

'Nunsense' is a divine musical comedy with un-convent-ionally funny script

By Kari Kratky
Staff Reporter

"Nunsense," a musical comedy playing at Omaha's Firehouse Dinner Theatre, provides a refreshing change from the traditional view of a nun's life.

The production tells the story of

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four nuns and a mother superior who put on a variety show to raise money. The convent cook, Sister Julia —

"Child of God" — makes a soup that causes 52 of the sisters to die of botulism. They manage to bury 48 of the victims, but the mother superior buys a Betamax with the rest of the money. So the remaining dead sisters are put in the freezer until funds can be raised to bury them.

Blue nun, anyone?

Through off-the-wall humor, "Nunsense" pokes fun at growing up Catholic and at religion in general.

Each of the five actresses successfully portrayed a memorable, unique character. Their strong voices

blended well in the show's catchy songs. All the parts were well cast and performed.

Picture five nuns kicking in a chorus line, tap-dancing or presenting a short, one-scene ballet, "The Dying Nun." Envision them showing home movies like "Nunja" or promoting a recipe book entitled "Baking with the BVM." These antics and more appear on stage at the Firehouse.

"Nunsense" is a purely entertaining, hilarious show. Due to its popularity, it has been held over twice. It will run through Sunday.

Ohlsson mixes classical, modern

By Micki Haller
Senior Editor

Garrick Ohlsson's superlative performance of modern and classic music earned him the adoration and respect of the audience Saturday.

Ohlsson was called back to the stage twice after Schubert's Fantasy

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'People tend to prefer dead composers.'

—Ohlsson

in C Major, Opus 15, and played three encores after a standing ovation.

His nimble fingers at times raced through runs and across the keyboard with dazzling skill, but sometimes lovingly caressed the music and let it linger forever.

His machine-gun piano technique shone during the performance of Six New Etudes by George Perle. Writ-

ten in 1984, the 12-tone music is a nervous reflection of our times. Like our society, the moods and trends of the piece change as quickly as stop-lights.

Ohlsson said this was the Nebraska premiere of the piece.

Before playing the Perle piece, Ohlsson took a moment to explain it.

"People tend to get very scared by (modern music). People tend to prefer dead composers," he said.

"Don't struggle. It won't do any good." The audience laughed.

Ohlsson's last piece, Barber's Sonata, Opus 26, was written in 1950. Many segments were almost dream-like, and it was impossible to tell where the sounds stopped and started.

Ohlsson also played Beethoven's Sonata in E major.

The classical pieces were tenderly played and brought to life although the composers have been dead for centuries.

This was the first time Ohlsson had played the Schubert and Perle pieces, he said.

"The Beethoven is a very, very old friend," he said.

Besides playing the piano, Ohlsson said, he is an avid reader,

likes to spend time with friends, and plays tennis and pingpong.

"I'm pretty average," he said.

An admirer protested.

"In most things, I'm pretty average."

Ohlsson said he developed his technique through practice.

"I am naturally gifted for the piano," he said, but he credited his teachers with shaping that talent.

He said he's gone through two technical overhauls.

"It's hard to describe that in words," he said. "It would take hours, and it still won't be clear."

He said Olga Barabini taught him to play with less tension and Irma Wolpe introduced him to 20th-century music.

"I like mixing music," Ohlsson said after the concert.

"Sometimes people are more apprehensive about new music. I like to break the ice," he said.

He said he hated all-modern-music concerts because it is hard for him to digest five pieces of new music at one sitting.

Classical and contemporary music play off each other, he said.

"I choose the music because I love it and believe in it," he said.



Courtesy of 20th Century Fox

Justine Bateman in "Satisfaction."

'Satisfaction' predictable and entertainingly dumb

By William Rudolph
Staff Reviewer

Somebody thought they had a good idea. Somebody at NBC Productions came up with the brilliant concept: "Why don't we do a story about a struggling blue-collar band, fighting inner turmoil and outside pressures, with only one summer to make or break it? And let's throw in a twist: they're a girl group... well, we'd better throw in a guy for equality, but a nice guy. A kind of nerdy guy, but nice. And let's throw in some sexual tension, some laughs and a cameo by a big-time rock star, just to add some punch.

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"Now all we need is a catchy title. What about... yeah, let's call it 'Satisfaction!' That way, you can look at it from all the angles: the rock song (and let's have it open the movie, too), as a metaphor for the band's summer triumph playing to all those little Long Island preppies, and let's let the public think it's a double entendre too. After all, they're a girl band (whoops, there is that one guy). But he's nice. Oh yeah, and let's make them all wonder if Justine Bateman chose this title to get even with Michael J. Fox."

