

Hungarian filmmaker visits UNL campus

By Sarah Knight
Staff Reporter

A man sits, quietly speaking, his thin-framed glasses covering shy



eyes; one can hardly believe it is Paul Schiffer, one of the most powerful filmmakers in Hungary.

Despite poor plot, 'Sisters' was well done

By Adam T. Branting
Staff Reporter

The UNL Department of Theater Arts and Dance closed out its 1988-89 season with Anton Chekhov's "Three Sisters," and turned what could have been three hours of thespian hell into three hours of watchable theater.

theater REVIEW

Maybe it's glasnost. Maybe it's spring. But theater departments around the country are jumping on the Russian theater bandwagon.

Two years ago it was a Lincoln group's production of Maxim Gorky's "The Lower Depths." At Doane last fall, it was a production of some short plays by Chekhov. Even today, the University of Evansville in Indiana is also doing "Three Sisters."

This is all fine and good, except for a couple things. One, Russian drama is long... real long. Two, a lot of good words are written, but seem to say nothing we don't already know. They seem to go nowhere. Three, lots of emotion is shown, and unless the director is careful, it could end up looking stupid.

"Three Sisters" falls into this trap. The story of three rich young women and their friends at turn of the century Russia who find themselves debating love, death, work, power and escape. Chekhov doesn't really have a plot that leads to the climax, which is quite disturbing and typically Russian.

Director Laura Miller and the cast must be given oodles of credit for an engaging show. The cast is always interesting and exciting to watch.

There isn't a bad performance in the show. Excellence is standard. But some of the actors were lucky enough to have very exciting roles, such as Joe Sampson as Solyony. Sampson is just so deliciously evil as a pessimistic soldier, one could applaud and beat him to death at the same time.

Another outstanding performer is Kevin Paul Hofeditz as Vershinin.

See 3 SISTERS on 10

Schiffer, who visited the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus this weekend for a Sheldon showing of his films, pioneered the field of documentary filmmaking.

"Since the age of 10 (or) 12 I always wanted to do something with theater or film or journalism. So finally, what I do is somehow a mixture of all of this," Schiffer said.

"Documentaries in the '30s, '40s, '50s and even the beginning of the '60s were simple, kind of propaganda films; 15, 20 minutes between the newsreel and a feature film.

"What we make is non-fiction, strictly non-fiction, but it looks like a feature film because it has an antagonist and a protagonist character with a story and a beginning and an end," Schiffer said.

Schiffer began working at the Documentary Studio of Hungary after graduation from film school, a university equivalent in Hungary.

"I started with short newsreels and with short documentaries," Schiffer said.

In 1965 Schiffer went to Vietnam and made the first documentary on

North Vietnam during the war.

The Hungarian reform wave began at the end of the '60s and this encompassed much of his time.

"Most filmmakers and journalists and social scientists wanted to help this change through analyzing the real social processes," Schiffer said.

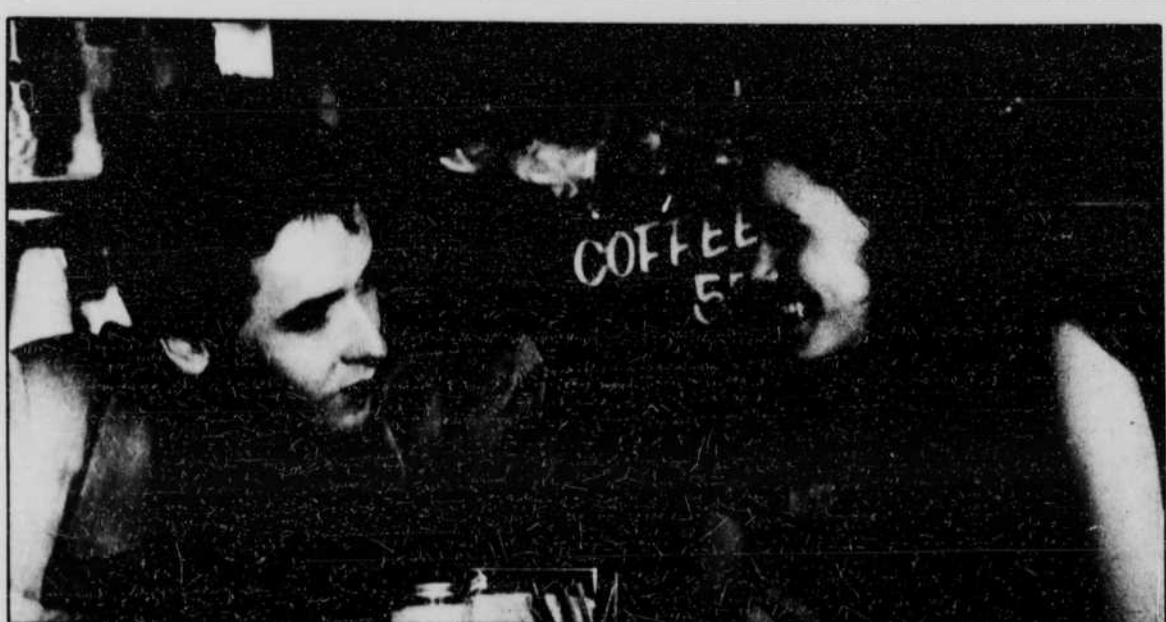
In the mid-70's Schiffer began working for a feature film studio, Hunnia, which encouraged him in the area of the non-fiction feature.

