



Violinist Leila Josefowicz performed at the Lied Center for Performing Arts Friday Night. Josefowicz is 16-years-old. photo courtesy IMG Artists

16-year-old wields a mean bow

Concert review

Leonard Slatkin and James DePreist.

Accompanying her for several numbers on piano was John Novacek, a composer and accomplished performer with a somewhat overstated playing style.

Josefowicz opened the show with two sonatas for violin and piano—the first by Mozart and the second by Gabriel Faure.

Though admirably executed, neither of these pieces showcased the violinist. It wasn't until the second half of the program that Josefowicz began to show her colors.

She performed the "Sonata No. 4 for Solo Violin, Op. 27" by Eugene Ysaie passionately and with great energy.

Josefowicz wrestled with the music, almost in rebellion against the notes.

During the last movement, her

face visibly flushed. She appeared to win her battle with the music and draw it under her rein.

It is this kind of playing, not mere accuracy of notes and time signatures, that makes for a compelling and evocative performance.

Then in two pieces by Igor Stravinsky — particularly the "Danse Russe" from the "Petroushka" ballet — she again showed her audience the struggle between artist and art.

The piece, famous to baby boomers and their descendants from "Gilligan's Island" (I ask to be, or not to be/That is the question that I ask of me), could have been mechanically performed — it is after all the dance of mechanical puppets.

But Josefowicz's performance was joyous and human and impassioned.

Her performance, in fact, brought something to the music that audiences might not have heard before.

In light of the second half of the show, the first seemed blase and predictable.

Is this the old theory at work: that audiences have to be "warmed up" at the beginning if they are to participate by the end?

Or is it that Josefowicz is not fully confident as yet in her own power to win an audience?

If the latter, she should fear no more.

The work on stage in the last half of Friday night's show won her an enthusiastic standing ovation from a Lincoln crowd, something that not even some of the greats can boast.

—Mark Baldrige

Pumpkins send crowd into frenzy

Concert review

A swarm of sweat-drenched, writhing Smashing Pumpkins fans witnessed one of the most powerful shows to grace Omaha's Peony Park, and the entire area, in a long while on Thursday.

Despite an overloaded, bass-ridden sound system, the Chicago band delivered a high-intensity performance, defying claims that the Pumpkins can't hack it live.

The first note of the Pumpkins' first song, "Geek USA," set off a near-violent pit that did not slow down all night.

As the temperature rose, so did the pace of the set, hammering out songs like "Hummer" and "Mayonaisse" and mesmerizing the crowd with "Dis-arm," which turned into a massive sing-along with chief Pumpkin Billy Corgan.

Singer and guitarist Corgan, along with guitarist James Iha, bassist D'arcy and drummer Jimmy Chamberlin, invaded Omaha as part of a whirlwind tour supporting "Siamese Dream," the band's recently released album on Virgin Records.

The set was surprisingly well executed, considering the heavily layered sound found on the album.

Other pleasers included "Quiet" and, from the Pumpkins' first album "Gish," "I Am One" and "Siva." The crowd reached the crushing point — as those unfortunate to find themselves against the stage would testify — with "Cherub Rock."

The band used no clever nor exciting stage antics, with Corgan choosing instead to shoot spooky looks at the crowd, occasionally dancing like a drugged rag doll and D'arcy spending most of the show examining the floor or the wall beside her.

But the Smashing Pumpkins left the crowd in a bloodied trance brought on solely by the band's mastery of transcendental rock and roll.

The sign outside Peony Park Thursday read "Puppet Show with Smashing Pumpkins," spoofing the point in the classic film "This is Spinal Tap" when a huge band was on its way down — if Omaha's reaction is any indication, Smashing Pumpkins is surely on its way up.

—Glenn Antonucci

Twelfth Night opens with great set, cogent acting



UNL's Thursday night opening performance of "Twelfth Night" was slightly marred by squeaky seats, tweeting birds and discourteous University Foundations students.

Despite the low points, the University Theatre Arts and Dance's season opener had its share of highlights as well.

Two of those were terrific costumes — designed by UNL Theatre professor Janice Stauffer — and a terrific panoramic set, courtesy of another professor, UNL newcomer Chuck O'Connor.

As with most of Shakespeare's plays, "Twelfth Night" has three stories running simultaneously, each one providing important bits and pieces for the others. Of course, the play also employs other Shakespeare standards, including faked letters, disguises and mistaken identity.

The intertwining stories are set in the make-believe land of Illyria. A duke's unrequited love for a lady, a shipwrecked young woman's

escapades in drag and the beleaguered troubles of a lady's manservant all combine for comedy and drama.

UNL graduate Eric Thompson is Duke Orsino, a man whose love for the lady Olivia (Missy Thibodeaux) is completely rejected. Olivia's scorn is not a response to any character flaws, but instead, a matter of the heart — she believes she is completely incapable of loving him.

Their story is further complicated by the arrival of Viola (Joan Kortic) — a young woman who is shipwrecked and disguises herself as a man. Viola becomes a messenger for the duke, and soon becomes entangled in his love affair with Olivia. Meanwhile, she mourns her brother, who she believes drowned in the shipwreck.

And finally, there is the comic mess with Olivia's manservant Malvolio (Dean Houser), who finds himself the butt of pranks and jokes from the play's merry band of buffoons and tricksters. The comical characters include Sir Toby Belch (Patrick Tuttle), Sir Andrew Aguecheek (S.R. Bigelow), Olivia's lady-in-waiting Maria (Amy Gaiher-Hayes) and Feste (Troy Martin), the jester.

While most of the characters cross storylines

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