

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Thursday, February 1, 1996

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## the Fine Print

Cliff A. Hicks

### New series introduces odd stories

"Are there spots in a leopard's eyes also?" — Eric.

J. O'Barr created a man named Eric. Eric was with his fiancée Shelly when their car broke down. A gang stopped, shot Eric in the head, and raped and killed Shelly. The gang never learned the names of its victims.

Eric, under the guidance of a crow, begins his quest for vengeance. Is he dead? Not dead? A spirit from the other side? It's not important. There is simply a call for retribution, and Eric must answer it.

This is the basis for J. O'Barr's masterpiece, "The Crow." While the movie with the late Brandon Lee was great, it was not "The Crow" as creator O'Barr saw him.

In the original Crow series, there is never a moment when Eric slips in his quest for revenge. Never that moment, as there was in the movie, when the audience doubts Eric. That was the beauty of "The Crow." It was a tale — a tragedy from the beginning — driven by the characters.

Laden with symbolism and imagery, "The Crow" was a black and white spectacular, a blend of action and thought-provoking commentary.

No matter how much laud I load upon the original series, nothing can ever really express how beautiful and ugly a tale it is. Like life.

If you haven't read it, go out and buy the graphic novel. Now. It is nothing short of visionary.

Time has passed since the original series and the movie. Another movie is in the works, with a new character unjustly killed. The plot is that Sara has grown up and is living with Ashe, played by French actor Vincent Perez. He gets killed during the Day of the Dead festival. It's called "The Crow: City of Angels" and is set in Los Angeles.

But J. O'Barr has another Crow series that is coming out. I hold issue one of "The Crow: Dead Time" in my hand. The series will run three issues.

The downside of the series? Well, J. O'Barr is only providing the story and covers, not the script or the art. His knack for excellent shadowing, smooth narrative and vicious dialogue was a key part of the genius of the first series.

There are almost three separate art styles used in "Dead Time," ranging from the harsh cutting 'line style preferred by Jae Lee, to the details of the dark Michael Zulli.

At first, the story seems slightly chaotic, but by the end of the first issue, things start to clear up, much as it did in the first series. I remember wondering what was happening at the beginning of the original series, a feeling recaptured by the new series.

There are two issues left, so I hate to pass judgment this early, but so far it looks as though "Dead Time" will be just as powerful as the original series.

So what if the new movie's coming out? I'll worry about that when I can see trailers and a release date. Until then, I'm going to savor every minute of J. O'Barr's new work, even if he's not drawing it all.

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

## Ensemble shows African music

By Patrick Hambrecht  
Senior Reporter

Wahoo High School juniors were singing a different tune on Wednesday — a three-part harmony of the South African national anthem to celebrate Black History Month.

The students were led by the Sibikwa Players, a South African song and dance ensemble.

The Sibikwa Players will appear throughout Omaha and Lincoln in the next week, including the Lincoln Community Playhouse, 2500 S. 56th Street, the Nebraska State Capitol Rotunda and the Blue Barn Theater.

Amy Lamphere, director of the Wagon Train Project, said she wanted to bring the group to Lincoln from the moment she saw a videotape of their performance.

"It's a whole different take on what I would think of as African music," Lamphere said. "There isn't what we would think of as tribal drumming, yet there are sounds absolutely rooted in that tradition and

mixed with Philadelphia street singing and traditional African music."

Smal Ndaba, an actor and writer, created the Sibikwa Players with Phyllis Klotz in 1988 as an option for young men endangered by the violence surrounding Daveyton, South Africa. The group is now on a world tour, performing Ndaba's "D.E.T. Boys High" and "Kwela Bafana."

"D.E.T. Boys High" is a disturbing musical about Mingus, a high school boy threatened with violent bigotry because of his tribe's circumcision initiation into manhood. The boy is confronted in the high school bathroom, and the arguments that follow are symbolic of the divisive problems facing the people of South Africa.