In 1981, Schiffer received a government grant to capture footage of rural life in Hungary.

"We made it from '82 to '87, but meanwhile we were really very lucky to find interesting stories while we were shooting. From time to time, we made films out of this material," Schiffer said.

Schiffer said Hungary differs from America in its film culture because although big name films like "Rain Man" are popular, art films are also in demand.

"Beside the American films, there is an audience which has a need to see the Bergmans, the Fellinis," Schiffer said.



John Cusack and Lone Skye from "Say Anything . . ."

Reviewer says 'Say Anything' is not typical teeny-bopper film

By Sarah Knight
Staff Reporter

People need a friend or confidant to whom they can say anything.

movie REVIEW

"Say Anything . . ." the beautiful film from Twentieth Century Fox, captures this need and examines three such relationships.

Writer/director Cameron Crowe, whose credits include "Fast Times at Ridgemont High," finally manages to create a film about teens that does not seem as if it were made by teens.

It begins at a high school graduation; Lloyd Dobler (John Cusack), determined to get a date with brain/beauty Diane Court (Lone Skye), begins scheming to get her to go out with him.

Diane has a close relationship with her father, James (John Mahoney), and has just received a prestigious fellowship to study in England.

Lloyd does ask her out and the

two, though resisting, slowly fall in love. They only have 16 weeks, however, and then Diane must leave for Great Britain.

Mr. Court disfavours the relationship because he wants everything for his daughter and does not want her to get sidetracked from her studies.

The film depicts the life decisions that everyone must make and indicates that all people, even those without conventional career goals, have value.

Crowe's whimsical, subtle script surpasses the usual teeny-bopper experience as it tears at the heart, revitalizes it with humor and romance, then tears at it once more. Like life, it combines comedy and drama.

Producer James L. Brooks brings back a few of the actors he worked with in "Broadcast News" including Cusack, Lois Chiles and Amy Brooks.

Lili Taylor, first seen in last year's "Mystic Pizza," has a supporting role as Corey Flood, Lloyd's devoted friend.

Mahoney gives an Oscar-worthy performance as the wonderful, yet mysterious father. He lives up

to the reputation built from his previous small roles in films like "Moonstruck," "Frantic" and "Suspect." This time, he gets the role he deserves and receives equal billing with his co-stars.

In one scene of particular interest, Mr. Court has just had his credit cancelled in a rather embarrassing incident and sits contemplating his loss. This incredibly powerful scene brought many audience members to tears, yet Mahoney merely sits, his painful expression making words unnecessary.

Skye portrays Diane quite perfectly with the cool, reserved quality of Grace Kelly, yet with accessibility to the audience.

Cusack remains his usual likable self, but his limited acting range makes for a rather dull character.

"Say Anything . . ." confirms the fact that a movie can be made in good taste -- even in the '80s.

"Say Anything . . ." is an extremely mild PG-13 for a few foul words and some adult situations and is showing at the Plaza 4 Theaters.

