

Arts & Entertainment

Laser rock shows zap Mueller Planetarium

By Richard Egger II
Staff Reporter

Each Friday and Saturday night, and Sunday afternoons, the Ralph Mueller Planetarium presents "Laser Fantasies," and this year the museum has added a new five-color projection system.

Easing into the softness of the high-backed chair, you notice humming voices around you. As your eyes adjust to the circular, dimly lit ceiling above you, a spherical tranquility surrounds you. You feel a strange sense of security, unique to the hard edges of your cosmopolitan routine.

Then the dimness changes to darkness and the voices fade. 2500 watts of music fills your ears. Imposing, but tasteful, these are the melodic signatures you've come to hear. But the sound is just one reason you are here.

A bright flash of light pierces your eyes, followed by brilliant pulses of electronic red, blue and aqua. They dance upon the sphere above you, creating shapes unlike any you've seen before.

Have you entered the Twilight Zone?

Not quite, but what you are experiencing carries an uncanny resemblance to such perceptions.

Dubbed by the planetarium as "Nebraska's best hour of rock 'n' roll," the shows are sponsored by Lincoln radio station KFMQ and are produced by Coherent Productions and the planetarium staff.

Jack Dunn, coordinator of the planetarium, said people should come to these shows "to see what's new and exciting at the planetarium."

"No two of our shows are the same," he said, "and people will always see something different. Even when the same music is being played, they will experience different visual performances with each show."

In past years, planetarium shows

were produced with only one red laser on a system that did not allow nearly as much computer imagery as the present system, Dunn said. The new five-color laser projection system utilizes shades of red, green, blue, aqua and a combination of the latter three, which can produce other shades, like violet.

Dunn said this system also allows more use of computer animation, gives vast programming capabilities and allows those in the control booth to actually draw images with the laser. In addition, certain laser images can be projected through various filters and appear on the ceiling while other laser images are superimposed upon them. This produces an atmospheric, three-dimensional effect.

"These things are expensive," Dunn said.

The new system's estimated cost is about \$65,000 and is owned by UNL junior engineering student Walt Simmons, founder of Coherent Productions.

The planetarium has a 50-50 contract with Simmons, Dunn said. It previously had a similar contract with Laserworks of Cincinnati, he said.

Dunn said Simmons designed the computer software and built the laser controls for the system.

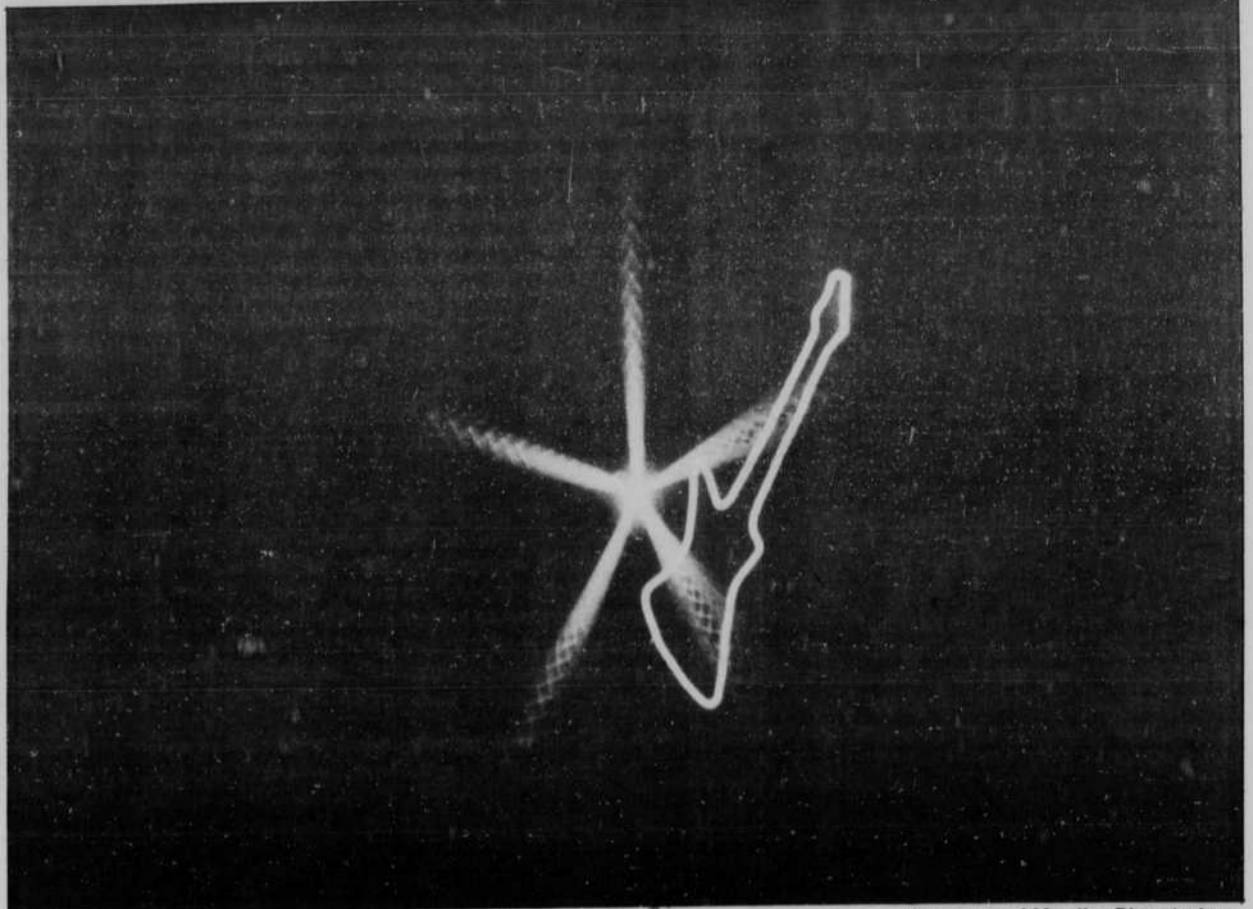
Dunn first became interested in lasers at a planetarium meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, several years ago.

