

## Nebraska Rep's season closes with romantic musical

By Paula Lavigne  
Staff Reporter

She loves me. She loves me not. She loves me. She loves me not. Who is she?

Through a mixture of confusion, irony and contrast, the Nebraska Repertory Theatre's season finale "She Loves Me" creates a tension only romance can endure.

This Broadway musical revival pits two people who dislike each other into a compassionate, quirky romance.

In the 1930s, women were expected to be barefoot, pregnant and unemployed. However, for Amalia Balash, (played by actress Susan Arundale) her single life as a worker in a perfumery makes her a striking contrast to her time.

Arundale, an Actors Equity Association actress, said her character was a strong woman with many obstacles to overcome for a single, working woman in the 1930s.

"It's a lot of fun to be playing ahead of her time," Arundale said. "She's struggling with a lot. In her time, if you weren't married at a certain age, there was something wrong with you."

Although Amalia is struggling with single life, Arundale said, she does meet someone — through the mail.

"She's actually fallen in love with someone she's corresponding with and who she's never met," she said.

Arundale said playing Amalia was an enjoyable experience because she was allowed to explore how Amalia resolved her many conflicts. She said she could also relate to the role on a personal level.

"In acting, it's very hard to get in. It's very competitive and there's always a challenge," she said. "When your job is over, you have to go back out an audition for another one."

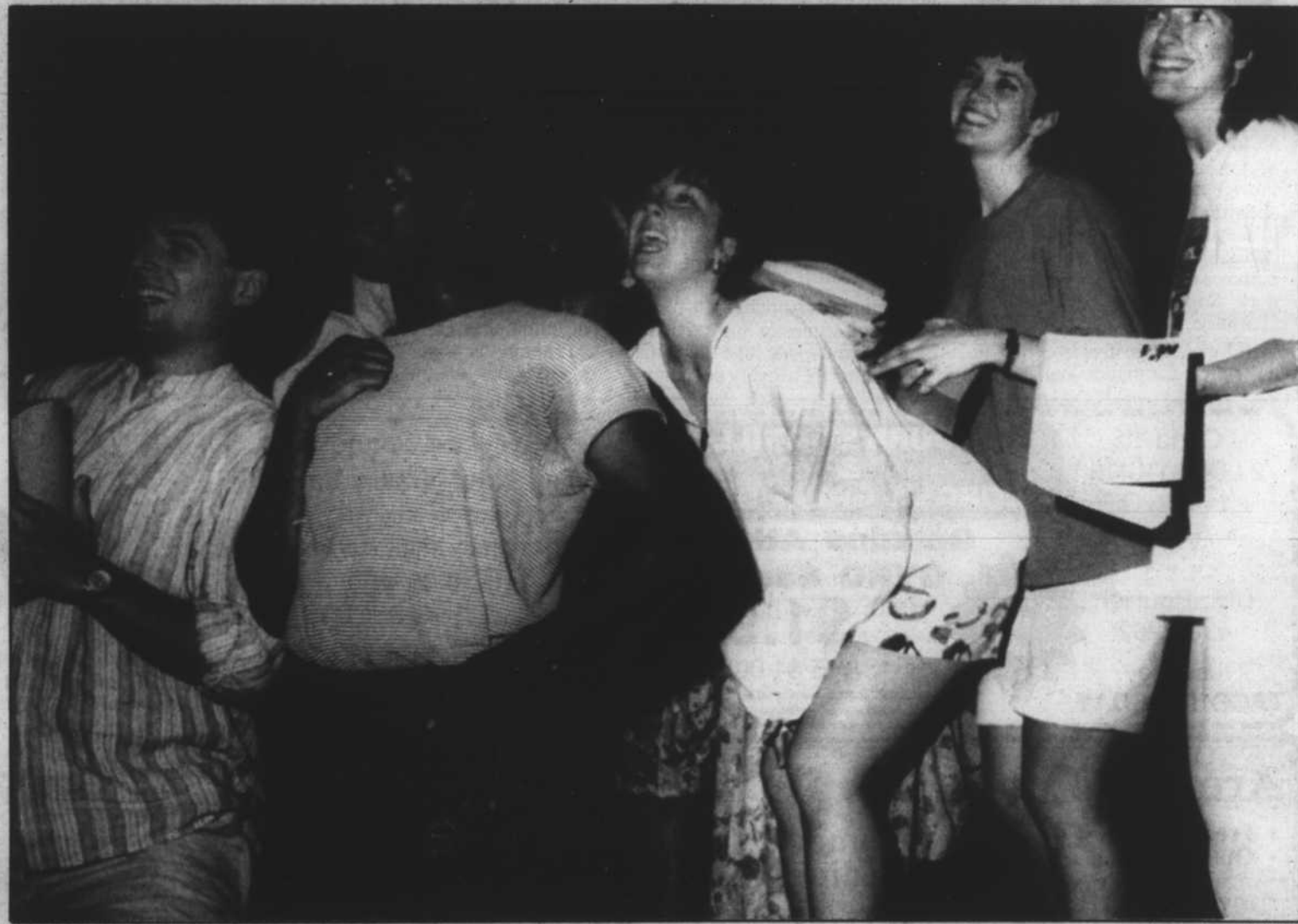
The "certain fear" that lies in searching for a new job is what ties the knot between Arundale and Amalia. However, the two don't lead parallel lives.