Lamphere said the play included "violent language and situations," and was less suitable for children than the song and dance revue "Kwela Bafana."

"Kwela Bafana," meaning "Move Boys," will showcase a mix of

American ballads and Daveyton town songs delivered with an innovative mix of tribal and western dance styles. Boy Ngwenya, a former member of the African 1950s band, the Woody Woodpeckers, will back the singers with lively, pounding piano music.

The Lincoln Community Playhouse will show "D.E.T. Boys High" at 8 p.m. on Thursday, followed by "Kwela Bafana" at 8 p.m. on Friday. Transportation is available from the Nebraska Union's west parking lot to the theater, and those interested should call the Wagon Train Project at 435-5592.

On Saturday, the Blue Barn Theater will feature "D.E.T. Boys High" at 7 p.m. and "Kwela Bafana" at 10 p.m.

Also, thrifty African music fans can see the ensemble at a free State Capitol drum concert in the Rotunda at 11:30 a.m. and meet them afterwards at Crane River, 200 N. 11th Street.

## Comedy Central arrives

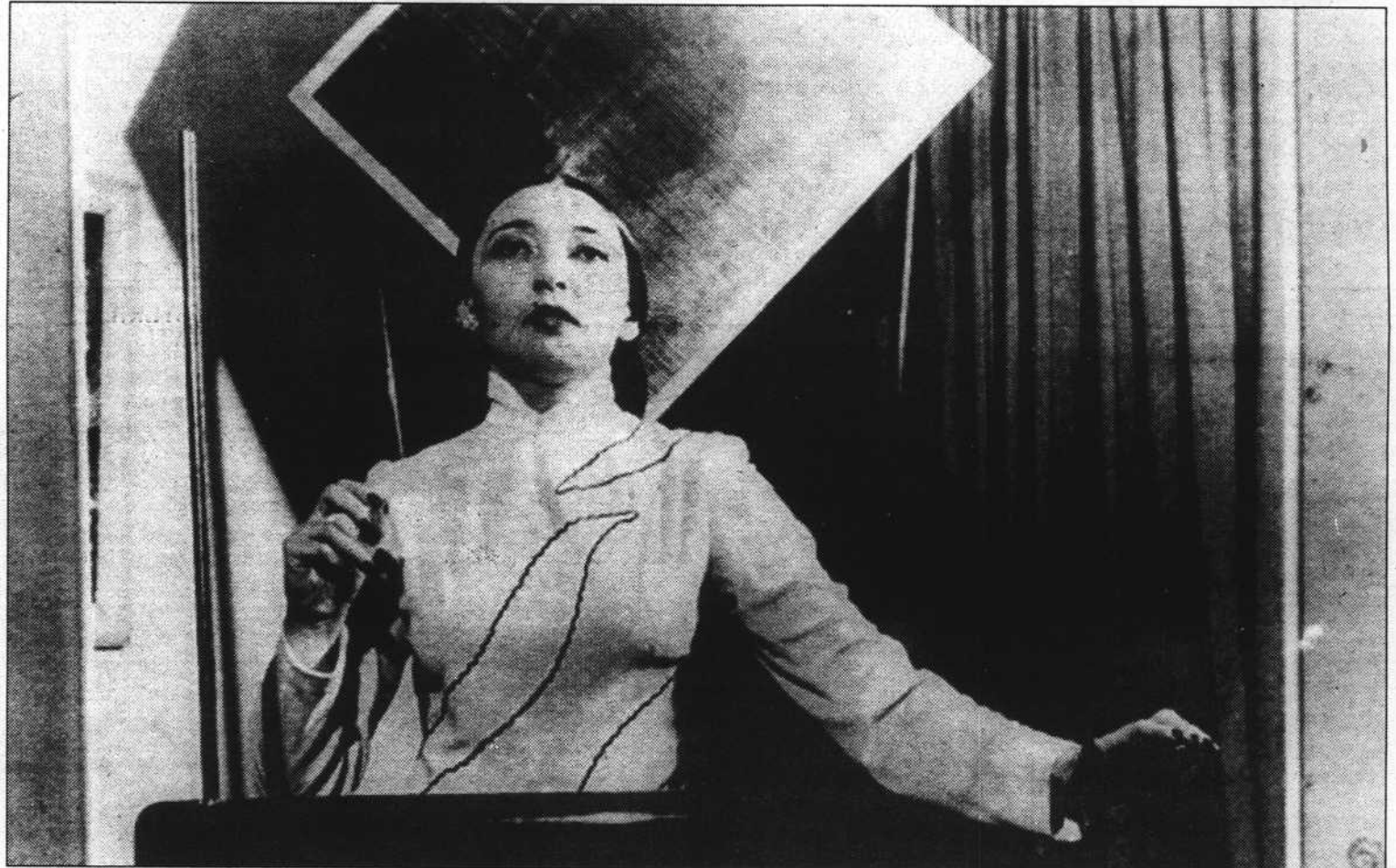
From Staff Reports

In a move guaranteed to cut down on the amount of time that many college students spend studying, Lincoln CableVision will add Comedy Central to its basic cable lineup today.

The network will run on channel 52.

Featuring classic comedy programs such as "The Benny Hill Show," "Saturday Night Live" and "Monty Python's Flying Circus," as well as original programming such as "Politically Incorrect," Comedy Central has become one of cable television's most popular networks in recent years.

Today's addition of the channel to Lincoln CableVision marks Comedy Central's Lincoln debut.



Theremin virtuoso Clara Rockmore performs in concert during the 1920s in the Steven M. Martin documentary, "Theremin: An Electronic Odyssey."

## Instrument inventor's life documented

### Theremin finally gets notoriety

By Mark Baldrige  
Film Critic

He was the original mad scientist. Hailed as the "Soviet Edison," he might just as well have been called Frankenstein.



In his day he was a celebrity of sorts, the inventor of the first electronic musical instrument.

Today, hardly anyone remembers the name of Leon Theremin. But a documentary, "Theremin: An Electronic Odyssey" — showing this weekend

