

Center offers experience, culture

Director notes Lied benefits for students

On behalf of the Lied Center for Performing Arts staff, I welcome the opportunity to respond to Jim Hanna's column (Daily Nebraskan, Nov. 19). While Mr. Hanna addressed a number of issues which are not related to the Lied (e.g., the removal of Arturo's Restaurant was a part of city redevelopment which had absolutely nothing to do with the Lied Center), I would like to particularly address the true merits of the Lied Center for the students of this campus. Before doing so, I would like to stress that at no time did Mr. Hanna contact me, or any of my staff, for information or factual verification.

The Lied Center is proving itself to be an outstanding facility for presenting world class artists. Unsolicited comments from artists include: "One of the great halls. It really has incredible acoustics." (Pianist Van Cliburn), "A great hall, one of the finest new halls I have played in." (Violinist Isaac Stern), "The audiences are good, the halls are wonderful, maybe we should move." (Riccardo Muti, music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra) and "A beautiful building." (Doc Severinsen).

Similarly, we were very pleased that the production staff "Les Miserables," the largest production now on tour, loved the size and accessibility of the Lied Center. They found the backstage and shop excellent in all aspects, and, indeed, those areas have

proved wonderful for the construction of sets by and for students, for productions in Kimball Hall, the Howell Theatre and the Johnny Carson Theatre.

The Lied Center is committed to serving UNL students educationally. The Lied Center's role and mission statement and programming philosophy clearly stipulate that we are to provide this campus with a wide variety of arts and entertainment experiences of the highest caliber. Any event that does not meet these standards will not appear on the Lied Center stage.

The Lied is an excellent training laboratory for students especially interested in technical aspects.

We provide space for UNL dance classes and for music students to rehearse the opera production.

Students are centrally involved in productions produced by UNL's Theatre Arts and Dance Department and School of Music, such as "A Christmas Carol" and "Don Giovanni." In addition to the extensive contribution of facilities and staff time, the Lied Center is a financial partner with the academic units. We have taken, and will continue to take, a successful role in generating private support for these activities.

Among others, the Lied Center has supported academic uses for performances, such as the UNL Marching Band, School of Music Choral

activities, the Nebraska Music Educators Association convention and the Nebraska Repertory Theatre.

Students also become involved in the Nebraska Repertory Theatre's program, which is in residence in the Johnny Carson Theater for several months during the summer.

We employ UNL students in our administrative offices, box office, backstage and house operations and encourage students to become involved as volunteers.

The Lied Center offers excellent opportunities for students to enjoy world-class performances. We are pleased to be able to offer half-price tickets to UNL students. Because of our desire to attract student audiences, we have negotiated away advantageous items in other areas of artists' contracts to allow for those types of discounts. In addition to contract negotiations, we spend a significant amount of time finding other sources of funding and underwriting to help subsidize these prices.

We designed a student series, that consists of events that have a particular appeal to students. This series is Lionel Hampton, The Playboy of the Western World, Kronos Quartet, Branford Marsalis and Paul Dresler's "Pioneer." The entire series could be purchased for \$30, which is \$6 per event! We thought this was extremely

affordable for students, considering current local movie ticket prices.

The Lied Center recognizes the vital importance of student input and representation.

The president of ASUN sits on the Lied Center Advisory Board to represent student interests.

We are continuing to work with the University Program Council's Kimball/Lied Performing Arts Committee (KLPAC), a student organization, to present programming that fits students' interests and then to design targeted approaches to marketing those events to the student population. One example of this is a series of reason-

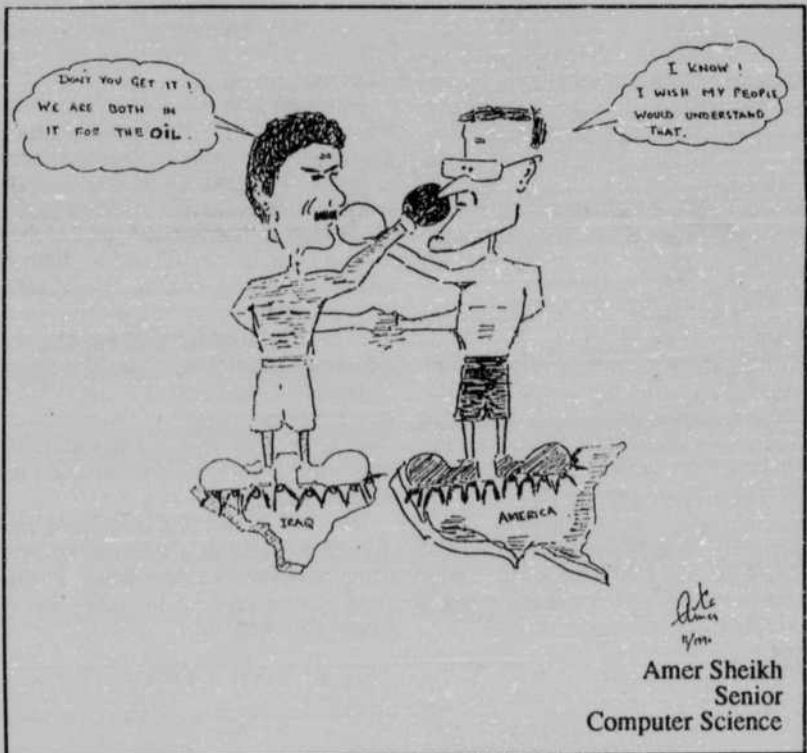
bly priced events staged in the Johnny Carson Theater beginning next fall. KLPAC is taking a leadership role in marketing this series, which may include extremely attractive dinner and performance packages for students.

Thank you very much for allowing me to present these Lied Center facts and provide a perspective for your readers on the truly important role the Lied Center has in the cultural and educational climate of our campus.

Robert Chumbley
director

Lied Center for Performing Arts

opinion READER



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