show.

"I want the audience to see inside the spoken word or inside the sung word; to be able to see truth," Jolen said.

Jolen received his master's degree from the University of Maryland. He performs regularly in Maryland and Washington D.C. and teaches part time at Montgomery College and Prince George's College. He has his own voice studio and occasionally acts as guest director, although usually on the east coast.

"When I first called and started talking about contracts and conceptual agreements and things like that, I said, this is going to sound real stupid, but I don't even know where Nebraska is. And now that I'm out here, I really like it."

After deciding the final cast of Donna Harler, Kris Olson, Richard Colla and Steve Andrew by videotape, Jolen arrived in Lincoln to start rehearsals June 9. Though the three-week rehearsal time could have been hectic and unsuccessful, Jolen said it ran smoothly.

"By the time I got here everything was well under control and they all knew what I wanted," Jolen said. "It was great."

Jolen decided to direct the production in order to convey what he believed to be Brel's "concept of simplicity."

"I really wanted to hold true to what the author wanted," Jolen said.

To create a more intimate atmosphere a platform was built in front of the stage for the performers. The audience will sit on the Kimball Hall stage and the four-member orchestra will play in the hall behind the actors and actresses. To compensate for the small cabaret sitting, the performers have had to make adjustments in their acting.

"Everything you do is magnified size-wise," Harler said. "So everytime you move, you're signaling... something to the audience."

Jolen said many classify the show as dated because the main catalyst is love. But he disagrees.

"Brel has tuned into the fact that we take on many masks as we go through life and we tend to live those fallacies and forget that there is a common link between us. There isn't a person on earth that doesn't want to be loved."

"Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris" opened off-Broadway in New York in 1972. The show was given the name after Brel declined an invitation to attend the premier in protest to the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War. The show will run June 28, 29, and July 3, 5, 6, 12 and 13 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for general admission and \$3 for students and senior citizens and can be purchased before the performance or by calling 472-3375.

## Don Henley

By Bill Allen  
Arts and Entertainment Editor

The best part of the Don Henley concert Wednesday night came at the very end. In this case that was great because the rest of the concert was sharp, visual and danceable.

For the second and last encore Henley's band started those familiar opening strains of "Hotel California," the classic hit made famous by the Eagles when Henley was their drummer.

### REVIEW CONCERT

The roar of the crowd drowned those opening strains and Henley started the lyrics at an extremely slow tempo. It's standard at famous musicals to speed up the tempo of well known songs ("Oklahoma," for instance) so the audience won't get bored with the sound. Elton John did this with his golden hit "Your Song," when he sang it in concert in Lincoln last fall.

However, Henley did the opposite. The lyrics were slowed down, every line sinking into a nostalgia-hungry audience. Only when Henley reached the refrain did he speed up to the normal tempo, then he went back to the slow tempo during the lyrics again. The effect was sensational and left the audience filled. Filled with what, it's hard to say, but it's a feeling you don't get at every concert.

The crowd was a mixture of younger Henley fans, known for his solo hits, "Boys of Summer," "All She Wants to Do Is Dance," and "Dirty Laundry," and older Eagles' fans, like myself.



Mark Davis/The Nebraskan

Don Henley played Wednesday at the Omaha Civic Auditorium, blending old Eagles' classics with his newer songs.

The new Henley solo songs were well done and clear, especially for a concert and sent the younger set into hysteria. Then, everyone got into the act during "Desperado,"

and "Life in the Fast Lane," classic Eagles' tunes performed well. Henley was a polished performer and appreciative of the audience response, which was refreshing.

## Combo mixes ethnic sounds

By Mike Grant  
Staff Reporter

Okay, it's Pop Quiz time. Which of these forms of music is truly "hip"?

A. Pop B. Polka C. Ska C. Latino.

The answer is, of course, "all of the above styles," especially when they are combined. But who could combine such variant forms of music without producing chaos? The musical cuisinart is none other than Brave Combo.

### REVIEW BEATS

Whether this Denton, Texas-based band is taking pop standards like the Doors' "People Are Strange" and turning it into a Yiddish Polka, or dusting off the old squeezebox to pour out a heavy accordion version of Iron Butterfly's "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida," the results are always danceable.

Carl Finch, leader of Brave Combo, calls these musical mutations "high energy ethnic music."

Finch, as lead vocalist, pianist, and accordionist is backed by Bubba Hernandez on bass, Mitch Marine on percussion, and Jeff Barnes, who plays both the saxophone and clarinet.

The band has been an established act in northern Texas for years and have toured nationally, opening for such prominent fusion acts as Los Lobos and Joe Carrasco, as well as conventional polka halls that usually feature bands like polka legend Frankie Yankovic.

How does your average Polka-Joe react to schottische versions of Jimi Hendrix?

"Old folks really enjoy it," Finch said in a telephone interview, "especially the little old ladies, who like the best."

"The student crowd is getting turned on to it. Things are really starting to happen with high energy ethnic music."

Trends seem to back up the Brave Combo style, now that Los Lobos, a Latino rock band from east L.A. has hit the scene with a mixture of Mexican ranchero music and rhythm and blues that is opening doors for other ethnically based bands.

Also, according to Finch, who is something of a musicologist, recording artists as diverse as Boz Scaggs and David Byrne of The Talking Heads have consulted him on accordion techniques.

Brave Combo's latest album, "World Dance Music," on the Four Dots label, has received favorable reviews. It in-

cludes a soaring schottische of "Lili Marlene," and anyone who isn't moved to dance by the ska version of Prez Prado's "Skokian" is a real candidate for the marble slab.

"What we really want to do is change people's perceptions of what is hip," Finch said. Well said, and well done. For too long, since at least the 1950s, mainline popular music in the U.S. has ignored the enormous contributions that polka, latino and other kinds of "ethnic" music have made, by concentrating almost solely on Anglo variations of music.

Brave Combo will be appearing at the Zoo Bar on Monday, July 1.

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