

State of the ARTS

Doug Kouma

The arts: unsung and underfunded

I sat amazed yesterday as I listened to my 9-year-old sister play her piano recital piece for me.

After only a year of lessons, she's playing classical songs with names I can't pronounce and key signatures cluttered with sharps and flats.

And she's playing them all from memory.

I, too, started taking piano lessons about that age, but after a year, I was still struggling with songs like "Elephant Walk" and "Old Jo Clark."

But she has a good teacher who has instilled in her an appreciation for music, even at her young age.

I was scared of my first piano teacher. I worried about getting yelled at when I hadn't practiced or done my theory. Lessons, to me, cut into my free time, and practicing was a chore.

Despite that, I gained a love of music that was furthered as I went through school.

Throughout junior high and high school, a year didn't go by that I didn't take at least one music class.

Looking back on those years as a whole, I have to believe that including music and the arts in my studies made me a more well-rounded person and a better student.

As with sports and physical education, the difference music and the arts can make in students' lives is great. It's too bad that this is so seldom recognized by those in positions who should know better.

When I was in high school, the athletic department, like at so many other schools, defined who we were as a school. And honestly, we weren't that good. In fact, we were downright horrible.

At the same time, though, the choirs were winning regional and state competitions, the bands were being invited to national festivals, and the orchestra was fast becoming the envy of the state.

Art students were winning competitions and pulling in scholarships like there was no tomorrow. The forensics team didn't know what a second-place finish was, and the drama department sold out the auditorium for every performance.

Still, the golf team alone seemed to get more support than the arts department as a whole.

All too often, it seems, school officials and administrators in glass offices fail to recognize the value and the importance of the arts.

Sports? They build character. They keep kids off the streets and out of trouble.

The arts? Nothing more than — as a friend puts it — glorified study halls.

With that attitude, it's easy to see how when the budget ax falls, the arts are often first on the chopping block.

In an age of fiscal responsibility and spending cutbacks on a national level, let's hope that we can still support the arts in our local schools.

My little sister's got a great start in music. I hope she's given the chance to continue.

Kouma is a senior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan Arts & Entertainment editor.



Criminal psychologist Helen Hudson (Sigourney Weaver), officer Ruben Goetz (Dermot Mulroney) and police detective M.J. Monahan (Holly Hunter) try to figure out a brutal serial killer in "Copycat."

Courtesy of Monarchy Enterprises

'Copycat' a spooky serial killer thriller

By Gerry Beltz
Film Critic

Don't believe the ads. Harry Connick Jr. barely shows up in "Copycat." Sean Connery had more screen time and dialogue in "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves."

Movie Review



But Connick's still cool. Although "Copycat" explores a different part of the human psyche than "Seven," it's just about as creepy.

Helen Hudson (Sigourney Weaver) is a brilliant psychologist who specializes in studying the minds of serial killers. After delivering a college lecture on serial killers, she is attacked by a killer (Harry Connick Jr.) she delivered professional testimony against. Jump ahead 13 months.

Detective M.J. Monahan (Holly Hunter) has her hands full with a brutal murderer on the loose, but several anonymous phone calls — from Hudson — eventually reveal the murder to be a copy of the infamous Boston Strangler.

But Hudson doesn't want to be involved. Since the attack, she has become an agoraphobic, suffering from panic attacks and reaching out of her apartment just to get the morning paper.

Hudson and Monahan are two opposing forces that go at it tooth and nail without ever making contact. Hudson doesn't want to help or get involved again, but Monahan manipulates her into the situation.

Director Jon Amiel ("Sommersby") has created a tale of intrigue and suspense with "Copycat," but he makes a couple of mistakes.

One, he lets us see the identity of the killer far too early in the film, thus killing some prime suspense and also a mystery in which to further engross the moviegoer. Two, he lets the suspense

The Facts

Film: "Copycat"

Stars: Sigourney Weaver, Holly Hunter

Director: Jon Amiel

Rating: R (violence, adult themes, language)

Grade: B

Five Words: Intriguing film makes skin crawl

run a little too long toward the end, losing the moviegoer in the fright.

Still, "Copycat" is quite good, and well worth making time to see, especially on a fright night like Halloween.

Forte fright Symphony gets scary in Pop concert tonight

By Brian Priesman
Staff Reporter

The Lincoln Symphony Orchestra gets into the spirit of Halloween tonight.

The latest edition of its Pop series has a Halloween theme and a twist. With upwards of 80 musicians, a dozen dancers and State Sen. David Landis taking part in the concert, the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra will perform music from Bach to "Batman."

Andrea Belgau-Hocking, who choreographed the show, said the first act would be traditional. Music styles ranging from Bach to Berlioz will be conducted by Yong-yan Hu dressed as everybody's favorite vampire, Dracula.

The second act features more modern horror music, ranging from

Danny Elfman's "Batman" to the famous "Psycho" theme.

A new twist to the concert is the addition of a dozen dancers and gymnasts. Belgau-Hocking said the collaboration was "an interesting meld."

"I think it's very unusual," she said. "The dancers share the stage with the orchestra."

The entire production is a collaboration between the UNL dance department, the Lincoln Symphony and the local law community.

The number of dancers originally numbered unlucky 13, but due to emergency knee surgery, one of the dancers had to drop out.

The dancers themselves are a combination of professional dancers, gymnasts and university students.

See SYMPHONY on 10



Travis Heying/DN

Yong-yan Hu, conductor of the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra, will get into the Halloween spirit tonight by conducting dressed as Dracula.