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Professional pianist to hold free concert

By LIZA HOLTMEIER
Senior Reporter

Concert Preview

When Phyllis Lehrer was growing up, her parents drove her 90 miles to piano lessons in New York. The experience left an impression on Lehrer, affecting her feelings for music for the rest of her life.

"I felt connected to something larger than myself," Lehrer explained.

She hopes to make the same connection with the Lincoln community today and Friday as a guest artist of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Music.

Lehrer, a professor of piano at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, N.J., will present a master class, lecture and concert while in Lincoln.

During the master class from 9 a.m. to noon today at Kimball Recital Hall, Lehrer will work on technique with six Lincoln pianists.

Lehrer's concert, which is free, will be tonight at 8 at Kimball. Works in the program include fantasies by Johann Sebastian Bach, Frederic Chopin, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Robert Schumann and Dianne Goolkasian-Rahbee.

"I love the improvisational aspect

of the fantasy," Lehrer explained. "I think each of the pieces has elements of the best of each of the composers."

Her lecture will be at Christ United Methodist Church, 4530 A St., from 9 a.m. to noon Friday. She will discuss "Inner Games of Music Workbook for Piano," a workbook she wrote. She will also discuss psychological approaches to music, and how games can help performers cope with stage fright. The lecture will incorporate a variety of non-musical exercises to teach musicians to focus.

"The hardest thing about music is the discipline and attention to detail it requires," Lehrer said. "You have to learn to focus on the music and not your own distractions."

Lehrer has taught at Westminster Choir College for 25 years. She received her undergraduate degree at the University of Rochester in Rochester, N.Y., and her master's degree at The Julliard School in New York.

Sponsoring her program are the Music Teachers National Association, the UNL School of Music and the UNL Research Council.

Downtown Dinner Theater will offer replay of musical

By LIZA HOLTMEIER
Theater Critic

"Something familiar,
Something peculiar,
Something for everyone
A comedy tonight!"

The Downtown Dinner Theater — which offered something for everyone in the revue "Side By Side By Sondheim" on Sept. 19 — is staging the musical again tonight through Saturday.

Last week, the group sang, acted, danced, laughed, cried and enlightened its audience of the wonderful world of Stephen Sondheim.

"Side by Side by Sondheim" features famous Sondheim songs like "A Comedy Tonight" from "A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum," as well as songs from lesser-known musicals like "Evening Primrose." Five cast members perform 33 songs in two hours, creating full characters in a few bars of music.

Cris Rook is the show's highlight. She uses the theater's intimate setting to the best of her advantage, forming a relationship with the audience. She charms with her smiles and knowing looks and brings out the passion in her fellow cast members.

While Rook comes close to going over the top during "Ah, Patee!," she redeems herself in the group number "You Could Drive a Person Crazy." The revue showcases her acting range, offering chances for comedy in "Getting Married Today" and drama in "Too Many Mornings."

The show also serves as a vehicle for the incredible voice of Shari Myers. Myers, who performs more sentimental ballads, like "Send in the Clowns," is best when alone with the audience.

As in Rook's case, the show pro-

vides Vincent T. Learned the opportunity to showcase his acting talent.

In "Marry Me A Little/Being Alive," Learned emotes such earnestness and passion that the audience can't help but be affected. He also captures the understated humor of Sondheim's lyrics in "Could I Leave You." Learned performs best when alone on stage or singing with Rook, whose performance equals his own.

Karen Chuplis portrays the "woman-of-the-world" characters. Her best numbers include the lascivious "I Never Do Anything Twice" and the mature "I'm Still Here." Consequently, she seems out of place in numbers like "Broadway Baby." Her transition voice is also weak and whiny.

William Whitney not only performs in this production, he also serves as musical director. Like Myers, his best songs include ballads like "I Remember." Whitney performs with subtlety and tenderness.

However, group members overdo the prima donna routine during the "Conversation Piece" in Act II. Their constant upstaging of each other takes away from Sondheim's substantial music and the performers' vocal talent.

Overall, the show provides a chance to reminisce about all the wonderful Sondheim musicals through the years, from "West Side Story" to "Gypsy" to "Follies" and to "Company."

"Side by Side by Sondheim" runs tonight through Saturday at the Downtown Dinner Theater, 245 N. 13th St. Show tickets are \$10 for tonight's show and \$12 for Friday and Saturday. Dinner theater tickets are \$20 tonight and \$22 for Friday and Saturday. Dinner begins at 6:30 p.m. and curtain is at 7:30 p.m. For reservations, call 477-9894.

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