"I was introduced to Larry Goodrich of Cincinnati. He believed in a philosophy that 'less is more,' and that it is not how much you can do with a laser, but rather what you actually do with it," Dunn said.

He said he believes the subtlety of laser-light shows are his most intriguing aspect of this kind of work.

Although lasers are often thought of as dangerous, the ones used in these shows can only be dangerous if they are used in the wrong way, he said.

"The lasers that we use emit only a small percentage of 100 milliwatts of power. The only way that somebody



Courtesy of Mueller Planetarium

A laser guitar at Mueller Planetarium.

could get hurt at one of these shows is if they somehow got in the path of the beams and stared directly into them for 10 or more seconds. Even then, though, the eye would be inclined to shut by its natural reaction to such heated light," Dunn said.

The planetarium gets its musical ideas from what is regarded as the most popular music in the Lincoln community.

"We'll do what sells the most. People wanted U2, so we're doing some U2 shows this year. If the people wanted Slim Whitman, it would be a judgment call, but we would probably decline to do such a show," Dunn said. "Other than that, we will continue to do what people want to see."

The planetarium works on a performance contract with various local radio stations to provide these shows to the public.

"They advertise our shows on their stations, and we advertise their stations at our shows," Dunn said.

Five local stations now assist in these shows. KFMQ sponsors Laser Fantasies, which are performed on Friday and Saturday nights. KLDZ, KHAT, KFRX and KLIN all sponsor shows that appear on Sunday afternoons at 3:30 p.m. Each show has a different theme, including music by the Beatles, Elvis Presley, Fresh Aire, Fleetwood Mac, Kenny G., Chuck Berry, and Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, and several others.

Laser Fantasies by KFMQ includes music by Genesis, Van Halen,

Boston, U2, ZZ Top, Pink Floyd, the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin and Heart.

The show times are 8, 9:30 and 11 p.m. through Nov. 21.

Admission is \$3.50 for adults, \$3 for students with ID and \$2 for children 12 and under.

Interested parties can also rent out the planetarium for private shows for \$200.

"People can choose the music that they like from the selections that we have available," Dunn said.

It takes two to three weeks to produce the individual shows because most of the work involved has to be done at night.

"During the day there are usually too many distractions, so we work mostly at night," Dunn said.

Home, heartache, youth, politics in 'tango-dy'

By Geoff McMurtry
Staff Reporter

UPC Foreign Film Series' "Tangos, The Exile of Gardel," (125 minutes, Argentina/France) plays Sunday at the Sheldon Film Theater at 2:30, 4:45, 7 and 9:15 p.m. Admission is \$2.75 with student ID, \$3.75 without.

Movie Review

"Smash all the ready-made formulas. Don't be afraid of risks. Make your own art form."

This is the message "talented but mad" writer/poet Juan Uno sends from his Argentine homeland to his exiled friend and collaborator, Juan Dos (Miguel Angel Sola). While meant to describe the music they work on together, it also applies to this film.

