

UNL opera enchants audience with humor, superb performances

theater

By George K. Stephan
Staff Reporter

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Music's spring opera production of "The Marriage of Figaro" on Friday charmed and enchanted a receptive audience that almost filled Kimball Recital Hall.

The School of Music Opera Theatre presented Mozart's eternal comic opera with all the enthusiasm and humor that the composer and librettist intended it to have.

The opera, one of the great operatic masterpieces by Mozart, is the sequel to "The Barber of Seville," and continues to tell the story of Figaro, the clever barber and now valet to the Count Almaviva, who throughout the opera seeks to marry Susanna, the Countess' chambermaid.

Figaro, however, encounters a severe problem after learning from Susanna that the Count wants to revive his "right of feudal privilege," that is, the right to seduce any of his female servants before they marry.

The opera unfolds with the series of tricks Figaro and the Count use to achieve their own aims and the farci-

cal and embarrassing situations that arise from them. The opera ends with the Countess and Susanna outsmarting both men with a trick of their own.

The opera bubbles over with silly situations, each one performed to perfection by the production's singers. More than once, the production was interrupted with laughter from the audience.

Among a series of marvelous performances was Leah Miller's. She played the page Cherubino, an oversexed teen-age boy obsessed with flirting with every woman in the palace.

Miller portrayed the amorous youth with tremendous energy throughout Cherubino's many little exploits. Miller's character displays lively appeal as the Count finds Cherubino in one compromising predicament after another.

Miller sang both of Cherubino's arias in Acts I and II with the energy and delicacy needed for Cherubino's favorite subject: love.

Darin Anderson became a favorite of the audience from the moment he stepped on stage as the intrigue-loving music master, Don Basilio. Anderson added a delightful freshness to the role in his portrayal of Basilio as

See FIGARO on 10

Genuine reggae sound emanates from album

Reviews



"Beer Joint & Tailoring"
Jolly Boys
BMG

If you can't form a crystal-clear vision in your mind of an enormous Caribbean sunset with the sound of the ocean and the rustling of the jungle foliage ever present in the distance, then all you need is a copy of "Beer Joint & Tailoring."

These images and more come to life through the music of the Jolly Boys. How do they do it? By recording three days worth of traditional Jamaican songs near Port Antonio, Jamaica — the heart of that Caribbean setting.

The legitimacy of this album can't be overstated. Almost all that has ever become reggae, rock steady, ska and rub-a-dub has its roots on that island and in these songs.

Not only are the sounds of "Beer Joint" beautifully captured on location, but the instruments are almost as elemental as the setting. The four musicians, Joseph Bennet, Moses Deans, Noel Howard and Allan Swymmer create their music with a banjo,

bongos, rumba box, guitar and some sweetly accented mountain voices.

For anyone interested in reggae, this album is a must. From start to finish, almost every song sounds familiar, undoubtedly because of the heavy influence these songs came to have as rock steady and reggae were being born.

If Harry Belafonte hasn't directly covered any of the songs in this collection, he certainly has drawn heavily on this kind of music throughout his career.

The music on this album is much like Belafonte's version of "The Banana Boat Song." Although the Jolly Boys chose not to include that song on "Beer Joint," the silky-smooth rumba rhythms and bongos are similar.

The domination of the triplet on songs like "Donkey Want Water," the punchy staccato grooves of "Wheel & Turn Me," and "Mattie Rag," and the emphasis of the up beat on "Never Find A Lover Like Me" expose the deep roots and deep influence of these songs on later Jamaican music.

Lyrical, the album is hard to grasp because of the Jolly Boys' thick mountain accents, but that which is

See JOLLY on 10



Courtesy of Columbia Pictures

James Marshall (right) and Cuba Gooding, Jr. star in the drama "Gladiator," a Columbia Pictures Release set in the world of underground amateur boxing.

Fight movie detriment to action films; plot mundane, soundtrack wretched



"Gladiator"



By Gerry Beltz
Staff Reporter

"Gladiator" (Plaza 4, Edgewood 3) is as much of a credit to drama/action movies as Milli Vanilli is a credit to the music industry.

The latest release from the director's chair of Rowdy Herring-

ton ("Roadhouse") tells the sadly predictable tale of Tommy Riley (James Marshall from "Twin Peaks"), who has just moved to a new neighborhood with his dad.

As it turns out, Tommy's dad is up to his eyeballs in gambling debts and coincidentally is sent out of town for a month just as the standard low-life goons come around to collect.

Riley, in an attempt to clear his father's debts, hooks up with a greedy boxing promoter named Pappy (Robert Loggia of "Big") for a one-night deal. Of course, Riley surprises everyone by winning the bout he signed up for, which isn't legally fought in the first place. To make things worse for the audience, he wins it in a similar fashion that many pro wrestlers win their matches: he becomes

impervious to the blows of his opponent and subsequently pounds him into the mat.

This, in turn, thoroughly impresses Mr. Horn, the requisite evil fight promoter played by Brian Dennehy ("F/X 1 and 2"). He sees Riley as a natural and his ticket to the big money. Tommy does try to quit, but Horn uses the debts of Tommy's dad to blackmail him into fighting bigger and deadlier opponents.

Riley eventually meets up with Lincoln (Cuba Gooding Jr. of "Boyz n the Hood"), who is a fellow gladiator, and they become friends.

Gosh, is there a chance that they will fight one another, thus placing their friendship in jeopardy? No, let's make an even wilder guess. Is

See GLADIATOR on 10

VIBES

Wayne and Garth reincarnate Queen album

Much Music recently reported that the Breeders, that alt-rock side supergroup that features such notable rock chicks as Tanya Donnelly of Throwing Muses and Kim Deal of the Pixies, is back with an overdue follow-up to its highly acclaimed 1989 release, "Pod."

The bad news: It's only a five-track EP. The good news: Deal's even-better-looking sister Kelley has joined the band on guitar. Schwing!

MTV is back on the concert circuit with

another lame-brained packaged-tour deal. Cashing in on the astounding wave of popularity in alternative acts, a la Lollapalooza, the station is sponsoring the "120 Minutes" tour. PiL, Big Audio Dynamite II and Live all will be participating.

The last tour MTV sponsored was the titanic bomb known as the "Club MTV" tour, hosted by "Downtown" Julie Brown. If Dave Kendall sits this one out, we may have a decent show on our hands.

KBHR, the fictional radio station that

Chris-in-the-morning hosts every week on CBS' "Northern Exposure" soon will be able to be broadcast this side of Cicely, Alaska. Esquire magazine reports that the show's producers will be releasing a soundtrack of the station's play-list, complete with actor John Corbett waxing philosophical as the beatnik Chris between tracks.

Everything from Howlin' Wolf to R.E.M.'s "Green" to obscure French folk singers reportedly will be on the disc.

The radio station has become an integral

part of the show's appeal.

On a final note: Queen stands poised to have another posthumous hit on its hands with the re-release of its classic "Bohemian Rhapsody," primarily because of the success of the film "Wayne's World" and the soundtrack that features the song.

I'm sure Freddie Mercury's smiling a knowing smile somewhere.

—Compiled by Paul Winner