

Student Academy Awards highlight fresh films

Participants get experience of Hollywood business, culture

By GERRY BELTZ
Senior Reporter

No glitz. No glamour. Joan Rivers won't be asking where a tuxedo was from, and Kevin Spacey won't be impersonating Christopher Walken.

But the 24th Student Academy Awards, which start today, still carry a good deal of importance and recognition, said Dan Ladely, director of the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater.

"It's really a great opportunity for students," Ladely said. "It opens the door for them, and they always look forward to it."

The entries for the awards come from three different regions; Nebraska is part of Region 2, which consists of 40 states plus the District of Columbia, Region 3 is made up of New York and Puerto Rico, and the West Coast makes up District 1.

The Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater is the site for screening all of the Region 2 entries for the four categories: dramatic, animation,

alternative and documentary.

"The 'dramatic' category usually consists of two-thirds to three-fourths of the entries," he said, "but there usually aren't too many in animation."

"We usually average out at around 100 entries total. This year we have a few less entries, but not much less."

The films are judged by a group of five to 10 people, all of whom are either involved in the film business or have some expertise in the film business.

"We ask film scholars, filmmakers," said Ladely, "and we also get university professors and Douglas Theatre employees."

"Basically, these are local people who are involved in — or have some kind of expertise in — the film business."

Each film is viewed by the judges, then those filmmakers with high enough scores are flown to the next level of competition in Chicago at the Chicago Art Institute, Ladely said.

Regional winners — one in each of the four categories and one at-large filmmaker — are then flown to Hollywood, where their work is judged by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Ladely said.

And even those who don't grab the big prize from the Academy can enjoy the trip out to Hollywood, Ladely said.

"There's cash prizes," he said, "plus winners get to visit the studios, the writers' guild and so on."

"It's a chance for them to get some insight and inside information, a chance for them to make contacts."

The screenings of the various films are free and open to the public, Ladely said.

"If you're looking for a cheap date, this is a great way to do it," he said.

Film schedules are available at the theater box office in the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, 12th and R streets.



MATT HANEY/DN

Theater Review

Theatrix dramas moving, inspiring Tragedy key to both plays

By LIZA HOLTMEIER
Staff Reporter

How do people overcome the sorrow and pain in their lives? This weekend's Theatrix Double Feature endeavors to answer this question.

The first show of the evening is "Savage in Limbo" directed by Sara Bucy and written by John Patrick Shanley. The play takes place in a run-down Bronx bar on a Monday night where the lives of Tony and Linda are radically upset by the entrance of Denise Savage.

The characters in this play are very different from the roles some of the cast members have traditionally played.

"In my other roles, I'm usually the goody-two-shoes," said Leticia Martinez, who plays Linda. "Linda is totally different. She's kind of the sleep-around girl."

Kristin Hensley, who plays the dynamic but desperate Denise, said, "It's fun to play a part that in most circumstances I wouldn't have the chance at playing."

Though the roles are new to the actors, the audience should easily identify with the characters.

"The characters are so complex but so real," Hensley said. "The audience should walk away feeling like they experienced a part of somebody else's life that could be closely related to their own."

Bucy agreed.

"The play deals with the fact that life is only as tragic as we see it," she said.

The second feature is "Defying Gravity," which is directed by Timothy Scholl. The play was written by Jane Anderson, author of "How To Make An American Quilt" and "It Could Happen To You." The central event of the play is the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger.

"It takes different characters in different stages of life from different areas of the country and shows how one common event draws

Please see THEATRIX on 14

'Bluaternative' artist defies definition

By ANN STACK
Senior Reporter

Becoming a full-time rock star could be compared to an exercise in speed-reading for Kelly Williams.

The Texan-turned-Atlanta resident quit her day job as a corporate fitness consultant a year ago, after making music her full-time career.

The Kelly Williams Band plays an unusual style of music it likes to call "bluaternative" — kind of bluesy, kind of funky, all the way rock 'n' roll.

"It's not so easy to coin us country-rock, although the first album sounds something like that because of the production," she said. "But we're not straight-ahead blues either. There's a lot of stuff in there. I grew up with Texas roadhouse blues, and that's how my voice sounds. Everyone has something different, though — blues and Southern rock, jazz, even funk."

"It's blues with groove — that's really the best way to describe it."

Williams picked up the guitar a mere four years ago, after moving to Atlanta and deciding to take some lessons. Her instructor introduced her to another student of his, Doug Pharris.

"Doug and his brother were putting together a band to play at a roof party," she said. "We had jammed a bit, and he asked me if I wanted to sing at it. We did the roof party and thought, 'Wow. This is fun.' The next thing we knew, we were writing songs and it evolved from there."

