

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Monday, October 9, 1995

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**State  
of the  
ARTS**  
Cliff A. Hicks

## Concerts: the smaller the better

Big shows, little shows, lots of shows all.

It can be a shame when great bands get popular. I mean, it's marvelous the bands are making more money, but the problem is there's this annoying ratio.

The larger the show, the less personal the show.

Granted, this isn't always true, but nine times out of 10, it's an unchangeable thing. It's sad too, since one shouldn't be greedy with music.

This is the problem that I have. A) I like this band. B) I share this band with my friends. C) They like this band. D) The band that I saw at a show of 400 is now playing to crowds of 10,000.

Anyone who has ever seen a small concert and a big concert knows what I'm talking about. At a small concert, there's a connection between the band and the audience.

The band can be friendly, personable and enjoy what they're doing, as can the audience. For the most part, the same is true for the large show, but you try and be friendly with 10,000 all at once and see how well you do.

Plus, it's real hard to enjoy being a quarter of a mile back from a band. If I can't see a band well enough to see the face of the lead singer clearly, I am definitely too far back.

Big bands get better sound, it's true. No matter where you are, you can hear the band well. But is that really the only point of going to a concert? You listen to a band; you join the energy between the band and the mass of people you are a part of.

Besides, sometimes the squelch, crackle and pop can add some like to a show. Until you hear a soundboard operator go insane, you have no idea what it's like to be bombarded by a full frontal sonic assault that haunts you for days after you've left the concert.

Large shows only give the people up front the feeling of being filled with music, and the people in back hear it, but don't feel it. It's one of the joys of being at a live show.

In a small venue, the music actually ebbs through my veins, pulsing inside me. Teeth rattle, bass throbs, a singer pleads desperately over drums going "rat-tat-tat." As Zen-like as it may sound, I become one with the music. Don't you?

At large shows, it's also true that a group of people can cause a lot of trouble for the majority. Mosh pits are fine for moshers, but the non-moshers who get caught up by the frenzy of people are, according to one moshers I talked to, "out of luck."

Sometimes a large scale show can capture that contact between audience member and band member, if only for a moment, and that can make the concert all worthwhile.

The problem still remains that these moments are the exception, not the rule. There will always be that evasive trust between small crowds and good bands that can never be transferred into a mass market, and I, personally, am glad.

Cliff A. Hicks is a freshman news-editorial and English major and a Daily Nebraskan staff reporter.



Courtesy of Columbia Pictures

Suzanne (Nicole Kidman) mixes business with pleasure while on her honeymoon with Larry (Matt Dillon) in "To Die For."

## Kidman magnificent in 'To Die For'

By Matt Woody  
Film Critic

Ever since Cannes, the buzz about "To Die For" has been two-fold: that Nicole Kidman turns in an outstanding performance; and that Gus Van Sant redeems himself after his universally-panned "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues."

As it turns out, both counts ring true.

Kidman deserves an Oscar nomination at the very least for her turn as Suzanne Stone, a small-town girl determined to make it to big-time television — at any cost.

And Van Sant has made a high-quality movie that, in its playfulness, shows us the ridiculousness of our society's obsession with television and fame.

Suzanne Stone has an ambition to be a famous television personality. To get her start, she lands a job at a local television station doing weather updates, but has her sights set on other projects.

One of these projects is a documentary about local youths, and in the course of making her film, she meets and befriends Jimmy, Russell and Lydia, three white trash teenagers.

Meanwhile, Suzanne discovers that her husband's priority in life is not the same as hers (her career), and she decides he is in her way.

So she gets the three teens to help her kill him. It sounds like a movie of the week, but "To Die For" is far more than just the plot.

Kidman is flawless, not to mention absolutely drop-dead gorgeous, as the obsessed Suzanne. Every little look or inflection seems to reveal more about her.

And Kidman's American accent is perfect. In the past, her Australian dialect sometimes would slip out, even during some of her better performances.

Joaquin Phoenix, brother of the late River Phoenix, also deserves recognition for his portrayal of Jimmy, Suzanne's dupe lover.

Much of the credit for the film's playful tone should go to Van Sant. In effect, he mocks Suzanne by telling the story in a documentary style. And he and screenwriter Buck Henry ("The Gradu-

### The Facts

Movie: "To Die For"

Stars: Nicole Kidman, Matt Dillon, Joaquin Phoenix

Director: Gus Van Sant

Rating: R (language, adult situations)

Grade: B+

Five words: Academy Award nomination for Kidman

### Movie Review



## Touring 'Tommy' rocks on

By Paula Lavigne  
Theater Critic

Theatrics married rock 'n' roll for the touring Broadway show of The Who's "Tommy" at the Lied Center this weekend.

The individual singers re-sounded in their performances. Michael Seelbach, who played Tommy, had an innocent, yet powerful voice suitable to his almost angelic character.

Although Seelbach had the leading role, Peter Connelly, who played the roguish Cousin Kevin, was a real catalyst for the action.

His hard-edged, punk attitude and lime-green disco ensemble typified the psychedelic London of the 1960s.

The "rockumentary" in some ways paralleled Pink Floyd's "The Wall" and Stanley Kubrick's "A Clockwork Orange" in its presentation, partially because of its ties to post-war England.

The cinema-like graphics scrolling across a mesh screen in front of the stage gave the performance an animated look and also gave the audi-

ence a context for the action.

But even with these achievements, what could have been a stronger, passionate performance package was sacrificed to a truncated Broadway show.

The sequence of events tied to Tommy's illness was not believable. The emotions weren't there. This included his father's disappearance in World War II and his witnessing of the murder of his mother's boyfriend.

The singing was good, but the acting bordered on being superficial. It was obvious that the cast was trying to squeeze a much longer Broadway production into a mere two hours.

The Who's "Tommy" wouldn't be the same without the music of The Who, either; and while I wasn't expecting Pete Townshend to jump on stage, the stage band could have put more power into its performance.

Even though the special effects in a touring show can't match those on Broadway, "Tommy" did have some exciting props. Still, it could have made better use of its lighting effects.

Overall, "Tommy" shone its finest actors, but the group needed to work on presenting itself as a team. The theatrics package was visually stimulating, but without the emotion it was comparable to a rock concert and not a rock opera.

### Theater Review



## Radio Iodine leaves crowd wanting more

By Cliff A. Hicks  
Music Critic

Saturday night at the Hurricane, a tiny crowd got to see exactly how potent Radio Iodine truly is. The St. Louis band took the stage quietly. No one really noticed them getting on stage.

Singer Ellen Persyn stepped up to the microphone in her Batman T-shirt, wearing white boots she had bought that day at The Ozone, as she told the crowd. Drummer Steve Held was wearing a kilt, bassist Tony Persyn a black dress and sandals, guitarist Rom Bramer an orange jumpsuit that read "Crash O'Day" and backup singer/keyboardist Anna Berry a pair of cutoffs and poet-style shirt.



### Concert Review

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