Beautiful, brilliant and surreal, Argentine director Fernando E. Solanas' "Tangos" flutters through several cinematic forms - tragedy, comedy and musical - but always revolves around the dancing of the tango.

always revolves around the dancing of the tango.

A small group of exiled Argentine artists are living in Paris, missing their politically troubled homeland and, between the trials of their daily lives, rehearsing an experimental dance based on the tango. Mixing tango, tragedy and comedy, the experiment is called a tango-dy, and represents the despair and longing of exiles for their home. Still, it retains the optimism and beauty of people who refuse to give in to pessimism and inertia.

Any reservations about something called a tango-dy disappear soon enough. Deeply thought-provoking, yet vibrant and full of life, the tango-dy and, in a larger context, "Tangos," charms and entices the viewer.

As we watch him work to put together his tango-dy, Juan Dos's enthusiasm and conviction are too seductive to ignore. Through every setback, trial, frustration and lull he keeps believing in the tango-dy, until we believe in it as much as he does. We are caught up in the beauty of the dance, its passion, energy and message.

Twenty-year-old Maria (Gabriela Toscano) is the focus of the film and the daughter of the enchanting Mariana (Marie Laforet), who's the featured dancer of the tango-dy and a well-known actress in her native Argentina before she left for Paris eight years before.

The story is narrated by Maria and her friends in a series of musical interludes in the streets and parks of Paris.

While the biggest concern for most of the exiles is when and if they can safely return to their strife-torn homeland, the exiled youth of Maria's age are more concerned with the problems of growing up than with their parents' longing to return to a land they left at a young, unsentimental and barely remembered age. They miss their homeland, but they also realize they are young in Paris. "Tangos" offsets the hopeful longing of Mariana and the adults vividly against the youthful, exuberant optimism of her daughter, Maria, and her teen-age contemporaries.

The story gets complicated, occasionally writhing between the many central characters who come and go in and out of Paris, events in Argentina and events in Paris. While the English subtitles work very well, a bit of knowledge of South American history is helpful and at times necessary.

Carlos Gardel was a legendary Argentine tango singer in Paris, who died in a plane crash in 1935. General Jose de San Martin helped Simon Bolivar liberate South America from Spanish control in the early 1800s and spent the last 25 years of his life in exile in Boulogne, France. Discepolo was a popular tango poet of the 1930s. These characters all appear, despite being dead, in surrealistic sequences that torment and inspire the characters in their continuing efforts to complete their tango-dy.

"Tangos" is not a "political" film, but politics are central to most of its conflicts. A sign asks, "Donde estan?" (Where are they?) referring to the hundreds of thousands who've

disappeared at the hands of various death squads. But the beauty, optimism and vision of director Solanas cannot be tarnished or undermined by the sobering statements he makes.

The ending scene of Maria and her friends dancing on the street in front of a gathered crowd (shot from an upper story of a building across the street so the crowd doesn't know about the camera), is visually stunning, leaving the viewer with an indelible breathlessness that captures the majestic beauty of "Tangos: The Exile of Gardel."

The UPC Foreign Film Series schedule for the remainder of the semester is:

Oct. 18 — "Marathon Family," Yugoslavia (95 minutes)

Nov. 1 — "Package Tour," Hungary (75 minutes)

Nov. 15 — "Sacrificed Youth," China (95 minutes)

Dec. 6 — "No End," Poland (108 minutes)

Screening times are 3, 5, 7 and 9 p.m.

UNL Orchestra to perform Dvorak

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Orchestra, under the direction of Dr. Robert Emile, will give a free evening performance at 8 p.m. Sun-

day in Kimball Recital Hall.

Two works will be performed by the 50-piece ensemble:

the "Overture" to Fra Diavolo, by Daniel Francois-Esprit Auber, and Anton Dvorak's "New World" symphony in E minor.

Talent applications due on Monday

Homecoming Talent Show applications are due Monday at 4 p.m., said Jill Keiderling, Walpurgisnacht chairwoman.

All UNL students are eligible to audition for the Oct. 21 talent show,

which will be at 7 p.m. in the Nebraska Union Centennial Ballroom.

Auditions will be Oct. 8 in the Centennial Room.

Applications can be picked up in the CAP office, Nebraska Union 200.

Ten to 12 acts will be selected to perform in the contest. Prizes will be \$150, \$100 and \$50, Keiderling said.

The event is sponsored by UPC's Walpurgisnacht committee.

For more information call the CAP office at 472-2454.