The band comprises Williams, Pharris, keyboardist Thom Mann, bassist Mike Voth and drummer Mike Richardson. They've played with the likes of the Chris Duarte Group, Storyville, The Doobie Brothers, Tinsley Ellis, Delbert McClinton and Robert Earl Keen.

They've been mini-touring in the wake of their self-titled debut album, released in July 1995. Plans are in the works to head into the studio next month to record the next one, Williams said.

You can catch the Kelly Williams Band Saturday at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St. They'll take the stage around 9:30 p.m., and there's a \$4 cover charge.

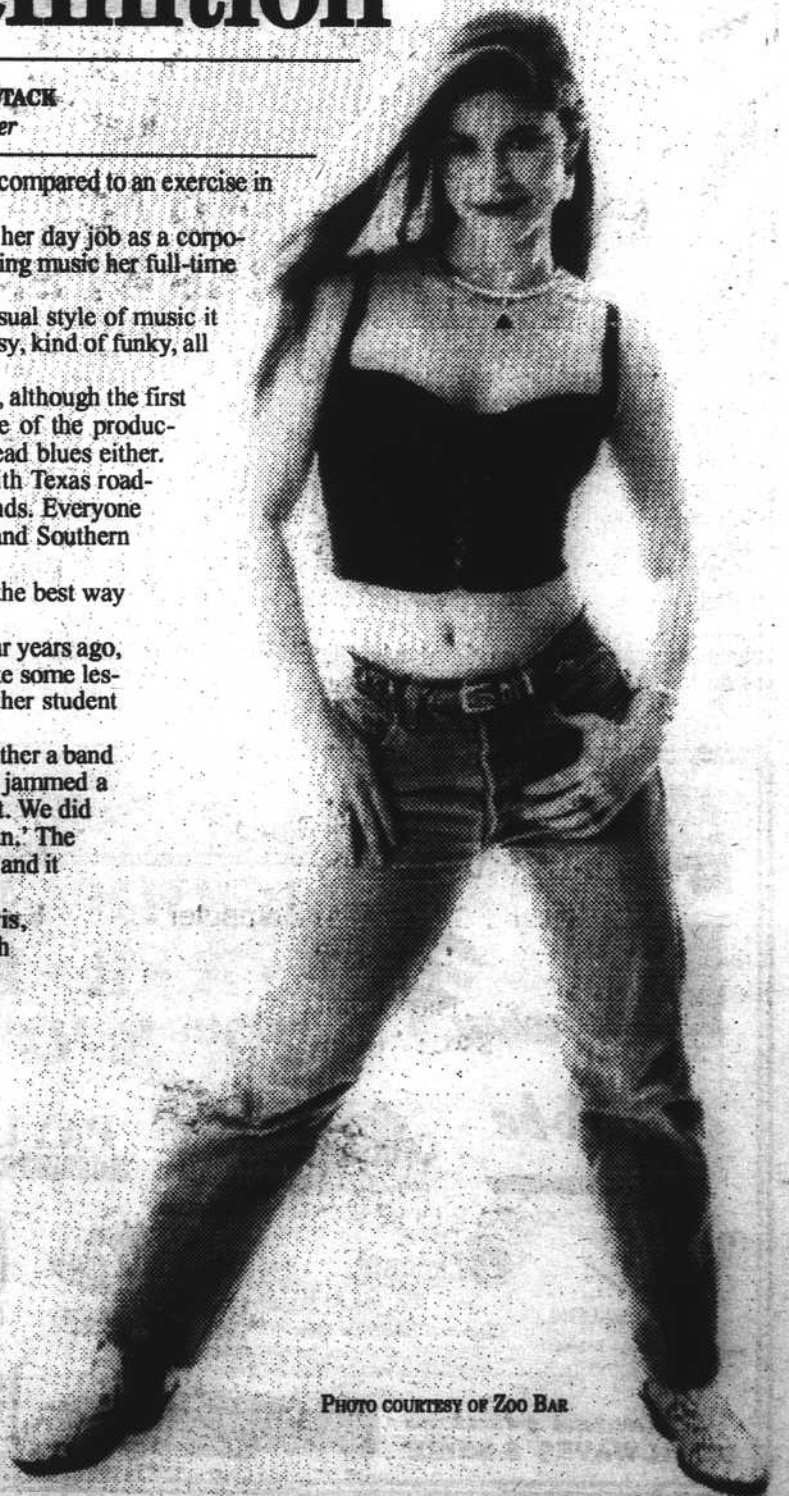


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