Arundale is happily married, and ironically, her husband is performing alongside her in "She Loves Me."

"I do have someone to share my life with," she said. "However, there have been times when I was lonely and looking for a relationship."

Performing as a lady in the 1930s was not a challenge for Arundale, either, because of her upbringing.

"I have parents who are quite a bit older and I had to relate to their lives," she said. "When I was a child, I was always asked to be a young



Jason Levkulich/DN

Cast members of "She Loves Me" rehearse the show's finale for tonight's opening.

lady because at that time, that was what was expected of you."

For director Keith Grant, the challenge of "She Loves Me" lies in the linguistics of the musical.

"A lot of the scenes take place in a perfumery and it's challenging to orchestrate the movement around that," he said.

Grant, who once taught at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said his return to Nebraska has taken him somewhat out of his normal repertoire. Grant said most of his work was

"very political and darker" than the lighthearted romantic comedy in "She Loves Me."

"This was a chance for me to find a vision for this piece," Grant said. "I wanted to find a way to do it differently than any production of it I'd ever seen."

Grant said there was "too much tension" to give anything away which would ruin the musical's "big moment of discovery."

"It's very 'Crying Game'-esque," Grant laughed. "I see it as people missing each other and not really connecting."

The relationships within the play are very subtle and intimate, which adds to the play's lighthearted atmosphere.

"It's a very charming, music box, Valentine Faberge' egg," Grant grinned. "It's very exquisite — not big and brassy."

"She Loves Me" will be performed today, Friday and Saturday and Aug. 4-6 at 8 p.m. in the Howell Theatre in UNL's Temple Building. There will be 3 p.m. matinees on July 31 and Aug. 7. Tickets are \$20 and student tickets are \$10.

## 'Client' guilty of solid acting, plot



### "The Client"



By Joel Strauch  
Staff Reporter

"The Client" has been found guilty of being the best film interpretation of a John Grisham novel yet.

The movie does justice to the book and also stands on its own as a solid film.

It tells the story of Mark Sway (Brad Renfro), a young boy who witnesses a suicide and learns the whereabouts of the body of a murdered U.S. Senator.

Mark enlists the services of attorney Reggie Love (Susan Sarandon), and she helps him ward off the unwanted attention of both the mob and a relentless federal prosecutor, Reverend Roy Foltrigg (Tommy Lee Jones).

Mark and Reggie desperately try to find a way that Mark can divulge the information he knows without putting him or his family at risk.

The strong acting adds much to an already intense Grisham plot. Academy Award-winning Jones fits well into the role of the attention-grubbing Foltrigg, who hopes to gain enough

publicity from the case to run for governor.

Twice nominated for an Oscar, Sarandon is exceptional as the resourceful and motherly Love. Setting aside her own problems, she gives her all for Mark and his family.

Newcomer Brad Renfro is captivating as the frightened but assertive Mark. Only 11 years old, Mark has matured beyond his age by growing up without a father. Renfro beautifully captures the essence of a young boy who is forced into a situation that quickly becomes too much for even his heightened maturity.

The filmmakers left out a few parts of the book that would have easily added a lot to the film, but overall "The Client" is a great watch for Grisham fans and nonfans alike.

## Child stars make splash on new video shelves

"Blank Check" (PG) — An enjoyable comedy starring Brian Bonsall ("Star Trek: The Next Generation") and Miguel Ferrer ("Point of No Return"), "Blank Check" is a story about a kid who gets a million bucks dropped into his lap, what he does with it, and how he avoids the people that want it back.

"What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (R) — An incredible film with some of the best young acting talent around, courtesy of Johnny Depp, Leonardo DiCaprio and Juliette Lewis.

Gilbert (Depp) is a young man whose life is at a standstill in a

small town, and he is caring for his entire family, including his mentally challenged brother Arnie (DiCaprio, in an Academy Award-nominated performance).

**PICK-OF-THE-WEEK** — For anyone that enjoyed James Cameron's "Terminator 2: Judgment Day", call the local video store to see if they are carrying "Terminator 2: Director's Cut" on their shelves. There's about 15 extra minutes of footage, including a different ending and even more funky special effects with both of the terminators.

— Gerry Beltz