Jazz quartet quite skillful and dynamic

By Micki Haller
Senior Editor

The Makoto Ozone Jazz Quartet cooked up a savory stew of sound Friday and Saturday night at Kimball Recital Hall.

kimball REVIEW

Although the performance had its problems, the energy and skill of the performers left a major impression.

Makoto Ozone, the 28-year-old leader of the group, is obviously a talent to keep an eye on. His flying fingers on the piano keyboard vindicated all the impressive program notes.

Ozone's fluent style encompassed a broad range of influences, from classical to spicy Latin-flavored jazz.

Ozone was called "the most vital and dynamic of them all," by Hugh Wyatt of the (New York) Daily News, and Friday's performance proved that statement was not an exaggeration.

However, Ozone's center in the spotlight was threatened by trumpeter Toru "Tiger" Okoshi.

Okoshi managed to coax a menagerie of squeaks and squeals from his trumpet -- the kind of sounds that make jazz trumpeting so exciting.

In addition, Okoshi had excellent breath control. From the dynamic level to phrasing, Okoshi had a totally masterful technique. He did, however, seem to have a few problems with the trumpet; he was constantly fiddling with it and making adjustments.

Both musicians are from Japan originally and play very well together. The pair almost totally dominated the evening in spite of arrangements to allow all members in the quartet to shine.

Completing the international flavor of the quartet were Gildas Bocle, the French bassist, and drummer Martin Richards from Boston.

Richards' aggressive drumming sometimes became overpowering, especially during some of the others'

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Friends confront social traumas of the '60s in '1969'

Shut Up and Watch the Movie is written by Lisa Donovan, a junior news-editorial major and William Rudolph, a sophomore English major.

Lisa Donovan: I was about 2 years old in 1969.

movie REVIEW

William Rudolph: I was born in 1969, Lisa. Imagine how weird it was watching "1969" and thinking, "Wow, I'm an embryo at this point."

LD: Well, I liked my second year of life and I definitely liked this

movie. "1969" is a simple effort of showing how members of a small town in Maine deal with the sociopolitical problems of the '60s.

WR: Scott (Kiefer Sutherland) and Ralph (Robert Downey, Jr.) are boyhood friends undergoing the traumas of college and the major changes of the late '60s together. Scott's serious and idealistic. Ralph's a screw-up who's into the drug culture. Can their friendship last through 1 1/2 hours of social changes, college riots and the specter of Vietnam?

LD: Yes and no. Once Scott's brother, Aldon (Christopher Wynn) enters the Vietnam war, Scott and Ralph's relationship changes. Now

that the war is "close to home," it challenges the two men to deal with their feelings about it. The pair left school. Scott rejects the establishment and buys and paints a Volkswagen bus. Hoping to find the meaning of freedom, Scott and Ralph cruise around the Northeastern part of the United States in the hippiemobile. Grudgingly, Ralph wants to return home because he is bored and in his own ignorant way realizes that he and Scott are running away from their problems, not solving any.

WR: They also have to deal with their families. Scott's parents are straight out of Good Housekeeping, or so it appears. Bruce Dern is his

superintendent patriot father. Of course, they don't see eye to eye. Mariette Hartley plays his very controlled, very perfect mother. Ralph's family is exactly the opposite -- looney tunes. Ev (Joanna Cassidy), Ralph's mom, is a riot. Running around in drunken abandon, Ev sports every '60s fad to come down the pike. The very fresh and intense Winona Ryder turns in a great debut as Beth, Ralph's idealistic young sister. In fact, the cast is probably "1969's" best point.

LD: Indeed. Hartley is simply at her best. When Aldon goes off to war, she decides to go running rather than say goodbye to her son. As Aldon's

bus is driving down the road, he sees a jogging woman waving at the bus. The bus pulls over and Aldon jumps out. The two stand and wave at one another. Hartley calls to her son, "Don't die." Every time she does, traffic noise blocks it out. Ordinarily, this type of scene is too dramatic, but Hartley's warmth and sensitivity pull at the old heartstrings.

WR: A lot of the credit has to go to Sutherland and Downey. Once again, Sutherland shows us that he is one of the most talented, feeling, versatile actors around today. Without a question, though, Downey is someone to

See 1969 on 10