

Theatrix will perform opera fest

By Micki Haller
Senior Editor

The words "Grand Opera" are enough to strike fear in the heart of any red-blooded, hot-dog-and-apple-pie-scarfing American, but Theatrix's April Opera Fest is nothing to worry about.

Theater Preview

"It's going to be really fun and really good," Bruce Tinker, artistic director of Theatrix, said about the 8 p.m. performances in the Studio Theater of the Temple Building tonight and Friday.

Officially titled "Inside A Theater," the fest is a sampling of songs and solos, and three one-act operas by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Music.

Samuel Barber's "A Hand of Bridge," Gian Carlo Menotti's "The

Telephone" and the songs will be directed by Chip Smith. Vaughn Williams' "Riders to the Sea," a musical adaptation of Eugene O'Neill's one-act play, will be directed by Karen Zrust.

Tinker said the presentation is a different form of entertainment. It will be all in English and each act lasts only 10 minutes.

The production gives students a chance to perform, Tinker said, and is an outgrowth of the opera class.

Because Theatrix productions are usually small-scale and without frills, Tinker called them "minimal operas."

With simple costumes, sets and lighting, "Inside A Theater" will suggest rather than create the atmosphere, Tinker said.

"The focus is on performing and the text," Tinker said.

Performers for "Inside A Theater"

are Chris Winkler, Jenny Coon, Jennifer Wells, Todd Brooks, Cheryl Peckenpaugh, Donald Klingelhoef, Kathy Keefe, Sharilyn McMahan and Julie Anne Wieck.

'The focus is on performing and the text.'

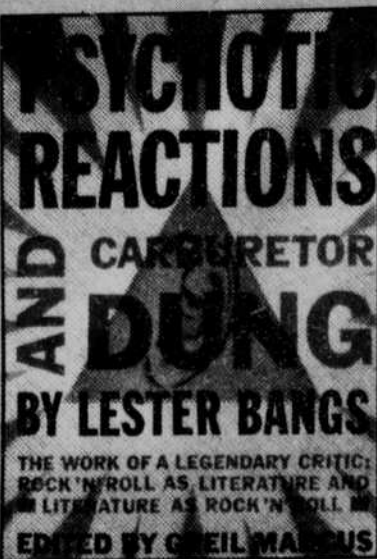
— Tinker

"Riders to the Sea" cast members are Yvonne Anderson, Judi Gardner, Scott Herr, Shaun Harner, Holly Heffelbower, Tina Peters, Gina Thompson, Shannon Harner and Mark Osborn.

Michael Cotton is the accompanist.

A \$1 donation for students and \$2 donation for adults will be requested at the door.

Dead critic, comic strip evaluated by reviewers



Courtesy of Alfred A. Knopf Publishers

By Charles Lieurance
Staff Reporter

Greil Marcus, editor, "Lester Bangs: Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung" (Alfred A. Knopf Publishing)

"Anyone who uses a typewriter is a girl." — Shane MacGowan, Bondage magazine, February 1977

Book Review

Lester Bangs spent most of his short life toilet-training his senses.

Between 1969 and his pathetic death in 1982, Bangs published hundreds upon hundreds of reviews and rants in the pages of Rolling Stone, Creem, The Village Voice and countless underground magazines. His style was intensely unique and contained the same ear-splitting recklessness and energy as the music he championed.

To his fans he epitomized the raw nerve of rock and roll on paper. The screaming feedback of electric instruments was paralleled in the frenzied flow of his prose. To his critics he epitomized the self-absorption and irresponsibility of so-called New Journalism.

Rolling Stone's Greil Marcus has assembled a sort of greatest-hits package of Bangs' writings entitled "Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung." The essays range from random, often incoherent, notes probably penned in the wee hours of the morning whilst coming down from whatever illicit substance Bangs was introducing to his fragile system at the time, to full-blown ecstatic reviews for the Stone and Creem.

Bangs lived rock music, for all the worth of that cliché, from its nocturnal resilience to its frequent and furious gotterdammerungs, believing wholeheartedly that it was just as important to listen to music as it was to play the stuff, once and for all purging the notion that only people trained on musical instruments should be allowed to make judgments on its quality.

Bangs' taste in music was varied, but leaned toward the virtually unlistenable. Robert Quine, sometime guitarist for Richard Hell and Lou

Reed, called Bangs up one day to tell him he'd figured him out.

"Every month you go out and deliberately dig up the most godawful wretched worthless unlistenable offensive irritating unnerving moronic piece of horrible racket noise you can possibly find, then sit down and write this review in which you explain to everybody else in the world why it's just wonderful and they should all run right out and buy it. Since you're a good writer, they're convinced by the review to do just that — till they get home and put the record on, which is when the pain sets in. They throw it under the sink or somewhere and swear it'll never happen again. By the next month they've forgotten, but you haven't, so the whole process is repeated again with some other even more obnoxious piece of hideous blare . . . You know, I must say, I have to admit that's a noble thing to devote your entire life to."

Bangs actually seemed to like this portrait of himself, saying in the book's final essay that Quine had "nailed" him.

"Psychotic Reactions" does contain its share of homage to the execrable, most of it the kind of cacophony that only the steady consumption of hallucinogens can redeem, and Bangs freely admits the role of drug use in his musical taste. Reviews of Lou Reed's "Metal Machine Music," considered one of the most abhorrent exercises in sonic excess ever almost across the board sounded just fine on paper, but actual bouts with the vinyl can only be recommended to those wishing to exorcise demons and evil spirits from the stereo.

However, Bangs' aural and circulatory stamina made it possible for him to discover the sheer, uninhibited joy of the first two Stooge LPs long before most critics could even stomach a few notes of such adolescent abandon. Bangs wrote endlessly on the Velvet Underground's musical supremacy long before it became universally hip to do so. His love of garage grunge also saved such punk prototypes as Count Five's "Psychotic Reaction," the Leaves' "Hey Joe," the Godz's first two LPs and the Troggs' "Wild Thing" from drifting off into forlorn obsolescence in the moldy archives of basement record stores.

All of the articles, whether concerning the metaphysical significance of Kraftwerk or making pitiful excuses for the talentless wimpicisms of James Taylor, are written like God's own rock critic, with a style that breeds Melville and Bukowski into one overly ambitious, hyper-adrenalized American mutant. Marcus, as an editor dealing with Bangs' career, is perhaps faced with a task a bit too much like a fundamentalist minister trying to condense the Bible for Reader's Digest. Much included here should not have seen the light of print, but the addictive energy of Bangs' prose keeps the reader coursing through even these sad, deranged passages.

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