



David Badders/DN

Dracula sinks teeth into Lincoln

By Michael Stock
Senior Reporter

Halloween bites. Especially this month at the Lincoln Community Playhouse.

David Richmond and Bob Hall are the men responsible for "The Passion of Dracula," a dramatic introduction to a 1911 incarnation of legend's greatest bloodsucker.

"The Passion of Dracula" was performed 714 times in nearly two years in New York, London, Johan-

theater

PREVIEW

nesburg and San Francisco. This year's performance afforded Hall, interim artistic director at the Lincoln Community Playhouse and artistic director of the Nebraska Repertory Theatre, his first opportunity to direct the play in 10 years.

It is worth the wait.

Set in England in the Autumn of 1911, the entire production is bound to the study of Dr. Cedric Seward. The story revolves around his niece Wilhelmina (Melissa Lewis) and the strange schizophrenic disease that she has been struck with. Wilhelmina is

in love with a roving London reporter Jonathan Harker, played by Tim Vanderberghe.

The strange anemic qualities of Wilhelmina's malady are soon explained by the presence of a certain neighbor named Count Dracula (by Vincent T. Learned).

Of course no Dracula tale is complete without the inclusion of a Dr. Van Helsing. Lee Schoonover in his role as Van Helsing provides the best performance of the troupe with his hollow and ancient voice. Schoonover's characterization is charming, endearing and entirely fitting for the Dracula tradition.

The crowd favorite was the show-stealing, screaming, insect-eating Renfield, played masterfully by Scott R. Glen, who bears a striking resemblance to silver-screen actor Thomas Mitchell ("Mr. Smith Goes to Washington") — with heightened eccentricities. He chases bugs, pets mice and screams at himself and invisible others.

What else could you ask for in comic relief?

The only questionable point in the play was Dracula himself. He seems a bit young, and not quite dark enough. The script's humorous treatment of

some well-timed lines builds his character well, but at times he is not as threatening as Bram Stoker's original legend promises. He does, however, have just as much magic and magnetism.

Much of the melodrama is delivered in a tongue-in-cheek fashion with near-expert timing. This tends to be the strongest point of the play. Even the shock value that Dracula's character demands is treated strikingly, tastefully and, at times, even comically. The fact that not even Dracula is devoid of wit makes "The Passion of Dracula" pointed and a dramatic success.

Performances of "The Passion of Dracula" will continue Thursday through Saturday and Oct. 30-31 at 8:00 p.m., plus a show Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

Adult tickets for Oct. 30 and 31 are \$11, the same price as regular Thursday and Sunday performances. Friday and Saturday performances are \$13. Student tickets are half-price.

Tickets are available at the box office, which is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and noon to 4 p.m. Saturdays during performance runs and 90 minutes before each performance.

(Available today)

Great week has comedy, thriller, courtroom drama



By Anne Steyer
Staff Reporter

This week shows promise as some of the year's best come to home video. Video stores will have in stock a great comedy, an excellent thriller and a solid courtroom drama.

"Defending Your Life" (PG) Close your eyes and imagine the afterlife in the waiting room between heaven and hell. If it's an all-white, mall-like city that resembles a theme park, you are seeing Judgment City.

Judgment City is the setting for Albert Brooks' ("Lost in America") latest comedy. His character has recently been separated from his new red BMW by a large bus and finds himself awaiting judgment by the court of the afterlife.

In Brooks' film, the choice is not a matter of heaven or hell. Moving on to heaven requires living a lifetime of courageous moments. Many of the funniest scenes come from moments in Brooks' life. His defense of them and his reactions to seeing them years later are hilarious.

Meryl Streep ("Out of Africa") co-stars as another dead traveler, staying at Judgment City awaiting "trial." Even people who are not Streep fans will enjoy her performance here. She is much more relaxed than in her other films and it's easy to see why Brooks falls for her.

Brooks is a very funny, very dry comedian. He is a yuppie's Woody Allen, making really painful situations funny. He has the insecure schtick down pat.

Likewise, the film pokes fun at the insecurities and seriousness of life. This is definitely worth viewing.

(Available today)

"Silence of the Lambs" (R) Director Jonathan Demme's ("Something Wild") taut thriller is one of the best to come to the screen in a long

time.

The story centers on young FBI agent-in-training Clarice Starling (Jodi Foster of "The Accused"), who is assigned her first case. Her task involves getting information on a convicted serial killer in order to assist the FBI search for "Buffalo Bill," an illusive murderer with a grisly method of operation — he skins his victims.

To obtain the much needed psychological profile, Starling is sent to talk with imprisoned psychiatrist Dr. Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lecter (Anthony Hopkins).

The story is based on a book by Thomas Harris, whose previous novel "Red Dragon" was adapted to the screen as "Manhunter." Harris has a talent for weaving a tale so well that the reader becomes part of the story, jumping at every turn.

Demme manages to recreate the same suspense; every shot is filled with tension. The acting also is superb. Foster and Hopkins both are likely candidates for Oscar nominations. (Available Thursday)

"Class Action" (R) Gene Hackman ("Hoosiers") and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio ("Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves") star as a father and daughter who are trial attorneys.

Jedediah Ward (Hackman) is a lawyer who fights for the "common people." Margaret Ward (Mastrantonio) is a fierce corporate attorney who represents one large company in its legal matters.

They take opposite sides of the courtroom when Margaret's company is involved in a class action suit regarding an automobile it makes. The car is part of a number of suspicious explosions and collisions.