only at the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater — is out to change all that.

Through interviews with associates and admirers of Theremin — and a surprise appearance by the great man himself — "Theremin" attempts to correct the mistake of history that has left the grandfather of electronic music out of the limelight.

Theremin invented proximity controls, which electronic devices activated when conductive material, such as metal or human flesh, passes through a magnetic field.

Using such high-tech wizardry, he developed musical instruments that need not be touched to be played, dance platforms that allow dancers to produce music by their actions and even a form of color television — all of this as early as 1930.

His most famous instrument, also called the Theremin, has appeared in movie soundtracks and rock 'n' roll songs, including "Good Vibrations" by the Beach Boys and Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Love."

And Theremin's Theremin inspired Moog's Moog. As a young

### The Facts

Film: "Theremin: An Electronic Odyssey"

Director: Steven M. Martin

Rating: PG-13

Grade: B-

Five Words: Jump-starting 20th Century Music

man, Robert Moog constructed dozens of Theremins; as an adult he would create the original electronic synthesizer.

The rest, as they say, is history.

But Theremin's place in that history has been occluded for some time, no doubt because of his long absence from the scientific and musical scenes.

In 1938, at the height of his career, Theremin was spirited away by agents of the then-Soviet Union — where he slaved for years behind the Iron Curtain, producing sophisti-

### Virtuoso to perform at Ross

By Mark Baldrige  
Staff Reporter

You already have heard a Theremin; you just don't know it yet.

The Theremin, a pioneer electronic musical instrument invented by Professor Leon Theremin in 1920, has had a long but obscure career in the soundtracks of spooky movies.

"The Day the Earth Stood Still," "The Bride of Frankenstein," and Alfred Hitchcock's "Spellbound" all feature the eerie tones of the world's first "touchless" instrument.

And this weekend, you can see one played.

See THEREMIN on 10

See DEMO on 10