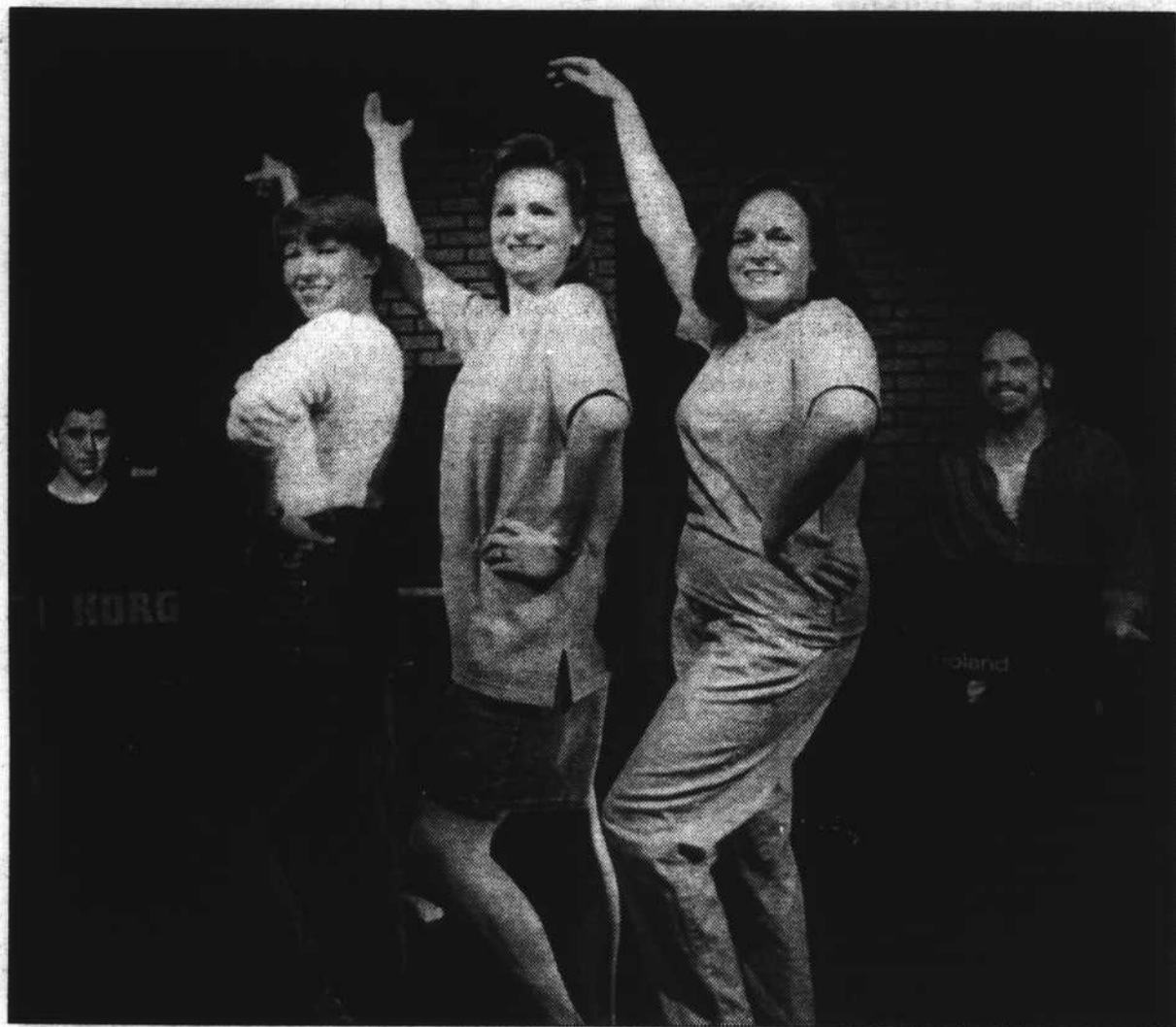


Sondheim revue challenges company



LANE HICKENBOTTOM/DN
BILL WHITNEY, left, Shari Myers, Karen Chuplis, Cris Rook and Vincent T. Learned are starring in "Side by Side by Sondheim," a musical revue starting Thursday at the Downtown Dinner Theater at 245 N. 13th St.

By LIZA HOLTMEIER
Senior Reporter

Theater

Stephen Sondheim's work spans 4 1/2 decades, and this week, audiences have the opportunity to enjoy a portion of his genius.

The musical revue "Side by Side by Sondheim" premieres at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at the Downtown Dinner Theater in The Green Room, 245 N. 13th St. It features 33 songs from the late 1950s to the mid '70s, and encompasses award-winning musicals like "A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum," "West Side Story" and "Company."

Earning numerous Tony Awards and fame equal to that of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, Sondheim's songs culminate in a memory-filled revue.

