

TOM MAINELLI

# Out & A&E WEEKEND OUTLOOK about

## One and only Symphony Orchestra performance concentrates semester's work

**O**n Sunday, music fans will have their first—and last—opportunity this semester to hear the UNL Symphony Orchestra perform in concert.

And it's free. The concert will consist of five very diverse pieces, according to Emil Aluas, the UNL School of Music's Symphony Orchestra Conductor.

Aluas said the first piece the orchestra will perform is Tchaikovsky's "Romeo et Juliette."

Lalo's "Le Roi D'ys," an opera featuring the vocals of tenor Darin Anderson, a voice major, will be the second piece.

The third selection is by American Alen Hovahaness, called "Fantasy on Japanese Wood Prints." The piece features the orchestra as well as a marimba player and soloist Kelli Scheef,

a percussionist studying music education.

Sergi Rachmaninoff's "Piano Concerto No. 2," the third movement, will be the fourth piece of the evening.

Pianist Anne Marie Madison will be featured.

After a brief intermission the orchestra will finish the evening's concert with a performance of Moussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition."

Aluas said UNL's symphony itself, like Sunday's concert, is made up of diversity.

"Our group is comprised of a wide range of people," he said. "We have very experienced people as well as freshmen."

Aluas came to Lincoln from Romania this summer. He said he has enjoyed his first full semester at UNL, despite the hard work involved.

"I have a lot of work to do," he said. "I have to develop both the orchestra and opera programs."

Aluas said he was pleased with the music school's presentation of the opera "Dido and Aeneas" earlier this semester.

"We did well both artistically and aesthetically," he said.

He hopes to do the same on Sunday night—in front of an auditorium filled with music enthusiasts.

"We really need the support of the community," he said. "We need people to realize what we are doing here."

So support UNL's Music School, enjoy some quality music and save a few entertainment bucks. The free performance is Sunday at 8 p.m. at Kimball Hall.

Mainelli is a senior News-Editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan Arts & Entertainment editor.



## Original music style to blow through Lincoln

By Paula Lavigne  
Staff Reporter

### Concert preview

**A**mid the frigid rush of the holiday season, The Winter Solstice Concerts drift into Lincoln this Sunday, featuring three premiere recording artists under the Windham Hill label.

Sunday's concerts are part of Windham Hill's fifth annual tour and support the album "A Winter's Solstice, Volume IV." Composer and pianist Liz Story, musical quartet Nightnoise and guitarist Alex De Grassi will be presenting solo as well as combined performances during the holiday themed concerts.

De Grassi, one of the first Windham Hill artists, said his work focused on pioneering new guitar styles and methods. He said a new style of mixing guitar with percussion went into his sixth and latest album for Windham Hill, "The World's Getting Loud."

Since his early teens, De Grassi said he stressed self-motivation over academic instruction in mastering the guitar.

"When I was thirteen, I learned from a friend who was taking guitar lessons," he said. "After his lesson, that he paid for, he'd teach me what he learned that day. We became

friends this way."

De Grassi's decision to try his hand at guitar stemmed from his inability to play the trumpet and his brother's talent for singing.

"It never felt right for me, because my heart wasn't in it," he said. De Grassi said he appropriated his brother's guitar after his brother discovered singing was his true niche.

Straight out of high school, De Grassi said he joined "something like a garage band."

"We used to play at frat parties at Stanford University," he said. "We'd just cover popular rock tunes."

He said his early musical influences were mainly blues and rock artists. He said he decided not to pursue a career in blues or rock because he did not have a good singing voice.

"I knew there was a niche for writing and playing original guitar," he said. De Grassi said he discovered his niche after a brief stint in college.

De Grassi said he attended University of California at Berkley, where he received a degree in Urban Geography and a few fundamental music classes.

"I took many of the basic music department classes, like music harmony," he said. "After one year, my professor said all the rules of harmony we learned didn't mean anything if you came from a different culture."

De Grassi said that was a liberating moment for him. He realized an academic approach to guitar playing wasn't right if you had your own approach.

"I have never reconciled with learning," he said. "It did make me feel my approach to music was justified, though."

He said self-motivation was the most important tool in guitar playing.

"You have to have an interest or passion," he said. "It's a fine balance. Scales, theory, harmony and history are great tools, but if you're driven by another motivation, it could be suppressed by academics."

Although fundamental music skills are important, De Grassi said he's thankful he stayed away from the academic approach.

"I wonder if I'd had gone that route alone, I might not have become a guitar player," he said.

"My music is an expression of who I am as a storyteller who's creating or making something," he said. "You have to be directed by that as much as by the skills you learn."