

Cinderella dances into audience's heart

Music highlights
Playhouse show

theater REVIEW

By Jill O'Brien
Senior Reporter

Rodgers and Hammerstein's magical, musical fairy tale, "Cinderella," Saturday came to life on stage at the Lincoln Community Playhouse, 2500 S. 56th St.

"Cinderella" was no small undertaking for cast or crew, considering the variety of songs and dances performed throughout the two acts.

The strong-voiced herald, played by Monte Michelsen, belted out the opening song, "The Prince Is Giving a Ball." Other familiar songs included "Ten Minutes Ago," "Impossible" and "Do I Love You Because You're Beautiful?" — the romantic ballad sung by the dashing prince (Anthony Ballard) and his bashful bride-to-be Cinderella (Shannon Marple).

Marple's tender performance of the angelic Cinderella was as dazzling as a glass slipper as she danced on an impressive storybook stage and sang her way into the hearts of the audience and the arms of the prince.

The only flaw appeared when Marple's sweet singing was drowned out occasionally by the orchestration.

Of course, one can't have a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical without an

orchestra, and "Cinderella" was backed by the Lincoln Musicians' Association conducted by Vincent Learned.

Aside from playing too loudly at times, the orchestra should be commended for providing live music for the cast.

One more regret that a nitpicking, hopeless romantic might have is that the kisses exchanged between the prince and Cinderella weren't long enough.

"Cinderella" has every reason to succeed.

Guest director Rhonda Lake recently came to Lincoln after spending 10 years in New York City. Her directing credits include "Into the Woods," "A Chorus Line," "Big Time" and "Nunsense," plus numerous acting roles on soaps, films and commercials.

Responsible for all those graceful moves on stage is choreographer Stephanie Chase, a Radio City Music Hall Rockette.

Also, set designer Julie Burney definitely should be applauded for her stage creations.

Once, as the prince sang to the audience, Cinderella danced with the moves of a prima ballerina behind a hazy transparent blue curtain in the background.

Peg Sheldrick played the role of the queen, and Daniel Reinchr played the portly and sometimes cynical king, exhibiting royal arrogance and humor.

But it was Sandy Fisher's portrayal of the fairy godmother, who lived up the show with her spontaneous humor laugh.

Sitting at the kitchen table, she told Cinderella, "I'm your fairy godmother. Don't ask me how I got into it. I've been one all my life..."

More words of wisdom followed. After changing Cinderella's rags to a royal white gown, Fisher flicked her fairy wand and chuckled, "No one will recognize you for what you are — people seldom do."

The gaudy, zany stepsisters delighted the audience every time Portia (Kristopher Filarski) opened her shrill mouth or Joy (Sarah Gibson) was plagued by her creaking knee. Gibson and Filarski convincingly played the insensitive nags, next to Sidney Johnsen Wayland's wicked portrayal of Cinderella's stepmother.

The biggest surprise of the performance came after the prince and the palace herald had exhausted their search for the woman who could wear the glass slipper. Well, not quite exhausted — the two actors leaped off stage and into a startled audience where the prince tried the slipper on several other candidates, including a reluctant male.

"Cinderella" will continue to play happily ever after until the final curtain call Dec. 20.

For more ticket information and performance times, call the playhouse box office at 489-9608.



David Badders/DN

2 Below revels in unique, fun style

UNL graduates hope
their funky mix leads
to another release

band REVIEW

By Shannon Uehling
Senior Editor

It's been described as funky random what-not with a hint of jazz, whatever that is.

Other terms might include eclectic, flexible, intoxicating and provocative, but the music of local two-person band 2 Below never will be called dull or inelastic.

"Let's just call it country," guitarist Kevin Kielian joked.

2 Below, made up of Kielian and keyboardist Scott Rehling, played Thursday night at the Edge, 227 N. 9th St.

The band has been a reality for less than two years, but the duo already has released two private-label albums — "The Next Door Zone" in 1991 and "They Dance Alone" this year.

Kielian said he met Rehling a couple years ago while working at the "Coffee House East," or as it's more commonly known, Paragon Music.

They have since formed an eccentric friendship and successful musical relationship. Their playful banter is entertaining even when they are not making music.

But when it comes time to play, Kielian and Rehling are able to pick up each other's cues as well as any band of veteran musicians.

That's not to say 2 Below makes no mistakes, but Rehling and Kielian said they knew how to keep the audience from hearing their slip-ups.

"We're the best cover-up band in Lincoln," Kielian said.

