

Daily Nebraskan
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Show should go on Producer deserves casting freedom

The Actors' Equity union stopped the show last week by threatening to prevent Jonathan Pryce, a non-Asian actor, from playing the lead role in the Broadway run of the British production "Miss Saigon."

But the musical's producer, Cameron Mackintosh, said the show won't go on without Pryce, who played the role in London.

The actor's union has a point; an Asian show should have an Asian star. But their point is flawed in several ways.

First of all and least importantly, the character Pryce is supposed to play is not completely Asian, just half Asian. He also is half French.

Second, actors traditionally play characters that aren't like themselves. Theater would be monotonous if actors could play only parts that matched a certain set of their own traits. The whole point of acting is to play other people, and makeup can and should be used to accomplish that goal.

And Pryce is one of a small number of non-Asian actors on the set. Of the 50 roles in "Miss Saigon," 34 are played by actors of color, 29 by Asians or Asian-Americans.

Finally, the logic behind the union's tactic easily can be reversed. If only Asian actors may play Asian roles, it follows that only white actors may play white roles. Lawrence Olivier could not have played Othello, but Denzel Washington would be kept away from Richard III, too.

The solution to the problem is simply to let the best actors, regardless of skin color, play the roles they win, and to let those who cast productions decide who gets what roles. In this case, it means allowing Pryce to play in "Miss Saigon."

--Jana Pedersen
for the Daily Nebraskan

Responsibility falls on parents

In response to Irvin Nelson's response (DN, Aug. 12) to Jana Pedersen's editorial (DN, Aug. 5), I think that before you start talking about where the responsibility falls after labelling, you should do your homework on the effects of labelling on the market.

According to *Rip* magazine, several hundred record stores across the country have announced that they will not stock labelled products. Several states have been considering mandatory labelling of all products with explicit lyrics, and what this leads to is pre-censorship. The responsibility will inevitably fall on the artists who produce the material, because if it is unacceptable, it won't even be in the stores. Artists are now pre-censoring everything including album covers just to get their feet in the door...

By not exposing our children to

this music, we are not necessarily protecting them from themes of bigotry and alcohol abuse, because that's what's happening in the real world. Knowing what is right and wrong should begin at home. The best thing we can do is educate our children so they know that just because suicide and drugs are in music, it doesn't make them acceptable. I think that the responsibility should be shouldered by the parent, but the tools available aren't working the way they were designed.

My final point is this: No one should have the final say on what music we are allowed to listen to, but by all means if they don't want to hear it, they are more than welcome to turn it off.

Joey Ossian
elementary education

letter

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions.

Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion, or not to run, is left to the editor's discretion.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.



There's little to learn from Iraq

In long run we won't have to worry about Middle East or oil

So, when the sand eventually settles and our boys come marching home from Kuwait what will we have learned from Saddam Hussein?

Some, such as Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kan.), would have us believe that we need to get on the ball, militarily speaking. Dole and others argue that Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait is a prime example of why we need to keep signing big checks to finance our defense budget.

Others would have us believe Hussein's invasion is as good a reason as any to begin disliking Iraqis as much as we learned to dislike Iranians, or are beginning to dislike the Japanese -- again. After all, who the hell do they think they are anyway?

Still others would want us to remember the leadership exemplified by our president during a crisis situation. In a week's time, President Bush managed to re-establish the United States' position as global policeman, deploy the most soldiers the United States has had abroad since Vietnam and slip an economic noose around the neck of our aggressor. It truly has been his finest hour.

While the Iraqi standoff has been a sobering experience to some and a pain in the wallet to others, all of us -- or most of us anyway -- will be able to walk away from this experience pretty confident. Older generations can rest assured that the United States still knows how to get tough. Crazy liberal college kids can get the ridiculous idea of world peace out of their heads. And even the children can experience the pride of daddy going off to war.

All this for a mere \$14.6 million or so a day.

Perhaps the moral of the Iraq-Kuwait story is that, in the short run, there really is very little to learn at all. We're just confirming what we've known all along -- that when you're American there's not a whole heck of a lot you can't do with a thick wallet and a big gun.



Lee Rood

But maybe, if we look a little further on down the line, we'd be able to learn a little more.

We'll all be glad to know that in the long run, we won't have to worry about bullies like Iraq. Nor will we have to worry about defending oil-rich Saudi Arabia from its greedy neighbors. And in the long run, Western Europe won't have to rely on the American government to protect its oil interests in Saudi Arabia, or anywhere else for that matter.

Why? Because in the long run -- which could come in about 40 years -- we will have used up the world's supply of fossil fuels.

In the long run, nasty mishaps like oil spills will be a thing of the past. We won't have anything to fill up our tankers, or power them for that matter.

It's such good news one wonders why it isn't covered more in the newspapers.

Not to worry. U.S. senators like Frank Murkowski of Alaska will have us facing the long-run in no time at all. In the midnight hours before Congress recessed for August, Murkowski added an amendment to the Defense Appropriations bill that would require the president to propose opening up for oil and gas drilling all onshore and offshore federal lands whenever oil imports exceed 50 percent. Just think -- oil rigs all over the California, Florida, North Carolina and Massachusetts coastlines with one measly amendment.

The idea has leaders in the petroleum industry so excited they're screaming, "Drill! Drill!"

Still, there are others who aren't so anxious about the future. Their voices, nearly silenced by all the cries for immediate relief, whisper, "Couldn't . . . shouldn't we conserve a little? Isn't it time to explore alternative energy resources?"

You'd think these people would grow tired of worrying. After all, many of them also complain that we need to do something now to handle the national debt, improve education, technology, the economy and the environment.

Such a burden. No, most of us would rather learn our lessons about the future when the future is upon us. It's what we're used to.

So, what's the real moral of the story in the long run?

That in the short run, there's really very little to learn at all.

Rood is a senior news-editorial major and a Summer Daily Nebraskan editorial columnist.