"Sondheim's music is so rich in content besides being beautiful and funny," cast member Cris Rook said. "I think people will discover a lot of songs they didn't know."

Director Julie Hagemeyer said the magnitude of work to be performed in during the two-hour show presents a challenge for cast and crew alike.

"We have lots and lots of music, and we have to find a way to tie it together and make it continue to flow," she said.

The complexity of Sondheim's work also makes it hard to memorize.

"It's hard because some of Sondheim's lyrics don't fit neatly into stanzas," Rook said. "He breaks out of what is expected a lot of the times."

Rook said she hoped the popular-

ity of Sondheim's work would help increase the patronage of the theater, which is in its second full season.

Hagemeyer said the atmosphere of The Green Room could help to accomplish this aim.

"It is so intimate," she said. "It's sort of like the (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) Studio Theatre because people are right there in front of you."

Rook added that the space helped the actors develop the ability to relate one-on-one with the audience.

"It's a very personal experience," Rook explained. "As an actor, you really notice the difference after performing on a large stage."

According to cast members, the production especially benefited from the intimate atmosphere.

"The show is based on the musical number and the ability of the five people on stage to relate to each other," Rook explained. "The audience will be closer to those relationships with this stage."

The show runs Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sept. 25-27. Dinner tickets are \$20 on Thursdays and \$22 on Fridays and Saturdays. Show only tickets are \$10 for general admission and \$6 for students on Thursdays and \$12 Fridays and Saturdays. Dinner is served at 6 p.m. with the show following at 7:30 p.m. Saturday's performance will be at 8 p.m. To make a reservations call 477-9894.



PHOTO COURTESY OF POLYGRAM FILMS

TERRORIZED BY UNKNOWN FORCES that seem intent on dismantling everything he has built, Nicholas Van Orton (Michael Douglas) has to win this enigmatic game or lose control of everything in his life.

'The Game' credits re-emerging genre

By BRET SCHULTE
Film Critic

Movie Review

In a recent interview, Michael Douglas proclaimed that his latest silver-screen offering, "The Game," was built on the best script he had read in 10 years - Hollywood stars must not make it to the movies a lot.

However, "The Game" is a surpassing and emotionally draining thriller, intelligently paced with a Hitchcockian momentum and packed with psychological beatings.

Smoothly puppeteered by the artistic hands of director David Fincher - best known for his morality play cop flick, "Seven" - this most recent effort is similar in cinematic style. It features gritty film techniques, artistic and bleak settings (in other words, California) and a char-

acter-based world of doubt and greed. The story revolves around a "millionaire fat cat," Nicholas Van Orton, played by experienced thriller-film and Hollywood fat cat Michael Douglas, whose credits in this genre include the critically-acclaimed "Fatal Attraction."

An investment banker and old-money elitist, Nicholas lives a cautious and enclosed life intentionally removed from the swarming masses of mainstream society. In this world, he exists very alone and very safely - until his renegade younger brother, Conrad (Sean Penn), re-enters Nicholas' life on his 48th birthday.

Please see **GAME** on 14



PHOTO COURTESY OF RESTLESS RECORDS

CHOPPER ONE (from left, Tyrone Rio, Amy Cropper and Jason Cropper) makes a two-day stop in Nebraska starting tonight at Omaha's Ranch Bowl. The high-octane pop-rock outfit will play Tuesday at Duffy's Tavern in Lincoln.

Energetic Chopper One to play

By MARYANN MUGGY
Music Critic

Concert Preview

Fasten your seatbelts and get ready for takeoff. Chopper One is landing in Nebraska.

The L.A.-based group will play Omaha's Ranch Bowl tonight, taking the stage around 10 p.m. The group will be in Lincoln Tuesday at Duffy's Tavern, with Rank Strangers opening at 10 p.m.

This new, happy pop band has a live show that has been compared to Cheap Trick, The Who, Big Star and Nirvana. But their sound has mostly been compared to that of Weezer. This stems from the fact that Jason Cropper, lead guitarist of

Chopper One, was an original member of Weezer and left as they were recording their debut album with Geffen Records.

Cropper left to become a family man, spending time with his wife, Amy, Chopper One's bassist. Jason taught Amy how to play while the two awaited the arrival of their adorable daughter, Kiefer, who is featured on the band's compact disc cover.

In the spring of '95, the two formed a band called Braxton Hicks. (The term is said to come from the term for early labor contractions.) When Braxton Hicks drummer Darrin

Pfeiffer left to join Goldfinger, the Croppers formed Chopper One.

Both Amy and Jason Cropper wrote the songs for the debut album and backed them up with strong vocals. By fall '95, the Croppers added Tyrone Rio on drums and released an independent single by the end of the year.

Chopper One also was featured on a compilation album called "HUSH," which came out of L.A. in '96. Jason Cropper's other projects include playing, singing and co-writing (with his wife) on the album by ska group 22 Jacks and producing an album

Please see **CHOPPER** on 14