The film, though centering on the case, confronts Margaret's loyalty to her career and her loyalty to her father and to justice.

Excellent acting by the leads and a gripping story make for two hours well spent. (Available Thursday)

Also this week: "The Simpson's Christmas Special" will arrive Thursday. Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa and Maggie lampoon traditional Christmas activities with the usual Matt Groening touch.

Mould stuns Omaha crowd

By Michael Stock
Senior Reporter

Bob Mould has stripped down his sound to the bare elements of 12 strings' worth of guitar and lyrics.

Monday night, Mould arrived in Omaha to stun the Ranch Bowl audience into gape-mouthed awe.

concert

REVIEW

Past, present and future were rolled into nearly an hour and 45 minute show, featuring early Hüsker Dü tunes, as well as tracks from his 1989 solo debut, "Workbook," last year's "Black Sheets of Rain" and five new tracks.

New tracks, "Can't Fight It," "Try It Again," and "Standing On The Edge," not only rivaled any of Mould's previous solo material, but emanate the intensity that no band has captured since Hüsker Dü's demise in 1987. Powered by a 12-string acoustic guitar, the new tracks featured the tell-tale Mould melancholy lyrics mingled with overpowering, positive chords.

The songs from "Workbook" were clearer and more pure than ever, lent new definition by the simplicity and clarity of Mould's acoustic show. "Wishing Well" and "Poison Years" were more up-tempo than their origi-

Poetry readings set for this week

By Bryan Peterson
Senior Editor

Several area poets will read selections from their works this week.

Two University of Nebraska-Lincoln assistant professors of English will give a reading of their poetry tonight at 7:30 p.m. at The Mill, 800 P St.

Elizabeth Weber has won two Academy of American Poets College Awards and is the author of "Small Mercies," available from Owl Creek Press.

Susan Whitmore, nominated this year for a Dewar's Profiles in the Performing Arts Award, is the author of "The Invisible Woman," recently published by Singular Speech Press, and "The Sacrifices," forthcoming from Mellen Poetry Press.

The free reading is titled "The Cage of the Body is a Burning House."

Friday at 3:30 p.m., Larry Levis will read selections from his poetry in 228 Andrews Hall.

Helen Crosswait will give a reading of "Riot in a Parrot Shoppe and Other Eruptions" at 7:30 p.m. Friday at The Mill.

The readings at The Mill are not part of an official series of readings, although The Mill has hosted a number of prior readings, including a recent one in which people read from banned or formerly banned books. The reading was followed by a silent auction of the books.

Coffeehouse tripe dangerous

Maybe it's just something about the place that turns people's brains to jelly. Not jelly really, but some kind of soup. I don't know what causes it, but you can hear some really dumb things in a coffeehouse.

It's true that any dumb statement is made dumber in direct proportion to how smart it's supposed to sound. Take the above sentence as an example. It's pretty dim sounding already, but can be made still less clever if you say, for instance, "Plato said that any dumb statement..." Other names may be dropped in for more spectacular results. I leave the proof of this as an exercise for the student.

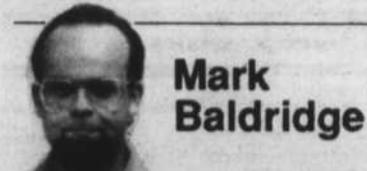
The point being that people are, for some reason, a lot more likely to tag on the name of Plato (or Freud, or Jung [pronounced "Jung"]!) to their own opinions if they have a cappuccino in front of them.

Just yesterday a guy in my local Casa de Café asked me if I agreed with Ayn Rand's assumption that the artist acts as a barometer of the philosophical climate of the age. If I'd have been in a bar, I would have punched him in the face.

"Did you hear what he said to me?" I would have shouted.

And those near me would've borne me out that he was asking for it.

But since I was in a coffeehouse at the time I had to pretend I didn't hear. I knew if I said anything at all, the next moment would find us at each other's throats over a word like "aesthetics." Or swooning over Nietzsche's eternal return. I mean, why should I care if he ever comes back?



Mark
Baldridge

It's really too bad, if you like expensive coffee, that you have to listen to such tripe to get it.

Maybe the best thing to do is make a game of it. Literally. Take a friend along and distribute points for correcting each other's pronunciation. Pretend to speak French and get in a big outrageous fight: "Ah wahnt ze monice, you sheep-skaht!" Why pretend you've read the books you're talking about when you can invent the books from scratch? You'll paraphrase passages from Freud's "The Interpretation of Panty Lines" or R. Buckminster Fuller's "User's Manual For Space-Ship Earth" chapter on ejection seats.

While those around you wow each other playing Go or chess, you'll be playing Strip Krahnk, a 2,000-year-old game from Atlantis. You'll be sure to draw an admiring crowd as long as you don't say or do anything in the least that is sensible or straight forward.

The only problem is the seductiveness of it all. It's so easy to play along, you may find, in time, that you've come to believe your own hype. It's a real danger.

But what can you do? You can always sit around with a cup of Sanka at home. If anyone says anything dumb there, it'll be you, and most likely you won't be impressed. Or you can jive up the java altogether. And take up, what, heroin? I mean, you've got to get those nerves tangled somehow, and you're sure not getting enough sex, right? Besides, where else can you meet so many people outside an alcoholic haze?

You can try some kind of lead suit, if you want. But I don't think it'll do you much good. And it may be that the only reliable defense against the Coffeehouse Effect is to allow yourself to go slowly mad. Or very quickly deaf.

Baldridge is a senior English major and Daily Nebraskan A&E columnist.



See MOULD on 10