

STATE ARTS

with Joel Strauch

New horror flicks so bad it's scary

People are immune to horror anymore. They have been so desensitized to meaningless death and violence that even a suspenseful book or frightening film can't elicit the heebie-jeebies like in the old days.

People just aren't going to be scared by reading about a crazed serial killer or watching some guy with a razored glove jump into the dreams of beautiful young women when they can look out their window and see mayhem and torture that's 10 times worse.

And there's just no comparing modern horror writing with that of the past. Even Stephen King can't make you shake like Edgar Allen Poe or H. P. Lovecraft.

Those guys just knew how to turn up the volume on the quadrasonic speakers of terror.

Maybe it's because there are a lot better treatments for mental illnesses these days.

If Lovecraft would have been able to get regular doses of lithium, he might have written about pretty flowers and beautiful sunsets instead of lurking fears and the infamous Cthulu.

Recent horror movies are more likely to make audiences laugh than recoil in fear.

The level of believability has been reduced by the ludicrous amounts of blood and gore that directors seem to think equates to fright.

Today's hack-and-slash films just can't cut it.

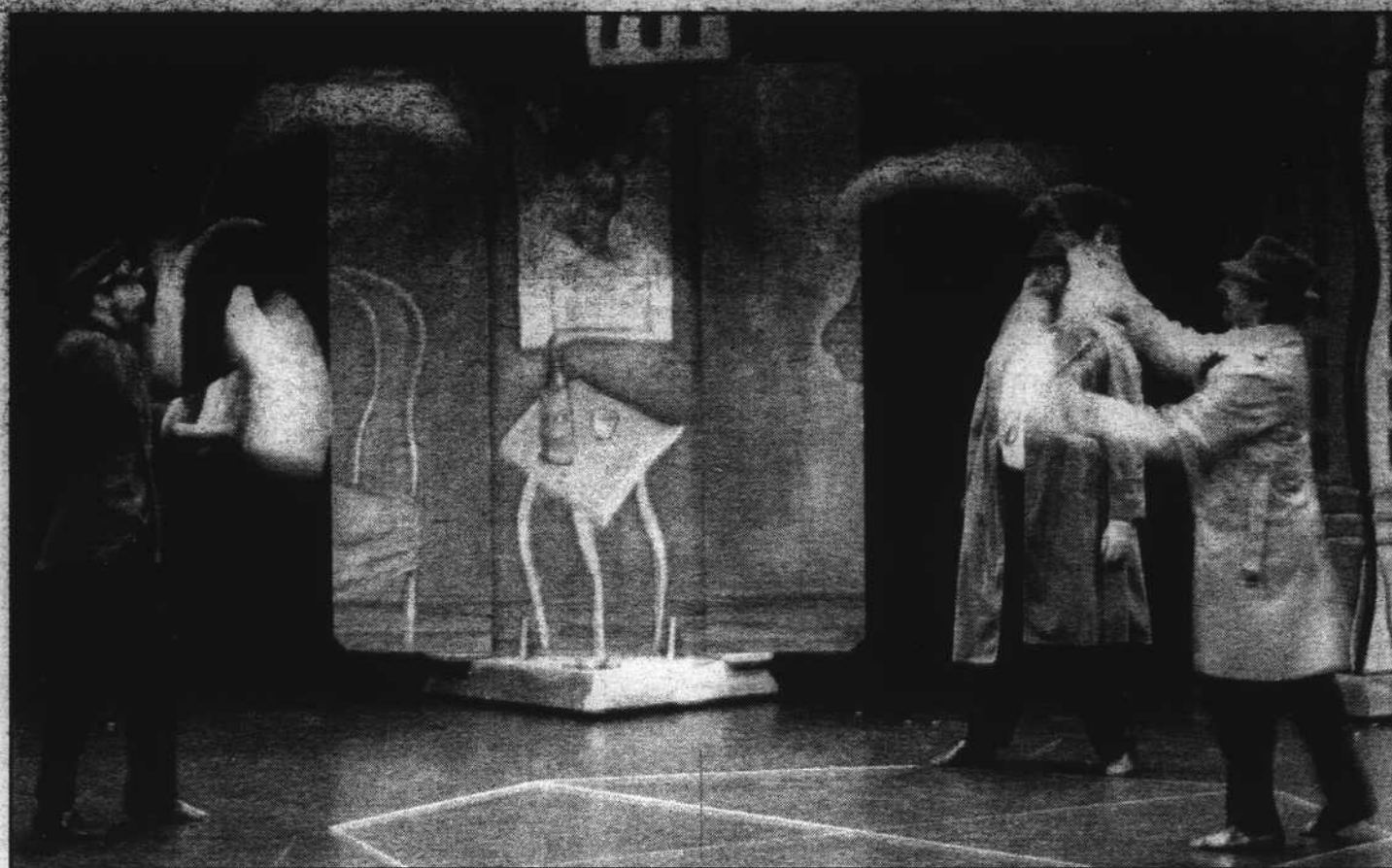
Alfred Hitchcock managed to trap and hold his audiences in sheer terror for two hours or more (and often haunted their nights for weeks).

Compare what he was able to do with the much lower-tech special effects in "The Birds" with John Carpenter's "In the Mouth of Madness." There is no comparison.

And it would take a billion Freddy's and Jason's to fill Anthony Perkins shoes' in "Psycho."

Every once in a while, we get to see a modern gem like "Silence of the Lambs," but most of the time we have to settle with exposed intestines and lackluster acting.

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Scott Bruhn/DN

The Flying Karamazov Brothers perform at the Lied Center Friday night.

