

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Monday, February 19, 1996

Page 9



Cliff Hicks

Noir music has become part of past

Read the following two paragraphs. Imagine them as being read by Humphrey Bogart and try to imagine the music playing in the background.

"It was wet outside. And raining. The dame had come to me, asking to take her case. She had long legs and a pair of blue eyes I just couldn't resist.

"She told me she had a case that needed doing, and didn't know who else to turn to. She put her hand on mine, and it was all over. Falling for the skirt was my first mistake."

Can you see it? Detective, private investigator, gumshoe, dressed in a trench coat and fedora, carrying a thick stogie.

Now find that music you were asked to imagine. Anywhere. Go on, look! Call a few music stores, ask around at a few places, then pick this column back up.

Back, eh? Didn't find any, eh? Now you know the frustration of trying to locate noir music.

The film style is known as noir. It means black. Perhaps the description applies to the very bleak tone that these films take. Or perhaps to the fact that the heavy shadowing made these black and white films more black than white, something uncommon.

They really don't make these things anymore. No more Sam Spade films. It's kind of saddening, really. The closest popular film anywhere close was "The Usual Suspects."

So what does one do to find the music that summons Raymond Chandler to mind? Search, and still it may not be enough. You might need your own gumshoe to find any.

My personal quest has seen no fruition. It began by asking several employees of many different stores—in a couple of different cities.

One store's employee recommended John Zorn, a jazz musician. After little more than five minutes, it was obvious that this wasn't too far off. If the musicians would remove the caffeine coursing through their blood and the thrash from their music, it might have worked.

Needless to say, it was not right.

What makes detective noir music? A piano, first off. Not some flashy keyboard, but just a plain piano. And a saxophone. Gotta have sax. Without good sax, I'm left unsatisfied. Plus bass. No electric. A big stand-up, slappable bass.

Oh yeah, there should be a guy in the back going "yeah!" when they play the more upbeat stuff.

Where to look? It's probably in the jazz section somewhere, but the question is where? The jazz section of any music store is a big area. Have you got 30 hours to listen to all of Blockbuster Music's selections?

So, what is there to do? "The Maltese Falcon" doesn't have a soundtrack, or, at least, not one that I could find. There are about 40 seconds of noir music on the "Scores of Humphrey Bogart," from "Casablanca." I'm sure you know the line.

Can you play it again, Sam?

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



John Cusack (left) and Al Pacino get to the point in the new political thriller from director Harold Becker, "City Hall."

Photo courtesy of Castle Rock Entertainment

Chaos consumes 'City Hall'

By Cliff Hicks
Film Critic

No matter what a politician does, someone is going to complain. Some complaints, however, are louder than others.

In "City Hall," the complaints are about as loud as they can get.

Mayor John Pappas, played by Al Pacino ("Scent of a Woman," "The Godfather"), is sitting pretty. His popularity rating is extremely high, he's made the cover of Time magazine ... things couldn't be better.

His deputy mayor, Kevin Calhoun, played by John Cusack ("Bullets Over Broadway," "Say Anything"), is an idealist who believes politics is black and white.

Then, on a rainy morning, a cop and a drug dealer get into a shootout that results in three dead bodies. The third is that of a 6-year-old black child.

Suddenly, Mayor Pappas is not sitting pretty any more, and the line that Calhoun thought he knew isn't so clear anymore.

"City Hall" is a fascinating movie. At the beginning, things start to move slowly. Very slowly. That's perhaps the movie's biggest flaw.

But once the plot does get rolling, it becomes messier than a plate of spaghetti. Things get confusing and motives get blurred.

Pacino gives a masterful performance as Mayor Pappas. He is powerful, moving, angry, inspiring, understanding and forceful. The subtleties of politics are well-captured by Pacino, as are the different coats a mayor puts on for different people.

Even though the main focus of the story is on Calhoun, Pappas is central to the movie. He is the axle around which the story revolves.

Cusack's performance isn't bad; there are times when his southern drawl simply becomes too much to be believed.

Beyond that, however, Cusack portrays a Boy Scout fairly well. His character is about as naive as they come when it comes to politics. Ac-



cent aside, Cusack also is convincing.

Why Bridget Fonda is a headliner for this movie is unclear. She isn't on camera a great deal, she isn't all that essential to the plot and she doesn't act all that great in the movie.

Besides her, other spectacular performances come from actors with smaller parts, namely Danny Aiello, Martin Landau and David Paymer. Landau plays Judge Walter Stern, whose involvement in the parole of

See CITY HALL on 10

The Facts

Film: "City Hall"

Stars: Al Pacino, John Cusack, Bridget Fonda

Director: Harold Becker

Rating: R (language, violence)

Grade: B

Five Words: Politics is a dirty word

Folk singer Pleasant returning to Lincoln

By Cherie Krueger
Staff Reporter

His fans are in for a "pleasant" surprise.

Yes, Wally Pleasant is back in Lincoln for his second appearance in as many months.

After a successful maximum-capacity concert on Jan. 12, he is returning once again for two performances tonight at Mudslide Slim's, 1418 O St.

