

the glassy eye



Jeff Randall

"Stupid dogs" take humor to new level

Let's face it, Hanna Barbera's cartoons never have been very good.

Sure, they had Scooby Doo; and Huckleberry Hound, in his prime, was one of the greats. But in the face of their competition, those cartoons never stood up.

Tom and Jerry blew them out of the water. Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck and even Sylvester the Cat were playing on another level altogether.

In the ongoing wars of the cartoon world, Hanna Barbera proved to be the equivalent of the French in the two World Wars—in other words, it never had a chance.

But that era may have ended. Hanna Barbera now has "Two Stupid Dogs."

At first, the dogs may seem a bit too mundane — too stupid — to be real contenders. But these dogs are much more than that.

Part of the newly developed and highly plentiful school of "Ren and Stimpy"-inspired toons, "Two Stupid Dogs" (which shows on the Cartoon Network, Saturdays at 10 p.m.) is a rarity in that it is actually as funny as the show that inspired it. And in many ways, it is better.

Whereas "Ren and Stimpy" was often little more than a hyperkinetic sleaze fest, relying on gross-me-out jokes and extraordinarily disgusting sound effects to generate laughs, "Two Stupid Dogs" takes the tasteful high road more often than not.

The show revolves around two unnamed dogs—one big dog, one small dog—that spend almost every episode in search of something to eat. This premise may be as old as animation itself, but every episode breaks new ground in cartoon humor.

Much like "The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show" and "Ren and Stimpy," the real key to the hilarity in "Two Stupid Dogs" is jokes that appeal to both young and old.

"Vegas Buffet," one of the newer episodes, centers on the dogs' trip to Las Vegas for the Super Duper Economical All-You-Can-Eat One Pound Hot Dog Buffet (or some variation thereof). But the buffet is closed upon the dogs' arrival, and they spend the whole time gambling, at the casino owner's forceful request.

For some reason, it's hard to imagine Pixie and Dixie in a casino. But for these dogs, nearly any place can be home. And, although life lessons often are found in older cartoons, not many characters have shown audiences how to "beat the house."

And the humor appeals to older audiences not only because of its subject matter. Sometimes the humor is so blatantly stupid that its mere existence warrants laughter.

One episode revolves entirely around the dogs' argument over who gets a toilet seat they found in the garbage. After about nine minutes of pointless debate (consisting mostly of back-and-forth refrains of "I want the toilet seat"), the senselessness of the entire show becomes the basis for its humor. You're watching this, and that's the joke.

This show may be juvenile, pointless and really stupid, but so is everything else on television. At least "Two Stupid Dogs" admits it.

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House of styles



Matt Miller/DN

Owner Jen Johnson poses with two mannequins at her store, Ruby Begonias. Johnson specializes in selling vintage clothing.

Store offers ever-popular vintage clothing

By Lane Hickenbottom
Staff Reporter

As clothing trends change, downtown Lincoln's newest vintage clothing store fills the gap most malls leave out.

The gap is vintage clothing, clothes that celebrate the styles that were popular yesteryear that continue to break the surface of popularity today.

Ruby Begonia's, located at 1321 P St., offers a wide variety of vintage and street wear.

Jenifer Johnson, the owner of Ruby Begonia's, has been collecting vintage clothing since she was 10. She said her sister, Heidi, got her

started by taking Johnson out to thrift stores.

"It was an older sister that inspired me," Johnson said. "My sister would take me to thrift stores. I would pull things off the racks and laugh at them. She would then say, 'Give me that.'"

Johnson said her love for vintage clothing had taught her a great deal of history. She said a lot could be learned by studying fashions.

"During wartime in the 1940s, they were rationing materials so you couldn't buy a dress that takes 15 yards of fabric," Johnson said.

All ages and types of people wear vintage clothing, Johnson said.

"I don't really have a typical cus-

tomers," she said. "I get high school, junior high, all the way up to older men and women. I really have a broad range of clientele."

Along with the different types of customers Johnson deals with, there are equally as many various reasons to wear vintage clothing.

"I think college students like to dress that way," Johnson said. "It is cheaper than buying new. Vintage clothing also retains its value if cared for."

"I think this is a really good time for me to have a vintage and street wear clothing store. People are really wearing what they want these days."

Ruby Begonia's might not look

like much to a window shopper. But the window shopper should be informed that the store, decorated with old movie posters, includes a basement. This is where Johnson features the majority of Ruby Begonia's merchandise.

"I try to add articles of clothing every day," Johnson said.

Ruby Begonia's is a great place to shop for costume or disco parties. Johnson said she was starting to rent outfits to people who only want to wear them once.

Ruby Begonia's is open Monday through Wednesday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Thursday through Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 5:00 p.m.

Instruments complement voices in opera

By Emily Wray
Staff Reporter

Victorian romantic comedy will take center stage at Kimball Recital Hall when "A Room with a View" makes its Midwest debut Thursday and Saturday nights.

The 8 p.m. performances of the opera are directed by professor William Shomos. Professor Tyler White will conduct the University Opera Orchestra. The score, written by UNL musical alum Robert Nelson with libretto by Buck Ross, is based on E.M. Forster's novel of the same name.

The opera was attractive to Shomos for a variety of reasons.

"The librettist was a director of mine, and Nelson is a UNL alum. We like to promote new opera works, too," Shomos said.

"The music is colorful, and the

motives for different characters fit together to help tell the story. The way the instruments are used with the voices are attractive writing."

He said the opera revolved around Lucy Honeychurch, played by Karen Kness, and George Emerson, played by Kenneth Floyd.

The first act is an exposition of how their relationship develops in Italy. But Lucy is in denial because George's social standing is below hers.

The second act takes place a few months later in England. It finds Lucy betrothed to another, still denying her feelings for George. Fortunately, after many trials and tribulations, the two lovers reunite.

Other principal players include Charlotte Bartlett, played by Rebecca Kouma Shane, and Mr. Emerson, played by Brett Hyberger.

"The message is that we need to

be able to see through conventions and societal standards in life that prevent us from reaching certain truths within us," Shomos said.

"It's about accepting your own true feelings and nature as opposed to letting outside voices do it. Lucy loses sight of what she is and wants."

Shomos said this opera had a more contemporary musical style than others staged in his two years at UNL.

"Musically, there are parallels to 'The Tender Land.' The music is essentially tonal but there is frequent dissonance," he said.

Having the writer and librettist at UNL this week is an advantage for the cast, Shomos said.

"It's a wonderful thing for all of us to have them here. If we have questions, they are here for us," he said.

A lot of preparation went into the

performances, he said.

There was an extensive process employed in selecting each semester's opera, Shomos said.

"The way I choose opera is to look at the people available at the open audition and look for an opera that suits their voices," he said. "I usually have certain people in mind, and I use students that are here instead of hiring out."

Learning scores and staging took about six weeks to put together, he said.

Pre-performance talks for "A Room with a View" by Ross and Nelson will be given at 7:15 p.m. in room 119 at Westbrook Music Building.

Tickets are \$10 and \$5 for students. They can be obtained at the Lied Center Box Office, 12th and R streets, or by calling 472-4747.