

Innovative theater group confronts issues

By Joel Schroeder
Staff Reporter

Even though the group is not widely known, Theatrix is far from being "new on the scene" in theater performances.

The self-supporting student project in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Department of Theatre Arts and Dance now is in its fourth year of existence and is gearing up for another season.

Graduate student Sam Schimek, who has headed Theatrix for the last two years, said he feels the group has improved over time.

He attributed the success to increased involvement and audience attendance.

"I have more people applying every season," Schimek said. Last year,

Theatrix started producing shows almost every week.

"The audience has kept up with the increase of shows since last year," Schimek said.

Theatrix has grown out of what used to be the Nebraska Directors' Theater, which was run entirely by graduate students and did productions for five years before the evolution of Theatrix, he said.

Schimek said the number of plays produced depends on the time slots available. The group is more likely to produce plays in the spring season than in the fall because there are more spaces, he said.

Some performances are original and some include dance numbers that are choreographed by people in the department, he said.

"There's a big mix," Schimek said. "We try to keep it varied."

He also said many of the pieces normally wouldn't be put on by the department or anybody in town.

"We are producing shows that take some sort of stand or that are not in the mainstream," Schimek said. Some of the issues that plays have targeted include AIDS, power relationships and war.

Schimek says the shows are chosen by the people who want to do them, which gives everyone a chance to play a part they've always wanted to do.

It usually takes about four to six weeks to get a play ready to perform, depending on the show and the directors, Schimek said.

Undergraduates, graduate students and even some Ph.D.s do the direct-

ing for the plays, and most of the cast members are theater majors, he said.

Schimek said attendance is "very good," with anywhere from 50 to 150 or more people a night.

"We've had many nights where we've had to turn people away," he said.

He said the cost to produce a weekend of shows is usually around \$200 to \$250. The department gives the group money to get started, but after that, "Theatrix is on its own."

The money spent depends on the show's needs, and the group tries to save and cut back as much as possible, Schimek said. "We have to get our money back," he said.

Theatrix will do performances every weekend from now until Dead Week, except the weekend before spring

break.

This weekend, Schimek said, the group will perform two one-act plays called "Closet Madness" and "Fifteen Minute Hamlet."

"Closet Madness," written by Murray Schisgal, is about a playwright who tries to become a success by telling the theatrical community that he is gay.

Schimek said that "Fifteen Minute Hamlet" is exactly what it sounds like.

"It basically contains all of the high points in 'Hamlet' in fifteen minutes," he said.

Next weekend, Theatrix will perform "Laughing Wild," by Christopher Durang.

The shows run Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights, starting at 8, in the Studio Theatre. Admission is \$2.

Rockets rock Lincoln crowd with own style

By Robert Richardson
Senior Reporter

The Zoo Bar was transformed into a southern blues extravaganza Monday night — a gateway from the blues of the past to the blues of the present.

Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets, featuring Sam Myers, dropped in on the Zoo Bar crowd as part of the Miller Genuine Draft Band Circuit. The band and its music were the driving force behind the sudden change in atmosphere.

The Rockets started with a crisp, strong and consistent sound that had Anson's guitar pitted against Matt McCabe's piano. Jim Milan's bass and Danny Cochren's drums provided a solid heavy road to follow.

Most musicians don't like to put their music into a category, but Funderburgh said he really didn't mind.

"I hear it called contemporary blues all the time," Funderburgh said. "I guess that would be what I would call it, contemporary blues, because it's now."

An example of this broad category was "20 Miles." Driven by guitar, vocals and accented with a sweet piece of piano, "20 Miles" was dark enough to be a blues song. But the beat was fast enough to really rock the audience. Funderburgh and vocalist and harmonica wizard Myers combined to make the song stand out — like it should.

Myers stood out front and looked good, while Funderburgh hung out in the wings. The reason for that, Funderburgh said, is because he's more of a team player and likes to put Myers in front because he's good.

"What I've tried to do is put together a really good band that really features Sammy, because I have the utmost respect for him," Funderburgh said. "I think he's a wonderful vocalist and a wonderful harmonica player."

Funderburgh credits some big names for his past successes. He said they helped pave his way and made life easier for the Rockets.

"The T-Birds were real big at that particular time, and Robert Cray and Stevie Ray Vaughn were doing really well," Funderburgh said. "We really kind of rode the coattails on that, while making our own way at the same time."