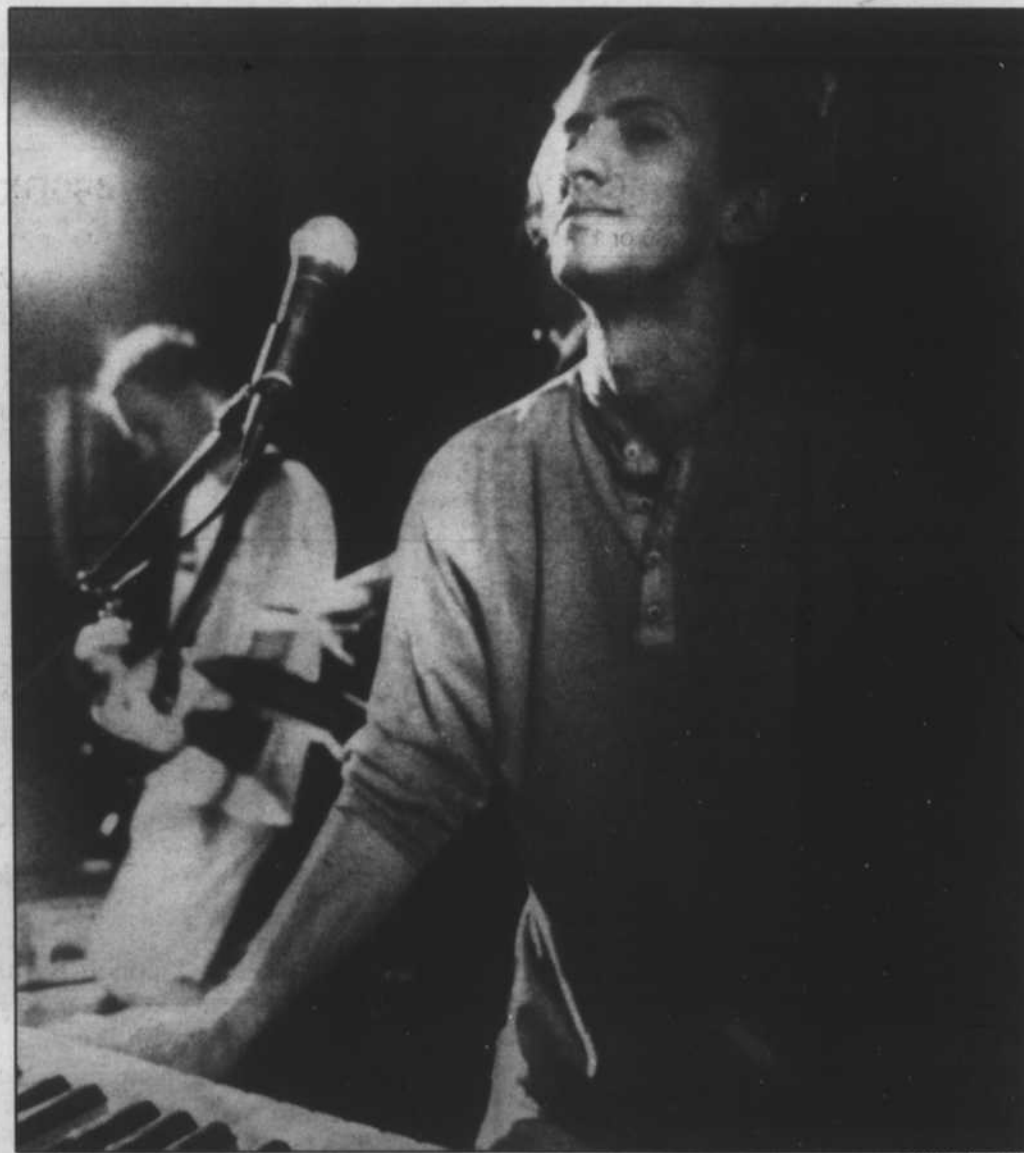
Rehling said it's just a matter of "evil-eye contact."

Kielian and Rehling, both graduates of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's College of Business Administration, share in the song writing, and their repertoire is all original.

Their playlist is a mix of reggae, jazz, blues and pop.

When asked where the inspiration for their songs came from, Rehling answered that it stemmed from personal experiences and "pressure not to have 'real' jobs."

Last winter, the two musicians lived in Phoenix, where Kielian went to school and Rehling "hung out by the pool." While they were in Phoenix, they recorded "They Dance Alone."



Jeff Haller/DN

Scott Rehling performs on keyboards and sings while Kevin Kielian plays guitar during a performance earlier this month at Rockin' Robin.

"We want to be in the South every winter," Rehling said.

This year will be no different. Kielian said he plans to move to Austin, Texas, in January.

Coupled with Kielian's move to Texas, the two musicians said they hope to achieve several goals they have set for themselves. One of those is to be accepted into the "South by Southwest" music festival in Austin.

Another goal is to record another album. "We're definitely going to put something out on 8-track," Kielian joked.

But in the meantime, 2 Below is looking casually for a new manager and performing about three or four times a month.

Like a number of other bands, 2 Below sometimes uses the talents of guest musicians who sit in on their performances.

For example, they were playing at Omaha's Howard Street Tavern one night when a musician, Tony Seville, approached them and said, "I play saxophone — can I sit in with you?"

Rehling told him to come back the next night, which he did. Seville has played with 2 Below a couple times since then.

Although the future of 2 Below is somewhat hazy, Rehling and Kielian said they plan to continue making their own brand of mixed-genre music.

"There's no need to rush now," Kielian said. "We have a lot of development to do."

Seasoned author
gives Sci-fi fans
thrilling view of
environmentalism



"The Venom Trees of Sunga"
L. Sprague de Camp
Del Rey Books

By Sam S. Kepfield
Staff Reporter

One of science fiction's great joys is finding a new title by one of the old pros, picking it up and discovering it to be as current, entertaining and lasting as one of the author's older works.

Such is the case with "The Venom Trees of Sunga."

L. Sprague de Camp has been around since the dawn of the Golden Age in 1939. In those 50-plus years, he has written nearly 100 books ("Lest Darkness Fall" is one of his more noted works,) and countless short stories.

De Camp also is one of the few science fiction writers to do a passing job at non-fiction as well (Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke and Robert Heinlein — the "big three" of science fiction for decades were others).

"The Venom Trees of Sunga" ought to warm the heart of anyone.

Kirk Salazar, son of an academic legend, journeys to the island of Sunga on the planet Kukulcan. His mission: examine the famed nanshin trees, which exude an acid-like venom, and how certain animals avoid getting harmed by it.

No thesis is ever this simple, though.

Salazar runs into George Cantemir, Terran corporate representative, who is in charge of clear-cutting the venom trees to make way for human habitation of the planet, which has been allowed by the ruler of the native sentient race called the "kooks."

The move for habitation is led by the Rev. George Dumfries, a fundamentalist preacher spearheading the settlement to ease Earth's overpopulation.

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