

# Chumbley dreams up music in spare time

## Lied's director composing opera, children's songs

By Stacey McKenzie  
Senior Reporter

When he's not at work as the executive and artistic director of the Lied Center for Performing Arts, Robert Chumbley can be found dreaming up musical theater at his piano, at his desk, or somewhere in between. He hasn't had much time to do anything else.

Late this summer, the composer

## PEOPLE Profile

was commissioned by the Boston-based Radiance Foundation, which supports programs for abused children, to create a series of songs for children based on the poetry of Ruth Krauss.

"I had to write these songs real quick," Chumbley said, "because the concert's Friday night."

"Three Little Daydreams," for soprano, mezzo-soprano, piano and per-

cussion instruments, will premiere Friday at Boston's Tsai Performing Arts Center.

Katherine Ciesinski of the Metropolitan Opera and her sister, Kristine Ciesinski of the Covent Garden Opera in London, will perform the songs. On Saturday, the performance will be repeated on National Public Radio.

Besides composing the songs for children, Chumbley has been working on another project.

Two weeks ago, he was notified that he would receive a second grant from the Opera America New Works/Development funds for his ongoing work on the contemporary opera, "Ordinary People."

The opera will be based on the novel by Judith Guest and the Academy Award-winning movie directed by Robert Redford.

"This story appealed to me so much because it takes ordinary people and really makes them heroes," Chumbley said. "I get tired of making heroes out of people who are already heroic."

The first grant for the opera, awarded to Chumbley about 1 1/2 years ago, was for \$21,000. The second grant was for \$5,000.

The grant is a help financially, he said, but more than anything, it is prestigious and attention-getting.

The Piedmont Opera Theatre of

Winston-Salem, N.C., nominated Chumbley to compose the opera's music.

"Ordinary People" is scheduled to premiere in September of 1994. Chumbley's work will be completed about one year before the premiere. A libretto for the opera is being written by Dugg McDonough.

For now, the composing is non-stop, Chumbley said.

"It's taken since I woke up this morning," he said. "It takes all of my weekends, my evenings and vacation time. Writing an opera is a huge undertaking for a composer."

## Jazz concert to feature guest

From Staff Reports

The Nebraska Jazz Orchestra will present "Classic Jazz from the Masters — Duke Ellington and More" at 7:30 p.m. today in Omaha and Tuesday in Lincoln.

These presentations are the second concerts in the orchestra's 17th anniversary season and will feature guest artist Chris Varga on the vibraphone.

Varga has attended the the Berklee College of Music, where he studied with Victor Mendoza, and the University of Nebraska-

Lincoln.

Selections from the program include: "C Jam Blues" by Duke Ellington and arranged by Dave Wolpe, "The Jitterbug Waltz" by Fats Waller and arranged by Kenny Berger, and "Barriers" by Varga.

Tonight's concert will be performed at Omaha's Crown Hall. The Lincoln concert will be performed at the Ramada Hotel and Conference Center, 141 N. 9th St.

Single admission tickets at the door are \$6 for students, \$10 for senior citizens and \$12 for adults.

## Education First! Week begins

From Staff Reports

National Education First! Week begins today and will run through Dec. 6, as declared by the U.S. Congress.

During the week, the Los Angeles-based organization, Education First!, and the four major networks — ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox — will use programming and media to promote public awareness about education.

In total, more than 140 hours of

programming, nearly twice last year's effort, will bring educational information into living rooms nationwide this week.

This marks the second year of the organization's 10-year drive to make education the nation's number-one priority.

Education First! was founded in 1988 by Lynda Guber and Carole Isenbuerg, two former New York school teachers who became television and motion-picture producers.

# Costner, Houston make magic on screen in romantic thriller

## "The Bodyguard"



By Anne Steyer  
Staff Reporter

After 15 years, "The Bodyguard" (Edgewood 3) is no worse for the wear.

Lawrence Kasdan penned the story line for the romantic thriller for actor Steve McQueen, but it languished on the shelf of some Hollywood storeroom after McQueen's death.

That is, until last year, when it was put back into production, this time with Kevin Costner in the title role and singer Whitney Houston as the woman in need of his talents.

Kasdan updated the script to the '90s by making Frank Farmer (Costner) a former Secret Service agent who retired from presidential

safeguarding after President Reagan was shot.

The type of threats to singer/actress Rachel Marron (Houston) have been updated too, now including not only threatening letters, but also exploding Barbie dolls.

Farmer agrees to protect Marron reluctantly, just as she is reluctant to hire him. Unaware of all the threats to her life, she sees Farmer as an unwelcome and unneeded accessory to her already busy life. Not surprisingly, he becomes much more than an accessory.

The core of the movie is the romance between the leads, but there is also plenty of action and suspense as Farmer tries to protect Marron from death threats and would-be assassins.

The plot, while a familiar story, has enough twists and jumps to make it fresh and thrilling — and it ends on an unconventional note.

Costner, always the Gary Cooper

guy-next-door, handles all the complexities of Farmer well. OK, he has a bad haircut; but beyond that, he does a fine job of capturing the persona of a man on the edge who lives life in the face of danger.

Houston, surprisingly, does a credible job as Marron. Granted, the part cannot be much of a stretch for her, but she has an undeniable chemistry with the camera and with Costner.

Having her sing a number of times during the film doesn't hurt either.

As screenwriter, Kasdan once again uses the same deft touch that has so successfully blended serious themes with a stroke of comedy in his other films: "Silverado," "Raiders of the Lost Ark," "The Big Chill" and "Grand Canyon" among them.

The tension, both romantic and otherwise, coupled with solid acting and realistic dialogue, makes "The Bodyguard" an exciting and highly entertaining movie.

### SAVE

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The Daily Nebraskan is now accepting applications for senior staff positions for the spring semester.

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If you are interested, come on down to the Daily Nebraskan office in the basement of Nebraska Union, pick up an application and sign up for an interview.

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