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**Theater**



Dave Bentz/Daily Nebraskan

The villain Little Harp (Jeff Talbott) threatens the heroine Rosamund (Mary Mares) in UNL's production of "The Robber Bridegroom."

**Director calls UNL stage production of 'Bridegroom' a 'bouncy musical'**

By Cindy Rohren  
Staff Reporter

"The Robber Bridegroom," the popular country musical based on the writings of Eudora Welty, opens tonight at 8 p.m. in Howell Theatre, 12th and R Streets.

**Theater Preview**

Rex McGraw, chairman of UNL's theatre and dance department and director of the play, said he chose the musical because it is "based on a good piece of writing," and it is commonly performed at colleges.

"Everybody's done it but us so it's time we did," McGraw said.

McGraw described the production as a "bouncy musical." Bluegrass music enhances the zany love affair between

"the dashing highwayman and a bewitching beauty," and complications arise as mistaken identities abound.

The play, set in Mississippi, is part fact, part fairytale. The cast of 23 play everything from common folk to southern belles to inanimate characters, such as walls.

"It deals with a story telling techniques so nothing is real," said McGraw.

McGraw said that rehearsals for this year's final UNL play begins in March, but for the first several weeks were only on weekends to incorporate students involved in other productions. He said that the actors have made a lot of progress in the 3 1/2 weeks of rehearsal and that he hasn't encountered any problems with the cast.

"I'm clever and imaginative and so are they," said McGraw. "The whole cast has been very inventive and quick to pick up on things."

McGraw said that one of the most remarkable aspects of the musical is

the high percentage of freshmen in the cast. He said that eight freshmen were cast in the production, a number that he said reflects the high degree of talent among the first year class.

"We have an incredible freshman class," McGraw said. "They're very energetic."

McGraw said that he and the lead, played by Kevin Hofeditz, are the only faculty members involved in the production. The set, costumes, lighting and sound were all student-designed and all other characters are played by students.

"The Robber Bridegroom" will run through Saturday and April 28 through May 3, with shows at 8 p.m. each evening and matinees Saturdays at 2 p.m. Tickets, which are \$4 for students for weekdays and \$4.50 for weekend performances, can be purchased at the Howell Theatre Box Office or by calling 472-2073.

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