

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Ensemble brings fun to Carson

By Eric Shanks
Music Critic

When a person thinks of classical music, they don't usually think of having fun. Classical musicians are thought to be intense, lacking any fun-loving traits and stuffy.

Until Thursday night at the Johnny Carson Theater, perhaps the only classical musician known to have fun was the great composer Amadeus Mozart. But Voices of Change, acclaimed Texas chamber ensemble changed all that. They had a blast — switching back and forth between formal dress and cat burglar garb complete with masks.

Jo Boatright — the ensemble's pianist, artistic director and one of its founders — was extremely intense during the performance, but her fun-loving side showed through.

The concert began with a mellow sub-tonic and hesitatingly forceful duet for viola and clarinet by Rebecca Clarke. Violist Barbara Hustis and clarinetist Ross Powell had a bit of fun with the audience when the unthinkable happened. The audience clapped between movements (Gasp!).

In a successful attempt to compensate for the audience's goof at a page turn, Powell joked, saying, "The hard thing about it are the page turns." The audience laughed, at itself no doubt, and did not make the same mistake again.

The ensemble specializes in music of the 20th century written by a variety of composers. Vocalist Virginia Dupuy performed a series of poems by Maurice Ravel in French about the invasion of a peaceful native island by white explorers.

Some songs called for strange sounds to be made by the cast. During one such moment, Boatright used a glass rod, paper clip, metal rod and her thumb inside the piano. At times she had one hand inside the piano, another playing the finger board, and was still able to turn pages and direct the music with subtle gestures.

Powell almost stole the show with his solo "Woody for Clarinet" a tribute to Woody Herman. After playing four short movements, he had the audience chuckling.

Boatright and the others remained in character for each movement and passage. Boatright sat in stern Victorian repose — even when she performed George Crumb's "Voice of the Whale" in black slacks and masks.

And by the end of the performance, it didn't seem strange at all.

WHAT A MANN



Travis Heying/DN

Drag Queen Sheza Mann, left, gives directions before the start of the performance of "April Futz" while Erica DeNay of the Screaming Kucakes listens. The performance at the Mission Arts Building was presented by The Futz, Inc.

Mann, Kucakes spice up 'April'

By Joel Strauch
Theater Critic

For a crazy evening of drag queen lip synching and bizarre comedy, take a peek at "April Futz."

Hosted by Lincoln's most glamorous entertainer, Sheza Mann, "April Futz" is a hilarious set of performances featuring the Screaming Kucakes and other wacky guests.

Sheza Mann came out on stage dressed in a blazing-red sequin dress, Liz Taylor hair and gaudy jewelry and lip synched to a group of songs.

Proving that she was not just a dressed up lip syncher, Sheza dazzled the audience with wit as well.

"If you haven't figured it out by now," Mann said. "I'm a drag queen — or what's left of one."

Mann had to leave the stage to adjust her dress during her opening. When a photographer followed her to take a few pictures, she demonstrated her ad lib abilities also.

"I didn't say I needed any help," she said to him. "Or did you come to get a picture of this?"

Mann ran both ends of the extremes in

costuming, appearing in power suits, short skirts and even a graduation robe.

Not to be outdone by the outlandish outfits, the Screaming Kucakes, headed by Buddy Starr, made their appearances in everything from next to nothing to shower curtains.

The Kucakes lip synched songs, but focused their acts more on slapstick — literally. Some of the dramatic episodes of their skits looked pretty painful.

Their comedy also skirted every other realm of humor. From their eccentric, Monty Pythonesque acting to their lip synching of the Bugs Bunny/Elmer Fudd opera (you know, the one where they get married), nothing was sacred.

Especially the supposedly sacred.

Buddy Starr took special pleasure in introducing their act "Propaganda," which directly responded to the recent visit by Reverend Fred Phelps of Topeka, who protested a gay performer at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

The array of odd characters seemed to be unending. The imposing performance of Pearl

Harbour — a cross between "The Bride of Frankenstein" and "The Mummy," as she synched "Don't Make Me Over" — was particularly entertaining.

The Kucakes made use of other types of communication besides lip synching. Vicki Clarke signed for Buddy Starr as he lip synched "My Eyes Are Fully Open" from Gilbert and Sullivan's "Pirates of Penzance."

The song moved almost too fast for the human eye to follow her hands, but she still had time to add her own hilarious element to the performance.

The props used by the actors were also impressive. It's not everyday you can see a six-foot condom dance across the stage, but this was done during "Use a Rubber."

The comedy and music of "April Futz" provided something for everyone of every shape and size to enjoy.

The show will be performed at the Futz Theater in the Mission Arts Building, 124 S. Ninth St. Showtimes are 8 tonight and Saturday night. Tickets are \$6 and can be reserved by calling the box office at 435-6307.

Sissies excited about show

By Dawn Brunke
Staff Reporter

Everything is coming together for the Sissies, and now the Lincoln band is just waiting for things to happen.

With an upcoming album and a show Saturday at the Hurricane, 1118 O St., the band is excited about what the future holds, vocalist Brian Johnson said.

"We recorded in February and are sending it off to be pressed this

week," Johnson said.

The 11-song compact disc will be available in about two months on Ism Records.

"We will play a tour and have a release party as soon as we get it."

So far, the Sissies have only played Lincoln and Omaha, but Johnson said they would take their show on the road after the album was finished.

Saturday's show will bring a mixture of older and newer songs. Just be ready to have some fun and hear some good music, Johnson said.

Opening for the Sissies is Lincoln's own Blaster. The Millions play the Hurricane tonight.

Echoing Green and Minne-

apolis' Fek take the stage tonight at Knickerbockers, 901 O St. The Return and Minneapolis' Lemon Grass will play there Saturday.

Sunday night brings Blaster to the stage again, this time at Duffy's, 1412 O St.

At Le Cafe Shakes, 1418 O St., Morphine Angel and Chloe will play tonight.

Lie Awake will play P.O. Pears, 322 S. Ninth St., tonight.

The Bel Airs can be seen at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St., tonight and Saturday.

And the Royal Grove, 340 W. Cornhusker Highway, will feature 7 Day Weekend tonight and Satur-

Weekend of free music playing at Kimball Hall

From Staff Reports

Students whose financial resources are running out as fast as their study time might want to check out some free entertainment this weekend, courtesy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Music.

Four concerts will be held at Kimball Recital Hall tonight, Saturday and Sunday.

Tonight's show will feature the University Singers, conducted by James Hejduk and student conductors Dawn R. Doverspike, Sheryl L. Monkelien and Matthew S. Norwood.

The performance, which will be composed of 52 voices, will be recorded for future broadcast by KUVF-FM/Nebraska Public Radio.

They will perform pieces by 20th century composers such as Juris Karlsons and Geoffrey Burgon, and classical composers such as Johannes Brahms and Johann Sebastian Bach, as secular and religious songs will be equally represented by the singers' repertoire.

Saturday's show will feature the Wind Ensemble. It will begin at 8 p.m.