With Myers out front and Funderburgh and the rest of the Rockets in back, the band definitely does its own thing. But Funderburgh said band members are doing what they want, as well as getting out their own style.

"As far as what I want, I'm pretty much doing what I want," Funderburgh said. "I would like to be able to just turn as many people on to this style of music as I possibly can."

If the Rockets keep playing like they did Monday night, they'll turn the whole country on to their fast-paced style of fun music.

The Rockets are fun to watch because they enjoy doing what they're doing and it shows.

"I know we have a good time when we're playing it, and I think most of the time, people enjoy coming out and listening to it because it's such an authentic thing, but it's very natural to us," Funderburgh said.



Marxhausen's sculptures offer magic to eyes, ears

By Trish Spencer
Staff Reporter

Instructions: Rotate gently when relaxed, shake when joyful, strike against hard object when stressful, listen to all three.

These are the instructions for Star Dust, Reinhold Marxhausen's best-selling piece of sound sculpture.

Marxhausen, a retired art professor from Concordia College at Seward, is an innovator of sound art, which he described as a "new" art form borrowed from the '60s.

Marxhausen, a traditional artist who painted two murals in the state capitol, said sound art is unique in that, unlike other forms of art, people can experiment and participate in it.

He first discovered the idea for his sound sculptures in 1960 when a doorknob he was playing around with gave off a sound, which later was compared to choirs of angels.

It took Marxhausen 20 years to capture the sound in a safe object — lengths of piano wire enclosed in stainless steel

metal that is welded together. The result is Star Dust, Parachimes and Cosmic Cubes.

He averages two sculptures a day, but Marxhausen said he does not care to know how long it takes him to produce one because that would make him a machine.

The unique combination of such a sprightly, magical sound inside a hard-looking case creates a piece of art that people of all ages appreciate, said Deb Arends, manager of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery Art Shop.

"He wants people to see things in a different way," Arends said.

People the world over, including first lady Barbara Bush and talk show host David Letterman, have had the chance to see things in a different light because of Marxhausen's talent. Both are owners of Marxhausen's sound art.

Marxhausen also appeared on CBS's "Good Morning America," Feb. 11. He appeared for four minutes on Charles Osgood's portion of the show and played "Amazing Grace" by throwing pipes down on the ground.

See ART on 10

'Mall' movie boasts stars



By Robert Richardson
Senior Reporter

Director Paul Mazursky opens his latest movie as a couple is sending their high school-age children on a ski trip. When the kids drive away in a van, the man tells his wife, "We procreated, now we can die."

"Scenes From A Mall" is worth watching, if only to watch its stars, Woody Allen and Bette Midler, try to adapt to each other's comedic styles. Midler has the potential to be colorful and emotional; Allen is Dry, with a capital D.

Together, they make a tragically disturbed couple — one in which love sometimes takes a back seat.

As the title suggests, the majority of the movie takes place in a mall. It is Christmas-time, and Deborah and Nick Fifer (Bette Midler and Woody Allen) are celebrating their 16th anniversary.

Typical yuppies, Deborah and Nick both hold successful jobs; they have two children, two Saabs and appear to be in love. But, as they prove, a lot can happen in 16 years.

After they make superficial love and final arrangements for a dinner party, Deborah and Nick take a trip to the mall for shopping and to air out their souls.

They stop in several stores to buy each other anniversary presents. And later, as they sit down for some yogurt, Nick decides to make public his sexual encounters, as he casually mentions that he has been having an affair for the last seven months.

Of course, they quit eating yogurt. In fact, the situation looks so helpless that they may quit their marriage.

Allen's traditionally dry humor is showcased by writers Mazursky and Roger L. Simon. Even though Allen seldom appears in movies other than the ones he writes and directs, he does ample justice to this nervous, skeptical, middle-aged man.

As Deborah rants and raves, Nick follows her around the mall into several other stores and they both make several big boisterous scenes. And as they're running around they take time out to have drinks, go dancing and have drinks again.

"Scenes From A Mall" with Allen and Midler is just that. Simply, a couple that goes to the mall. No more, no less.

The movie has two big names attached. Allen and Midler add to the spectacle of the movie, but the script is so well written that almost anyone could be put into these parts, and be funny in a weird sort of way.

"Scenes From A Mall" is playing at the Lincoln Theatre, 12th and P streets.