

'Christmas Carol' to fill Lied with spirit

By Julie Naughton
Senior Reporter

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's performance of "A Christmas Carol" will be new and improved this semester, according to one of the show's stars.

"More people can see the show with fewer performances," said Kevin Paul Hofeditz, who plays Charles

theater PREVIEW

Dickens. "We used to do two, three times more performances, and that was more stressful for students and faculty involved with performances."

The bigger space will be more visually impressive and will reduce the stress on students and faculty, he said.

The play will be performed at the Lied Center for Performing Arts Thursday through Sunday, with 8 p.m. performances Thursday through Saturday and 2 p.m. shows Saturday and Sunday.

Hofeditz, an associate professor of theater arts, and Donovan Dietz headline the cast. Dietz, a resident of New York, is a former Nebraska resident and has performed in several plays with the Nebraska Repertory Theatre. Most recently, he was in this summer's "And a Nightingale Sang."

"A Christmas Carol" is the story of Ebenezer Scrooge (played by Dietz) and how, on Christmas Eve, he is visited by several spirits. The spirits show him his past, his present and his

future, and through that, help him understand the true meaning of Christmas.

Hofeditz has done "A Christmas Carol" at the Missouri Repertory Theatre and as a guest artist at a small college in the Saint Louis area. He said that the Lied Center performance is both similar and different from his past experiences with the show.

"It's a larger Christmas Carol than I've been involved with before," he said. "The other performances that I've done were the same adaptation, though."

There are several adaptations that theaters perform, he said, but "this one is the best. It uses Dickens as a narrator, and includes a scene with Dickens and family at the beginning of the show."

The show also differs from past UNL performances, he said.

"Our talent pool is very strong, in terms of talented student actors, and that is no offense to those we've had in the past," he said. "All of the roles are being excellently done this year."

Hofeditz said the play has endured because of its classic themes.

"The play has a message about humanity and looking after people on this earth that we all know, but need to be reminded about," he said.

The cast is all students and children from the community, except Dietz and Hofeditz, professional Equity actors. There were open calls for the children's roles.

The show also will contain an

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Paul Chandler/Daily Nebraskan

Long, winding road brings comedian to Lincoln

By John Payne
Senior Reporter

Journeyman comedian Gary Mule Deer has had a long and winding road to mediocrity. But that's fine with him. His press releases even cite one-line reviews like "3.50 cover, two-drink minimum" and "The show runs through Sunday." You see, Mule Deer makes his living opening for headline acts. Las Vegas, Lake Tahoe and Atlantic City have been the most frequent stops throughout his career.

On Thursday night, Mule Deer will be the featured attraction at the Royal Grove, 340 West Cornhusker.

The Spearfish, S.D., native has a running joke to sum up his career: "Show business is my life, but I can't prove it." You hear a lot of cracks from Mule Deer about his obscurity. Occasionally he'll say something

optimistic like "My career is looking up, though. Bigger things than ever have been falling through for me lately."

Actually, Mule Deer has plenty to show for his 28 years in the entertainment industry. He's made over 200 television appearances on shows such as "Late Night with David Letterman," been in movies like "Annie Hall," and of course, there are the stage performances.

"I joke about it a lot," said Mule Deer in a telephone interview from his Los Angeles home, "but the entertainment industry has been really good to me."

One of the benefits of being somewhat less than a household name, according to Mule Deer, is having time to do what ever he wants, like return to his home town.

"I try to get back to the Black Hills

when ever I can," he said. "It's a place that I didn't really appreciate, growing up. Living in L.A. makes you realize how beautiful the midwest is." His love of wildlife even prompted him to change his name from Miller to Mule Deer in honor of the animal that he has so admired all his life.

comedian PREVIEW

Although he has opened for everyone from "Sinatra to the Doobie Brothers," Mule Deer usually warms the stage for country/western artists like Lee Greenwood or Willie Nelson. His act is a combination of music and comedy. Song parodies—among his more popular is his impersonation of Johnny Cash singing Gilbert and Sullivan—are a big part of his act.

He describes himself as a "funny musician," rather than a comic who dabbles in music.

At one time, he was the lead singer in a rock band. And as part a popular folk group, he had a contract with Epic Records, putting out five albums.

During some of his lean years, Mule Deer shared an apartment with another struggling young artist—Steve Martin. Mule Deer got his start in show business at the same time artists like Martin and David Letterman were just starting out.

"I've known David since he moved out to L.A. in 1976," he said. "I loved his stand-up routine, and I still think he's one of the best stand-up comedians working."

Mule Deer's humor, he claims, started out as a way of compensating for his musical inabilities. From there,

his act began to mushroom into a "50-50 mix." Mule Deer's show is often a cerebral one, in which he likes to satirize current events, sending them up in mock news reports.

But he has been known to resort to slapstick from time to time as well, like shooting arrows at a rubber chicken. His guitar usually serves as a bow, as the comedian gives the bird a final cigarette before the execution. Mostly what Mule Deer does though, is to find the absurd in everyday life, and expand upon it.

"I think what maybe sets my act apart," he theorizes, "is simply the experience I bring to it. I've been around, and I bring all those experiences into my routine in a way that I think people enjoy."

Tickets for Gary Mule Deer are \$4 at the door. The show starts at 9:30 p.m.

Time off profits regrouped band; 'Chain' to attract larger audience

Pylon
"Chain"
Sky Records

By Jeffrey Frey
Staff Reporter

In the early 1980s, the archetypal college bands R.E.M. and the B-52s were stirring things up in Athens, Ga. Right along side those two bands was Pylon.

Toward the mid-1980s, R.E.M. and the B-52s began stirring things up on the college music scene all over the country. And while Pylon gained a strong following, the band basically remained a permanent part of the local Athens scene. Not long after, Pylon disbanded.

However, when the film "Athens, GA Inside/Out" was released—which chronicled the impressive music scene—a few years after Pylon's demise, there came a renewed surge of interest in the band's music.

Pylon had been included in the film even though the members no longer worked together as a band. And the rejuvenated interest the group

received proved to be the catalyst to get things going once again.

The members of the band got together to release a compilation of



their previous work, called "Pylon: The Hits." Soon after, Pylon regrouped and decided to do some recording.

After opening for R.E.M. on the last stage of the Green World Tour last year, the band recorded and then put together a new batch of songs which comprises its latest release, "Chain."

A few years off have done something worth noting. It has, in a sense, made the group much better. But that is not entirely accurate because, formerly, the band was impressive. If the band seems improved, it's because its return to songwriting is one of startling precision and complete success.

Pylon has done almost nothing different with the sound of its new songs. Its distinguished brand of pop music retains all of its original qualities. And now, with a new batch of songs as equally satisfying as the older compositions, the band is poised to show that what it's doing now—and what it did before—is going to impress a much larger audience.

If you can imagine a robot with its constricted, erratic movements trying to play the trademark jingle-jangle sound of early R.E.M. songs, you can understand a little of what Pylon sounds like.

The comparisons stop here, though. The only thing Pylon has in common with R.E.M., or any band, is that when the musicians pick up their instruments, they make a certain type of noise. Some better than others. Pylon falls into the better category.

Guitarist Randy Bewley carves out the same loose, yet biting chords on the new songs as he did with older Pylon hits like "Crazy," "No Clocks," and "Stop." His guitar is minimal and

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