Well, gee, that's the movie in a nutshell. The opening credits should have warned me. When I saw the name Aaron Spelling — creator of "Dynasty," "Charlie's Angels" and "The Love Boat" — that should have alerted me that NBC Productions' "Satisfaction" was going to be nothing more than a 90-minute TV movie with four-letter words (no skin — after all, it's PG-13). Besides, what would Steven, Elyse and Alex say if sweet little Mallory bared her breasts on screen? Don't forget who's producing the film.

"Satisfaction" revolves around the band Mystery. We get Bateman (with a New York accent, no less) as a teen-age Joan Jett. But, hey, she's also valedictorian of her class and a scholarship recipient, no doubt due to her graduation speech in which she stirs her generation to make a difference instead of getting subverted by the "techo-tit" of today's society. She also plays a mean guitar and cowbell. Also in the band is the only other known actress, Trini Alvarado ("Times Square"), as Mooch, a tough gangster in black leather who plays a mean set of drums. To complete this happy little quintet, we've got Britta Phillips as Billy, the lead guitarist and druggie extraordinaire. If Justine's Joan Jett, then Britta's the jailbait Lita Ford, for sure. Oh yeah, don't forget Nickie, the nice guy from across the

street (Scott Coffey) who's into classical music and is recruited by Justine and company to play keyboards. Whoops, we forgot Daryle (Julia Roberts — why do all these girls have masculine names?), the "slut on her good days" who does eerie things with her chin while jamming on bass between intense perusals of the upper classes.

Mystery (how aptly named) manages to get itself hired to play the whole summer at the Long Island resort bar of Martin Falcon (Liam Neeson), a washed-up alcoholic record producer who hates them on sight.

In due time, all the usual TV-movie complications occur: Nickie falls for Mooch, who's really a pretty shy girl underneath her mop of hair and the black leather gear that she wears to the beach; Daryle decides she doesn't want to be just a sex plaything for both the law-school snobs summering at the resort and her blue-collar boyfriend; and the Falcon falls for Justine and begins to write songs again. He also wants to get them a job touring the dives of Europe.

But there are problems: Can Justine abandon her college plans? Will the summer of love last? Just what kind of an accent does that smooth Falcon dude speak in, anyway? Will Billy get off drugs before they kill her? Why is Mooch called that?

If Justine's Joan Jett, then Britta's the jailbait Lita Ford.

Of course, I don't want to spoil the ending, but common sense and friendship prevail and it all ends happily for everyone except the Falcon. You know he's not a good guy: He drinks and smokes in today's "Just Say No" era.

The acting in "Satisfaction" can best be described as remarkably noteworthy, considering the lines the cast has to deliver. The rock sequences with Mystery aren't all that bad — it's just hard to keep a straight face while they jam out to covers of Aimee Stewart's 1979 disco hit "Knock on Wood" and the original musical source for the Oreo Big Stuff commercial.

The best thing in "Satisfaction" is unquestionably Debbie Harry, even if she's only on the screen for about three minutes. Deb has two lines and is given third billing for her

See SATISFACTION on 7

Professor aims at teaching art of turning stones into weapons

By Micki Haller
Senior Editor

In 40 minutes, 277 people poured into the Encounter Center at Morrill Hall Sunday and saw a research associate in anthropology knap flint.

Flint knapping is the time-honored Indian art of making arrowheads.

More than 50 people crowded around Peter Bleed to watch him transform stones into weapons and tools.



Mark Davis/Daily Nebraskan

Blead demonstrates flint knapping.

"To make a good one, two hours isn't too long," Bleed said, but an arrowhead can be made in as little as 45 minutes.

Blead said he learned how to knap flint from a man in Idaho who had taught himself how to make stone tools.

He became interested in knowing how people made tools because he wanted to know more than archaeological names and dates, he said.

"If we know how they made artifacts, we might be able to know

how they lived," Bleed said.

People came from around the region to the demonstration.

Estaline Carpenter and Ceres Henkel of Fairbury saw the flint knapping on a morning TV program and decided to see it firsthand. They brought Henkel's two grandchildren and a friend.

"Basically, we're interested in museum-type things," Henkel said. "But this rock knapping is so interesting."

Stan Jensen, an associate professor in plant pathology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said he came to the demonstration to learn more about flint-knapping.

Many people brought arrowheads and other artifacts. An arrowhead buried in a vertebra was passed around.

Peggy Engelman, Encounter Center coordinator, said people are just interested in making arrowheads.

She said she thought the nice weather Sunday had a lot to do with the turnout.

The flint-knapping program is fourth in the Encounter Center's "Sunday Afternoon with a Scientist" series.

Brett Ratcliffe, curator of entomology for the University of Nebraska State Museum, will give a program about insects on April 10.

All programs are at the Encounter Center at Morrill Hall from 2 to 4 p.m.