

Nebraska musicians keep tradition alive with old instruments

By Micki Haller
Senior Editor

Westbrook Music Building is filled with unearthly silence on a Saturday morning, but faintly, strains of eerie music drifts from far-off rooms.

It is a magical melange of piano, winds and strings, each in a different key, all with their own songs to sing.

But a visitor to Westbrook last Saturday might have heard something special: The first Early Music Festival at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Nebraska groups gave mini-concerts (which were also treated like rehearsals to some extent) on archaic instruments, like the sackbutt (a precursor to the saxophone), recorder and cornamuse. That night, the event culminated in a concert at St. Mark's on the Campus.

According to Jean Dodworth, a player in the Eastridge Consort, most of the musicians were from Lincoln neighborhood groups. She said some people were in several different groups. They came "out of the cellar" to play, she said, so many weren't professionals.

The only non-Lincoln group was the Collegium Musicum Concordia, from Concordia College in Seward.

Gail Butt, a member of several of the groups that played Saturday, gave many reasons for keeping the traditional instruments alive.

"There's a lot of music for them, and some of (the works) don't work as well on modern instruments," he said. "They have, in their own right, their own sound."

"It's the color of these instruments. It's been gone so long that it sounds new."

Some of the instruments are very different than modern instruments. One example is the cornamuse, which has a reed, like a clarinet or

oboe, but the reed is enclosed in a box-like piece. The mouth never comes in contact with the reed.

"Technically, they're whistles because of the mouthpiece," Butt said. Because the reed can only be controlled by air pressure, not mouth pressure, it's easy to get out of key.

In fact, many of the instruments are hard to play well because they must be adjusted and "finagled" to get the right pitch, he said.

"They're easier to play badly," he said.

Early instrument musicians aren't stuck in the past, however. The present continues to intrude.

For instance, one man in the Eastridge Consort was having trouble with the timing of a piece, and asked for the group to start over. Even the second time didn't work out quite right.

"Rebooting the system is a fatal error," commented Paul Burrow, director of the Eastridge consort.

The group used a gun-case for some of the instruments, yet another reminder that this is the 20th century. Butt said many instruments don't come with cases, or the cases are prohibitively expensive.

"Whereas, in our culture, gun-cases are terribly cheap," he said.

The older instruments definitely have a sound of their own. The music is lighter and airier, and seems much more floating than the sounds of modern instruments.

"It's fun," Butt said. Butt said the music then, like music now, varied in quality.

"Some of it is exquisite. Some of it is dishwasher. Some of it is just good craftsmanship," he said.

"This music is much more democratic than most modern music," he added. "Each of the lines (parts an instrument plays) has a melody. You don't feel like you're just accompanying someone."



Connie Sheehan/Daily Nebraskan

Paul Burrow and Jean Dodworth of the Eastridge Consort play Saturday.

UNL professor attacks book's publication

By Lisa Donovan
Senior Reporter

The ethics behind the publication of a book by University Press is under fire from one University of Nebraska-Lincoln professor.

According to Bruce Erlich, associate professor of English and modern languages, the publication about World War II Nazi collaborator Paul de Man has some bugs.

Several things, Erlich said, went wrong with the production of "Wartime Journalism: 1939-1942." The volume, published last October by University Press, is a compilation of articles by de Man,

an ex-Yale university professor and deconstruction theorist.

The second volume, "Responses," is due out this spring.

First, Erlich said, "Wartime Journalism: 1939-1942" was done by people who worked closely with de Man.

"Wartime Journalism," a compilation of articles written by de Man for a Nazi-run newspaper in Belgium, was edited by some of de Man's students.

Erlich said the material in the book should be available, but he said he thought several things went wrong in its production.

"I don't think it's appropriate

for people who have a very strong personal commitment to their teacher to be producing the edition that is critical of their teacher," Erlich said. "I think that's basic conflict of interest."

Another problem, Erlich said, is that the edition is being produced without translations.

"The articles in Flemish are being translated," Erlich said, "but 120 articles in French are not, to my knowledge, translated. Moreover, they're in Belgian French, which is not the same thing as the French you learn in French 101," he said.

"It takes special training to be

able to read the thing."

Erlich said that should not be the case.

"I think people should have clear access to what's really written," he said.

The edition should be bilingual, Erlich said.

There should be translations at least of the most important articles, and especially of the articles that would most influence one's thinking about de Man, he said.

Willis Regier, editor-in-chief of University Press, agrees that "Wartime Journalism" would be more accessible if it was published in English.

"We thought it would be better, however, to get a hold of the originals and put it in a bound volume," Regier said.

"People were getting excited about things they didn't know about," he said. "People had imagined that de Man had written things -- imputed things."

Regier said that by publishing the French originals, there would be no mistake about what de Man said in his articles.

Now people can cite word for word what he says, Regier said.

"They have it right there in front of their eyes," he said. "Now they can put up or shut up."



Tammy Taylor/Daily Nebraskan

Lincoln bands perform benefit show for Latin American Solidarity Committee

By Mark Lage
Senior Reporter

Three local bands gathered Saturday night at the Commonplace to perform a benefit show for the Latin American Solidarity Committee.

Trout Mystery, Leafy Green Things and 13 Nightmares performed to raise money for the showing of PBS-banned documentary "The Houses are Full of Smoke." The documentary, which deals with American foreign policy in Central America, will be shown in the Nebraska Union at 7 p.m. Thursday.

Lincoln's most dangerous urban assault band, 13 Nightmares, played

the last of three sets. As they took stage, a crowd of about 100 dancing and bobbing heads pressed close to the power-chord bursts "Right Now" Hurts to be Murdered."



It was a typical, although somewhat sub-par, 13 Nightmares set, with all of the familiar features -- high volume, long hair, remarks upon

the importance of long hair, impromptu covers ("Femme Fatale" and "7 Chinese Bros.") and extended guitar abuse at the end. The only thing missing was singer/guitarist Gregg Cosgrove's customary for-against jab.

Also present were a couple of normal Nightmare problems. Lead guitarist Jon Taylor, as he often is live, was seen but rarely heard. His remarkably catchy leads to songs like "Right Now" were often 100 percent inaudible.

And then there was tuning. They tuned guitars before every single

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