

## Music school cuts budget with finesse, director says

By Andrea Christensen  
Staff Reporter

Budgets cuts usually are received with fear, frustration and even panic. But Rusty White, interim director of the UNL School of Music, said the school would handle its budget reductions with finesse.

"We decided to make one vertical cut," White said. "That was the elimination of the All-State Fine Arts Program, a summer program that allows high school students to work with university faculty."

Raymond Miller, All-State Fine Arts Program director, said the program, which costs the University of Nebraska-Lincoln \$15,000 annually, has run for the last 26 years. For one week each summer, the program brought about 300 talented high school musicians, artists, actors and dancers to UNL for education and recruitment.

White said plans already were being made to replace the All-State Fine Arts Program with a self-supporting program. One such program is the Great Plains Symphonic Band Camp scheduled for June 14-19.

"We are working from the ground up," White said. "We are still in the planning stages right now, but we hope to offer programs for orchestra and choir musicians as well. We think these programs will serve the same recruitment and educational goals as the All-State Fine Arts Program did."

But when faculty vacancies occur, White said, "Retiring senior faculty will be replaced by junior faculty who receive lower salaries."

White said these reductions would not reduce the quality of education offered by the music school.

"We haven't eliminated anything that will adversely affect our ability to offer courses or educate students," White said.

White said he hoped funding for the School of Music would increase when it became part of the College of Fine Arts.

"When (UNL Chancellor Graham) Spanier announced the plans for the College of Fine Arts," White said, "he made it clear that the \$150,000 budgeted for that purpose would be used to address programming needs, not just to set up a new administration."

White also said he was optimistic that being part of a fine arts college would increase the music school's prestige.

"The image of the arts will be improved generally," he said.

See MUSIC on 10



Michelle Paulman/DN

Artist Gerardo Meza stands before his painting "La Calavera De Mis Esvenos" (The Skeleton of My Dreams), part of his exhibit at The Coffee House, 1324 P St.

## From the roots

### Local artist's paintings celebrate his Mexican heritage

ENTERTAINING PEOPLE



By Mark Baldridge  
Senior Reporter

Handsome and brooding, Gerardo Meza looks like he should be posing for pictures, not painting them. But that's what this 28-year-old Lincolnite has been doing for as long as he can remember.

I talked with Gerardo over steaming cups of expensive coffee, surrounded by his paintings at The Coffee House, 1324 P St., where his works will be displayed through March 7.

He was shy at first, tentatively responding to questions about his life and background. But once the conversation switched to painting, his words became animated. He

talked so quickly that I had to struggle to write it all down.

The son of Mexican immigrants, Gerardo's art reflects his roots.

"I guess it all comes from that tradition, that heritage," he said of the Hispanic influence that permeates his work.

He cites as major influences the Mexican muralists of the early 1900s and the work of Frida Kahlo, wife of Diego Rivera, whose paintings explored a personal reality.

"Mexico has finally reached a place where artists are dealing with their own personal themes," he said.

Decorated with snakes, skulls and saints, many of Gerardo's paintings illustrate what he called "the Mexican tradition that death is part of life."

"You mourn," he said, "but it's also a celebration."

"And the snake is a symbol of life in Aztec culture," he added. "It's not a morbid thing."

Yet Gerardo has plenty of reason to be morbid. In 1990 he survived the death of his father, a divorce and the death of a friend.

Since then, he's worked on several paintings that try to explore what is beyond death.

"That's my therapy," he said, "It's the only thing that brings joy to me."

The paintings on display at The Coffee House were created during 1990-92, and can be read as a kind of exploratory diary of his recovery.

"It's just like looking in a mirror," he says of one painting, titled "El Sueno De La Muerte" (The Dream of Death). "It's about trying to keep the faith when you don't see any hope."

It is in his portraits that Gerardo's art seems most certain of itself.

"The portraits are trying to express some kind of emotion — anguish," he said.

Two among these that stand out

are: "Lucia," a portrait of his 3-year-old daughter Carmen and "Soy Yo" (It's Me), a self-portrait.

In other paintings he abandons all pretense of realism and explores the images of dreams. These paintings are of uneven quality, but show a steady growth over time, and a sure grasp of principles.

One of the best of these is "El Chango Rey" (The Monkey King) which, in Gerardo's words, "keeps changing. You can look at it every day and find something new."

In some of these later paintings, people appear with bluish skin.

Gerardo got tired of hearing people say all his subjects were Hispanic. "So I just invented different minorities," he said.

In fact, Gerardo has met resistance from local art galleries to his paintings because of their ethnicity and surreal style.

"Some people say good art is

See MEZA on 10

## Releases range from rentable to repulsive



By Anne Steyer  
Staff Reporter

The three R's are coming home to video this week: Retro, Rentable and Reprehensible.

"The Rocketeer" (PG) Disney's version of the comic-book film is based on Dave Stevens' 1982 homage to aviation all-stars and 1930s Southern California.

Daring stunt pilot Cliff Secord (Bill

Campbell) is the hero who, by chance, finds a strap-on rocket pack.

While Secord and his mechanic buddy (Alan Arkin in an Einstein-inspired role) are trying to figure out the pack, a number of other people, including the FBI and the Nazis, are trying to locate it.

Secord has a lot of fancy flying to do, between keeping the pack from enemy hands, foiling the Nazis' newest power scheme, and of course, saving his actress-girlfriend (Jennifer Connelly).

And when he does strap on that rocket pack, he goes ZOOM! looking like a hip bug.

"The Rocketeer" features some

See RELEASES on 10

## Known jazz artists featured in weekend music festival

### concert PREVIEW

By George K. Stephan  
Staff Reporter

This weekend's Nebraska Jazz Festival marks an opportunity to hear jazz from locally and nationally known musicians.

The festival begins tonight with a concert featuring internationally known jazz musician Kahil El'Zabar and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Jazz Ensemble at 8 at Kimball Recital Hall. El'Zabar studied in Africa and utilizes tradi-

tional African instruments in modern-day jazz.

On Saturday, some of Nebraska's top high school jazz bands will compete in the Nebraska High School Jazz Band Competition beginning at 10:30 a.m.

The Kim Park Quartet, a Kansas City jazz group that will be judging the band competition, will have workshops Saturday afternoon for students and anyone wanting to learn more about jazz. The quartet then will perform with the competition winner at 8 p.m. Saturday at Kimball Recital Hall.

The jazz will continue Sunday with the performance of the Ne-

braska Jazz Orchestra at 2:30 p.m. at Westbrook Recital Hall.

The festival will climax when the Count Basie Orchestra performs with Dizzy Gillespie at 4 p.m. at the Lied Center for Performing Arts. Gillespie is a jazz institution and one of the most influential musicians in jazz history.

Although the concert is sold out, cancellations are possible. Tickets for the concert are \$24, \$20 and \$16 with half-price tickets for students.

Tickets for all Kimball Recital Hall concerts are available at the door or by calling the Lied Center Box Office.