

Local musicians pool efforts on cassette



Richard Rebarber, left, Charles Lieurance and Lori Allison are all involved in the making of a tape, "Floating Opera," which features all local talent.

— 66 —
It's just what we like to do, and every chance we get we like to take it.
 — Allison, lead singer of The Millions

These days I spend every moment of my free time on music.
 — Richard Rebarber, producer, Floating Opera

By Heather Sinor
 Staff Reporter

Local talent, a love of music, a little spare time and a lot of hard work form the motivation behind the newly released cassette, "Floating Opera." The cassette, produced by Richard Rebarber, a UNL associate professor of mathematics and statistics, and Charles Lieurance, a UNL alumnus, was recorded in the upstairs studio of Rebarber's home. The 18 musicians and two artists featured in the recording are all local.

Rebarber said Lieurance came up with the idea of beginning the project. Lieurance gave him the lyrics, written mostly about his "screwed-up childhood," Rebarber wrote the music.

Rebarber received some formal musical training in college, but he said his ability to play the piano was more important.

"Most people who can play the piano can write music," he said.

"But, as I started recording, first of all I didn't want to sing on it, so I wanted to get Lori Allison involved," he said.

Allison, the lead singer of The Millions, has one of the best voices he has ever heard, he said.

Two of the songs on the cassette are Allison's originals. She had written them for herself, but never performed them.

"Lori's music fits in," Rebarber said.

Finding talent was not a problem. "Lincoln has a very tight-knit musical community," he said. The musicians were all "very interested in help-

ing out."
 "It's just what we like to do, and every chance we get we like to take it," Allison said.

The music on the cassette is a lot different from what The Millions usually play, she said.

"It's a good change."
 Rebarber wrote the basic arrangements, but some performers added their own creativity.

"I prefer it if somebody can change the part, or improvise," he said. "One of the songs on the cassette, 'The Nursery,' was not intended to be hard driving, but Ron Albertson (the drummer from the band Mercy Rule) had a really insistent sound that made the song."

Although everyone was very cooperative in devoting time to the recording, Rebarber said the whole project took about two and one-half years to produce. Each song took 50 to 100 hours to perfect, he said.

"These days I spend every moment of my free time on music," he said.

The cassette is being sold in most local music stores for around \$6.95. For those interested in the music, but unsure of a title with "opera" in it, Rebarber said that the word "opera" should be taken lightly. He said it meant opera in the sense of a collection of people, and "floating" was in terms of no fixed group of singers.

From the artwork on the cover to the lyrics to the vocals to the music itself, contributors really gave their best work, Rebarber said.

"That's what's really interesting about this project."

Female-dominant 'Opera' works

If you accept the premise that a song is simply "bad poetry set to music," "Floating Opera" may push the limits of your definition.

"Opera" is, in fact, pretty good poetry set to music — and pretty good music, too.

The list of contributing musicians on the liner notes reads like a who's who of Lincoln music intelligensia: Tammy Van de Bogart, John Tobler, Ron Albertson, Lori Allison and tons of others; a kind of dream team, really.

The result owes something to the subversive tunefulness of Kurt Weill and something to the kind of melancholy, alcoholic, white male (heir to

Irish princes) music that comes bubbling out of the underground again and again in this country.

The lyrics orbit in a kind of paralyzed fascination with the ghosts of a personal past — around a baleful feminine sun: "In the nursery/pictures taken of me. Pretty blond baby/and the mother who frowns."

All this is made something like hermetic by the female vocals that dominate the album.

"Opera" is a trip, then, through a world of male anxiety and dread, with a cushy pillow and a window seat.

— Mark Baldrige

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Experiments with college rock abound on Loud Family album



The Loud Family
 "Plants and Birds and Rocks and Things"
 Alias Records

It's been since 1987 that Scott Miller's band Game Theory released its sprawling, enigmatic album "Lolita Nation." Six years later, you either haven't heard of Game Theory, or you are still trying to figure out the significance of the reference to Nabokov.

To make things difficult, Scott Miller is back with a new band (The Loud Family) and a new album ("Plants & Birds & Rocks & Things") that is packed with more references

than a lost episode of the Dennis Miller Show.

"Plants" continues the cinematic sequence of experimental college rock deeper in Miller's mind. It explores the individual in our modern world: poor, inundated by marketing messages, unable to connect meaningfully with anyone for very long.

If you are graduating soon — faced with the opportunity to become a humorless corporate slave — this album may touch you deeply.

Scott Miller and the rest of The Loud Family are one of the few bands that can take nifty, digital studio toys and make sonic art that transcends vacuous computerized dance.

The result is an album so sideways that you will have to explain it to all of your friends. Buy it if you can find it.

— Pohl Longsine

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Konzert CALENDAR

Tonight — Big Daddy, Royal Grove; Lucky Peterson, Zoo Blues Bar (through Saturday); Dixie Dregs, Ranch Bowl.

Tuesday — Isaac Stern & Friends, Lied Center for Performing Arts; Fugi's (Ethnic Dance) at the Red & Black Cafe; Big Daddy, Royal Grove; On the Fritz, Ranch Bowl (through Saturday).

Wednesday — Uretha Franklin/Ritual Device/Unsane, Duffy's; Cosmopolitans, Plamor Ballroom; Big Daddy, Royal Grove.

Thursday — Too Smooth, 9th Street; Loopholes/Roosevelt Franklin, The Edge; Randy Mollner/Julius Nevis, Red & Black Cafe; Ripcord, Rockin' Robin; Big Daddy, Royal Grove; Omaha Symphony, Orpheum.

Friday — Sonny Rollins, Lied Center; The Wrex, Duggans Pub; Duggan & Doyle/King Fish, 9th Street; Strong Barn, The Mountains; Clayface/Pullout/None with Guns, Red & Black Cafe; Hat Trick, Rockin' Robin; Big Daddy, Royal Grove; The Continentals, Howard Street.

Saturday — Hexagon, Sheldon; Loud Sounding Dream (LSD) from Kansas City with Nerve Thang, The Edge; The Wrex, Duggans Pub; King Fish, 9th Street; Strong Barn, The Mountains; Emerald Fyre, Red & Black Cafe; Hat Trick, Rockin' Robin; Big Daddy, Royal Grove; The Continentals, Howard Street; Omaha Symphony, Orpheum; Whiccross with guest rapper, ROC-T, York High School in York.

— Compiled by Jill O'Brien