

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Diverse Lied agenda goal of new director

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

In high school, C. Bruce Marquis produced and directed theatrical productions. In college, he turned to opera. Once in a while, he performed in the church choir.

Although his love of performing was great, he chose to abandon it as a career. Now, instead of being on stage, he works behind the scenes in arts administration.

On Oct. 10, Marquis (pronounced markwiss) will assume the post of director of the Lied Center for Performing Arts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He currently is serving as the director of fine arts programming at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

"I grew up being exposed to a wide variety of art forms. I personally enjoy just about everything," he said.

Marquis said there were some forms of music, such as rap, that he enjoyed less than others. But he said he could still appreciate music he did not prefer.

His personal tastes cover a broad range of classical music, jazz and traditional music — music including bluegrass, American gospel, South American folk, Afro-pop and eastern European choral music.

Marquis said he enjoyed a variety of theater and dance, from traditional classical to cutting-edge modern.

Marquis said a great thrill for him was discovering new artists in all art fields and introducing them to the community.

During his tenure in Milwaukee, he brought about 50 new artists to the city.

"I enjoy artists who are moving the arts forward — who are creative in exploring new ground with their arts and not just re-creating museum pieces," he said.

"They can still perform established repertoire, but only if they are able to do it and place their own, unique interpretation on it."

Marquis said he would bring artists to the Lied Center who excelled and represented the best in their field.

That approach fits in well with past and current Lied Center performers, Marquis said. He plans only to expand, not change, the center's programming.

"The Lied has a position in the region as a

multifaceted organization to serve the university community, the Lincoln community and the broader Nebraska community," he said.

The Lied Center must appeal to all of its constituents, Marquis said, and bring the best of many fields to Lincoln.

"We will continue to present classical music, Broadway performances and cutting-edge artists," he said.

But Marquis said one of his aims was to expand the Lied's theater offerings beyond Broadway touring companies.

"Across the board, I hope to expand in areas of increased cultural diversity," he said. "There are some marvelous world traditions in all genres that we should be introducing to our communities."

"It comes back to my personal view that we need to realize, as we approach the year 2000, that all great art is not white, western European art."

As part of the university system, the Lied Center has a special challenge to introduce the university and the surrounding community to various traditions that make up the current cultural aesthetics, Marquis said.

Marquis said the Lied Center had a special duty to broaden students' horizons and needed to be responsive to students on several different levels.

"I believe the students already have some input in programming by being on the Lied Center advisory board," he said, "but I think we can engage in more conversations about what the students want at the Lied."

On the other hand, many students have been responsive to the Lied Center. Nationwide, the Lied Center has one of the highest percentages of student attendance.

"I must applaud the students at UNL for taking an interest in the arts," Marquis said.

But the Lied Center can go a step further, he said, by better developing programs to reach out and stimulate greater interest among students.

Balance, Marquis said, is the key to gauging what the Lied Center offers the students.

"I think we will always consider bringing in artists which are attractive to students, but we will also have to be responsible to introduce students to artists and art forms with which they may not be entirely familiar."



Courtesy of Lied Center for Performing Arts

C. Bruce Marquis, the newly chosen director of the Lied Center for Performing Arts, hopes to introduce students to new and different art forms. Marquis, who will assume the post on Oct. 10, said he would like to involve students more in the process of deciding which performers are brought into the Lied Center.

'Trial By Jury' plot belongs in a closed courtroom

By Joel Strauch
Senior Reporter

"Trial By Jury" should be sentenced to death. Or at least to several consecutive life sentences.

The film's award-winning cast is its only positive attribute. Unfortu-

nately, cast members are given transparent roles and are unable to substantiate the movie's far-fetched plot.

The story is hardly new. Valerie Alston (Joanne Whalley-Kilmer) is a single mother and a business owner in New York City who has somehow managed to maintain the rigid ideal-

ism of Pope John Paul II. So when she is called for jury duty, she feels compelled to leave her business for two weeks and find a baby sitter for her 7-year-old son to fulfill her obligation.

She quickly finds her idealism challenged by the defendant, Rusty Pirone (Armand Assante), a sadistic mob boss who is on trial for murdering 11 people.

Ex-cop Tommy Vesey (William Hurt), who is one of Pirone's henchmen, coerces Alston into voting for Pirone's acquittal by threatening her and her son.

Alston is forced to compromise her almost naive ideals to protect herself and her child. She soon is transformed into a liar and a manipulator.

The acclaimed actors that abound in this film fail to give it believability, either because of poor performances or the weak characters they must portray.

Hurt does a fair job as Pirone's henchman, but the hopeless idealism with which Alston is afflicted seems

to be contagious. Hurt betrays his Mafia boss to protect the woman he has been verbally and physically threatening. This sudden change of heart makes Vesey seem superficial.

Assante and Gabriel Byrne, who plays prosecuting U.S. Attorney Daniel Graham, are convincing in their courtroom confrontations. But their performances are not above mediocre and add little to the film.

Whalley-Kilmer is not bad in her role of an honest, moral woman who is forced to transform into the epitome of everything she is against. But the change is so drastic that it becomes almost comic, and Whalley-Kilmer is unable to make the Jeekyll-and-Hyde metamorphosis believable.

Others in the supporting cast give inept deliveries that destroy any hope of realism that the film might achieve.

The plot has more holes than a box of donuts. Alston shows her nervousness during the trial and is the only one who votes not guilty in a cut-and-dry case. No one even thinks that she might be threatened by an incredibly rich and powerful

Quik Facts

Movie: "Trial By Jury"

Rating: R

Stars: Joanne Whalley-Kilmer, Armand Assante, Gabriel Byrne, William Hurt

Director: Heywood Gould

Grade: D

Five words: Pleading insanity film's only defense

Mafia kingpin! Graham, the prosecutor, finally hits on the idea after what seems like an eternity.

Plenty of other things are wrong with this picture, but it is hoped that enough evidence has been provided here to reach a guilty verdict.

"Trial By Jury" does do a fair job of portraying the inner workings of the judicial system — especially the deliberation of the jury. But its predictable plot, poor acting and incredible coincidences make it a film well worth not seeing.



Courtesy of Warner Bros.

Gabriel Byrne and Joanne Whalley-Kilmer star in "Trial By Jury," a psychological courtroom thriller.