Brothers blend comedy, juggling

By Joel Strauch
Theater Critic

Unlike Feodor Dostoevski's Brothers Karamazov, who threw philosophical arguments between them, these Karamazov Brothers throw bowling pins, painful puns and sharp insults at each other and the audience.

The internationally acclaimed brothers (they are brothers, just not each others') balanced slapstick, parody and juggling almost perfectly during their Friday-night performance at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.



The Karamazovs are Paul David Magid, Michael Preston, Sam Williams and Howard Jay Patterson. They presented a new show called "Club Sandwich," a hilarious murder-mystery that spans the world and all the realms of comedy.

The Karamazovs had a scripted plot, but they ventured far from any script restrictions with their improvisation.

They poked fun at people from Omaha, the Cornhuskers and even the Lied Center itself.

When someone brought the Lied pro-

gram up to the stage, one of the brothers said he didn't want a publication from a from a place that lied.

The horrible (and yet horribly funny) puns were tossed back and forth almost more than juggled objects.

Sayings like, "make like a tree surgeon and embark," elicited head shaking and laughter from the enthralled crowd.

But the show revolved around their amazing juggling feats. The Karamazovs juggled by themselves, they juggled together, they juggled while playing music — they even juggled in the dark.

They were not perfect, but when they dropped a pin, their quick wit made it more entertaining than a flawless performance would have been.

They also made it clear that they could juggle and chew gum at the same time.

During one scene, two of the brothers played a piece on a marimba while juggling, singing, tap-dancing, playing harmonicas, shaking bells on their hats — as well as chewing gum.

The show really got going during the perennial centerpiece of the Karamazovs' performance called "The Gamble."

During this act, the audience could bring up objects for the character Professor Harbinger to juggle. These objects had to be

heavier than an ounce, lighter than ten pounds and smaller than a breadbox.

Audience members who were familiar with the Karamazovs came prepared with an unbalanced array of items.

But not everybody followed the rules. When someone brought up some transparencies, one of the brothers asked, "Haven't you seen an ounce before?" and one of his compatriots replied, "They did, but they didn't inhale."

Another audience member brought up a boomerang and a Karamazov said, "What's the name of this? Wait, wait, it'll come back to me."

After the audience voted by means of an applause-o-meter, Harbinger had to attempt to juggle an unbalanced ball with a bean bag in it, a water balloon and a Nerf bow and arrow.

He had three tries to juggle the three objects for a count of 10. If he succeeded, he earned a standing ovation, but if he failed, he got a pie in the face.

As a tribute to his skill at juggling, his face remained clean.

The Flying Karamazov Brothers provided an evening of eye-boggling and side-splitting entertainment. And a good time was had by all.

Redneck tour rocks Pershing

By Gerry Beltz
Concert Critic

The rednecks were out in force Saturday night, and they were proud of it.

They came out in droves and packs to see Jeff Foxworthy make a stop at Pershing Auditorium for his "You Might Be A Redneck If ..." tour, and the show was a near sell-out.

From the nosebleeder seats to the chairs on the floor, nobody in Pershing could spit a wad of tobacco juice without hitting a belt buckle the size of a satellite dish.

The concert wasn't limited to the redneck population; many non-rednecks were around as well. No matter what color a person's neck was, they could be heard quoting any one of Foxworthy's six books on the way in to Pershing.

"If the slogan 'Say NO to Crack' reminds you to pull up your pants, you might be a redneck," said one lean, tall, cowboy-looking gentleman, laughing loudly.

Whether a redneck or a blue blood, Foxworthy was the ticket to side-splitting laughter.

Although Foxworthy is possibly most well-known for his "You might be a redneck if ..." lines, those took up only about five minutes of his two-hour show. And he told those at the beginning.

That was a wise move for two reasons: On one hand, why recite your books when the public can buy them; and two, any idiot can get up and recite jokes.

The rest of his show was devoted to his redneck family, his wife and two daughters and various other slices of life.

It was hilarious.

Foxworthy interacted with the audience a bit as well, regularly talking to a couple of newlyweds in the front row, using their experiences as segues into some of his own material.

Foxworthy's concert tour was sponsored by Red Dog, and Foxworthy talked about his involvement with designated-driver programs, noting that the designated driver has one of the worst jobs imaginable, the baby sitter.

Foxworthy even made a couple of potshots at the capital city, making note of his flight into "Lincoln International Airport."

Foxworthy's opening act, Mitch Mullany, was quite a hoot as well. Again, he didn't have any really original material (differences in sexes, pet problems, etc.), but he still delivered quite a good show.

Masquers' one-acts offer new, varied talent

By Kristin Armstrong
Theater Critic

Funnier than "Ace Ventura, Pet Detective," more pressing social issues than "Melrose Place" and better acting than an after-school special.

All this for \$2?

I had only one question after watching the Masquers' New Plays Project Saturday night: Why do people think they have to go to the Lied to catch some primo acting when equal or better talent is just across the street in the Studio Theatre?

Each of these five one-act plays, all written by students, was entirely different in scope. The plays could be seen as simple en-

tertainment or a good laugh, but hidden under the guise of the clever humor lay poignant social criticism.

The plays opened with "Why Dream," a play by Mayde McGuire. It was the longest, and certainly the best, of the bunch. The plot centered on Jessie and her husband, Mike, and their crumbling marriage.

Jessie, a cynic portrayed strikingly by Julie Long, decides she is tired of being ordered around by her cheating sleazebag husband (Gordon Bjorman), so she takes off, telling the five dinner guests at her table she is leaving to get some of "that cheese" for the salad.

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