Pleasant, who is quickly becoming a mainstay in Lincoln's live music scene, will perform an all-ages show beginning at 7:30 p.m. and a 21-and-over show at 10:30 p.m.

The shows are not the only events that Pleasant has planned for today. He will visit KRNU this afternoon and will stop by Homer's, 1339 O

St., around 5 p.m. for a meet-and-greet with the public before his shows.

KRNU is where his popularity in Lincoln began. After playing his song, "She's in Love with a Geek," the station received requests for his other witty folk songs. Local music stores started to carry his albums, and now he has an impressive group of followers in Lincoln.

Pleasant, a Detroit native, has a great amount of appeal among Lincoln's young people.

Kristi Lankford, a sophomore advertising major, said she and her friends had been listening to Pleasant's music since last year.

"He's really funny, and he's got great hair," she said. "His lyrics are just hilarious."

Pleasant is now touring for his third album, "Houses of the Holy Moly," which is his most successful album to date.

There is a \$3 cover for both shows.



St., around 5 p.m. for a meet-and-greet with the public before his shows.

Art work on display tells story

From Staff Reports

If you think the story behind art is as important as the art itself, an exhibition now on display at UNL's Home

Economics Building, on East Campus at 35th and Holdrege streets, should have plenty to offer.

The Cultural Survival Project is a collaboration of the works of recent immigrant and refugee children with that of Shelley Fuller, assistant professor of art and art history, and Wendy Weiss, associate professor of textiles, clothing and design.

In addition, a guest exhibition by Linda Anfusio will document the design process behind the creation of jewelry.

The Cultural Survival Project will be on display through March 7. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

Academy ends tour with thrills

By Emily Wray
Music Critic

Many came to the Lied Center hungry for classical perfection on Saturday.

A sold-out crowd were thrilled by the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields' presentation on the ensemble's last tour stop.

The ensemble offered inspired energy and technical know-how

for all in attendance at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

The energy level was evident throughout the entire concert, manifesting itself many times with the performers barely able to stay seated.

Artistic Director Kenneth Stillito led the ensemble by setting tempos and providing cutoffs. But St. Martin in the Fields went for the most part without a conductor, developed to reflect a performance practice of the Baroque era.

This technique afforded the ensemble an almost effortless familiarity with the audience.

It seemed that the performers were engaged in playing for the sheer joy of it; the audience was not a burden. Quite to the contrary, the audience rightly acknowledged the ensemble's offerings many times.

The first piece, written by Johann Sebastian Bach, set the tone for the entire evening's performance. Written for three equal choirs of violins, violas and cellos, with double bass and continuo, the concerto swelled over the audience, enveloping it in a brilliant sound.

The "Suite from Don Quixote der Löwenritter," continued with the exuberant feel of the concert. The 20-piece ensemble had no difficulties infusing the piece with a forward motion and adding the appropriate texture and artistic feeling, while excelling in telling the story found in the piece.

Dmitri Shostakovich's powerful "Chamber Symphony in c minor, Op. 110a" was next on the program. Fortunately, Stillito warned the audience by moving the intermission to after the piece instead of before.

He said that everyone would need a break after this piece, and he was right.

Powerful, terrible, brilliant and horrible do not even begin to describe this piece. Having experienced it is akin to the Holocaust

Museum in Washington, D.C., or watching documentaries against any number of social injustices. In fact, this piece may be the most musical indictment of the Soviet Union's regime.

The final piece, by Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, was slightly anticlimactic. Of course, almost anything is anticlimactic after Shostakovich. There were a couple of technical lapses, but overall, it was quite solid.

After three short and sweet encore pieces, the crowd's hunger was satisfied through the classical perfection of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

After three short and sweet encore pieces, the crowd's hunger was satisfied through the classical perfection of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.



He said that everyone would need a break after this piece, and he was right.

Powerful, terrible, brilliant and horrible do not even begin to describe this piece. Having experienced it is akin to the Holocaust

Museum in Washington, D.C., or watching documentaries against any number of social injustices. In fact, this piece may be the most musical indictment of the Soviet Union's regime.

The final piece, by Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, was slightly anticlimactic. Of course, almost anything is anticlimactic after Shostakovich. There were a couple of technical lapses, but overall, it was quite solid.

After three short and sweet encore pieces, the crowd's hunger was satisfied through the classical perfection of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

After three short and sweet encore pieces, the crowd's hunger was satisfied through the classical perfection of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

After three short and sweet encore pieces, the crowd's hunger was satisfied through the classical perfection of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

After three short and sweet encore pieces, the crowd's hunger was satisfied through the classical perfection of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

After three short and sweet encore pieces, the crowd's hunger was satisfied through the classical perfection of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

After three short and sweet encore pieces, the crowd's hunger was satisfied through the classical perfection of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

After three short and sweet encore pieces, the crowd's hunger was satisfied through the classical perfection of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

After three short and sweet encore pieces, the crowd's hunger was satisfied through the classical perfection of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

After three short and sweet encore pieces, the crowd's hunger was satisfied through the classical perfection of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

After three short and sweet encore pieces, the crowd's hunger was satisfied through the classical perfection of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.