

Jewish, lesbian folk-singer Phranc to play UNL stage

By Ken Havlat
Staff Reporter

Phranc, a self-defined "basic, all-American, Jewish, lesbian folk-singer," will make her Nebraska debut Saturday night at 8 in the Great Plains Room of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln East Union.

The performance is part of Women's Week, sponsored by the University Program Council's Women's Words and Music Committee.

Her only album, "Folksinger," on Rhino, is a refreshing blend of styles. Unfortunately, it was accepted more by European than American audiences. It introduced her not only as a singer for feminists or lesbians, but as a universalist with subjects everyone can relate to.

The Smiths thought so much of Phranc that they made her the opening act for their 1986 American tour. While critics were trying to figure out whether the Smiths were art or drone, Phranc was described as phenomenal.

Phranc has paid her dues. She moved from radical feminism to Los Angeles' punk-art underground, where she was part of the duo Nervous Gender. Then she became guitar-

ist for the influential post-punk combo Catholic Discipline (in the film "Decline and Fall of Western Civilization," Phranc can be seen wearing an interesting hat while introducing the band). And now she is a folk singer.

For "Radio Tokyo Tapes, Volume 3," one of the strongest anthology series ever produced, Phranc contributed "The Strange Death of Mary Hooley," which is about a slice of life in her community.

Several magazines from her hometown of Venice, Calif., wrote about her attending her 10-year class reunion a few years ago. While most people looked older than they actually were, Phranc said, she felt like a kid who had walked into the wrong place. Most of her former classmates had become materialistic yuppies with kids. Except for a couple of women who'd been members with her in a Bluebird troop, no one knew who she was, and when they saw her they yelled, "Susie Gottlieb! Susie Gottlieb!" No one knew she was now Phranc the folk-singer.

She has toured regularly since "Folksinger" came out in 1985. Phranc is now writing material for a new LP. While her manager said no



Phranc

Courtesy of Rhino Records

contract has been signed with anyone yet, Phranc deserves the best. Proof of this should come to anyone attending her show.

Tickets are \$4 for UNL students, \$5 for the general public. Jaci Augustin and Kathy Tejcka of the band Amethyst will open for Phranc.

Lawyer performs one-man play

By Mark Lage
Staff Reporter

A one-man play based on the life of famed trial lawyer Clarence Darrow will be performed by Donald B. Fiedler on Tuesday.

"An Evening With Darrow" was written by David W. Rintels and is based on Irving Stone's novel "Clarence Darrow for the Defense." The production is directed by Suzanne Dieckmann.

The play details several episodes in the life of Darrow, one of the greatest and most famous lawyers of all time. Darrow was known as a great champion of the working class, freedom of speech and equality for minorities. During his career, Darrow successfully defended 102 men who could have been executed if convicted.

Fiedler, a lawyer from Omaha, said he began his avocational career 15 years ago when he made an important discovery about himself: "I had a big ham in me."

He made this discovery during "spoon days" at work, when he and other lawyers would act out practical-joke scenarios for the benefit of unsuspecting co-workers. These activities aroused his interest enough that he took some beginning acting classes, eventually leading to a regional acting career in theater and commercials.

His roles have included Oscar Madison in a Lincoln-area production of "The Odd Couple" and Lenny in "Of Mice and Men" at the Omaha Community Playhouse, for which he won the Fonda-McGuire Award in 1981.

Fiedler became interested in the Darrow story before he began his acting career when he saw Henry Fonda portray Darrow in the public-television movie version.

Relatively early in his acting career, Fiedler was involved in lobbying the state government, which included numerous trips between Omaha and Lincoln. He cured the boredom of these trips by using the time to familiarize himself with Rintels' script, and by the end of the lobbying stint, he was well-versed enough to audition for the one-man performance.

Fiedler said the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Law College's early interest in this production was instrumental in getting it started. In fact, one of his earliest, incomplete performances was at UNL. For this

reason, Fiedler said, he is excited about returning to UNL for a complete performance.

Being a lawyer doesn't help with the role as much as some people may think, Fiedler said. He said he may be able to relate to some of the scenes better than other actors, but he is not presumptuous enough to say professional actors can't do as well or better in portraying Darrow.

Fiedler's role as Darrow hasn't affected his own trial experiences much.

"A little of it may have sifted through, but my style is completely different," he said.

Fiedler said he sees many similarities between acting and being a lawyer. In fact, he is preparing a 10- or 11-point lecture on the subject. The most important similarity, he

said, is that both actors and trial lawyers must be able to "focus." An actor must be able to look at a script and focus on the most important points for his character and then concentrate on bringing these points out during his performance. Similarly, a lawyer must be able to pick out the most important aspects for his side of a case and then stress those points during the trial.

Fiedler has never had the luxury of being able to choose acting as a full-time profession, but said if he had the choice, he would probably continue to practice law. He prefers to balance both careers, hopefully keeping them both fresh and challenging.

"I really enjoy the practice of law, as well as doing Darrow," he said.

Fiedler will give his free performance at 8 p.m. Tuesday in the College of Law Pic Room.



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