

Lied Center

## Peking Opera brings ancient tradition to Lied

BY BRET SCHULTE  
Assignment Reporter

The Orient is coming to Lincoln, and not through Pier 1 Imports.

The Peking Opera, famous throughout the world for its centuries-old tradition of "active" opera, brings its pageant of traditional costumes, fairy tales and highly skilled performers to the Lied Center for Performing Arts tonight.

Unlike Western opera, in which music is emphasized over physical action, opera in the Peking tradition employs dancers, acrobats and martial artists to bring its stories to life, said producer Dan Hughes.

"Peking Opera is action opera," Hughes said. Evolved from centuries of Chinese tradition, Peking Opera incorporates three basic forms of physical Chinese art: dance, gymnastics and opera.

Performers train their entire lives to master the vast repertoire of Chinese folk tales and

opera pieces, usually studying all three fields of performance art.

"Everyone in this company has been studying for years," Hughes said. "You just can't walk into a Peking Opera company and start work — every foot movement, hand movement and eye movement is significant."

"Every foot movement, hand movement and eye movement is significant."

DAN HUGHES  
producer

"They've got kids 6 or 7 years old training to be a Peking performer."

Since the late 1980s, The Peking Opera has been selling out performance centers around the country. Tonight's performance is part of the company's second visit to the United States. The group's tour started in February and will continue through April.

With more than 50 members of the company on the tour, the Peking Opera has been dazzling crowds with its elaborate costumes and brilliantly choreographed action sequences.

"Standing ovations is what we've been having consistently," Hughes said. "This is a cultural and entertaining experience for children and adults."

For U.S. residents, The Peking Opera has created a program of excerpts from four classic Chinese stories.

Divided into two roughly 45-minute halves, The Peking Opera will perform two short fairy tales: "The Sword is a Gift from Bai Hui" and "Stealing the Stored Silver" during the first half of the program.

After intermission, the program will change slightly, focusing on sequences from popular Chinese novels of the 16th century. The first piece is "Li Kui visits his Mother" from the classic "Outlaws of the Marsh" — a story of a man who takes his blind mother to war with him because she can no longer live on her own.

"Havoc in Heaven" follows, and is immensely popular among audiences, Hughes said. The story focuses on the Monkey King, whose antics as he crashes an aristocratic banquet get a lot of laughs from the audience, Hughes said.

"It's very beautifully done and certainly without a doubt the Monkey King is a favorite," Hughes said. "He is adorable."

Tickets for the 8 p.m. show are \$22, \$18 and \$14, half-price for students. For more information, call the Lied Center Box Office at (402) 472-4700.

Hughes said tonight's show is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"The only way to go see a show like this is to go to China," he said. "And that's expensive."

# the idol of march

## Symphonic Band to pay tribute to Sousa at Lied

BY BARB CHURCHILL  
Assignment Reporter

Being 60 years removed from the face of the Earth usually cuts into one's performance schedule.

But Saturday night, John Philip Sousa will be in Lincoln for a repeat engagement. Sort of.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Symphonic Band will perform "A Salute to Sousa," an exact recreation of a 1928 Sousa concert appearance in Lincoln.

Rod Chesnutt, director of the Symphonic Band and assistant professor of music at UNL, said this particular concert format is based on Sousa's because Lincoln was a regular stop for his renowned professional concert band in the 1920s and 1930s.

"This concert is recreated from the original material, right down to the soloists, the overtures, the marches and the other pieces," Chesnutt said.

Sousa's importance to American music and the American concert band cannot be overestimated. Sousa was the preeminent bandleader of his time, and was "the most famous musician in the world," Chesnutt said.

Sousa composed 151 marches and many other pieces of music, including ballets, operettas, incidental music and variety-show music. Today, Sousa is known more for his marches than anything else.

The popular British comedy series "Monty Python's Flying Circus" uses Sousa's "Liberty Bell" march for its theme music, which helps point out Sousa's enduring popularity.

Other commonly played marches include "Washington Post," "U.S. Field Artillery" and "Stars and Stripes Forever." All of them, including "Liberty Bell," will be performed at some point during this concert.

The 1928 Sousa concert will be recreated because 1998 is the 70th anniversary of the "University of Nebraska" march, not-so-coincidentally written by Sousa.

The "University of Nebraska" march was commissioned during Sousa's regular Lincoln stop in 1927 and premiered by Sousa's band in 1928 on its next trip into Lincoln.

"The only difference," Chesnutt said with a smile, "is that when Sousa came into Lincoln in 1928, it was the fall. We're doing this concert in the spring because football is just a bit more important now than it was in 1928."

The Lied Center for Performing Arts concert-event is held every three or four years. The UNL Wind Ensemble was last featured in the Lied Center in 1994.

"Every few years, we try to do this type of event because it's important for our band students to know their heritage and history," Chesnutt said. "This is a concert that is soaked in history."

This concert-event is twice as long as the typical Symphonic Band concert. It features three conductors (Chesnutt; Jay Kloecker, UNL director of bands; and Lawrence Mallett, director of the UNL School of Music), three soloists, about 10 marches and more than 20 pieces in all. "The Carnival of Venice" is considered the

prototypical trumpet solo for band.

Jean-Baptiste Arban, composer of "The Carnival of Venice,"

is credited as the founder of the modern school of trumpet playing, and

exponentially expanded the expectations of all trumpeters by

his playing, teaching and composition.

"In 1927, 'The Carnival of Venice' (featuring trumpet solo) had been around for awhile in its original form for orchestra. It was like one of our Top 40 pieces,"

Chesnutt said.

Darryl White, assistant professor of trumpet at UNL, agrees with Chesnutt regarding the relevance of this piece.

"The Carnival of Venice" is a musically significant work which expanded the technical capabilities of the trumpet," he said. "It is extremely virtuosic and demanding."

Trumpeter Vito Speranza will be featured on "The Carnival of Venice."

Speranza currently serves as an airman in the Heartland of America Band, in residence at

Offutt Air Force Base. Speranza earned his bachelor's degree at Potsdam University in New York and an advanced performance degree from the Conservatorio Di Salerno in Italy.

The arias "Ah Fors e Lui" and "Sempre Libera" from "La Traviata," were justifiably famous in 1928.

"La Traviata" was composed in 1853 by

Please see SOUSA on 10



MATT HANEY/DN

## Professor to perform English oboe rarities

BY BARB CHURCHILL  
Assignment Reporter

William McMullen, associate professor of oboe at UNL, believes strongly in promoting lesser-known musical works written for the oboe. Especially if the works in question are from Great Britain.

McMullen used his sabbatical from teaching last semester to research and perform in Great Britain the works that will appear in his recital Sunday in Kimball Recital Hall.

McMullen loves Great Britain for both its strong contribution to Western art music, and on a more personal level.

"My father was on sabbatical in Great Britain for half a year when I was in high school, and I wanted to go there again," McMullen said.

"In addition, I've played a lot of British repertoire and I wanted to learn more."

McMullen will play four lesser-known works for oboe by four highly-regarded British composers. While doing the research on these pieces in Great Britain, he took every opportunity to study and perform these works.

McMullen performed these four pieces 12 times for seven different people while in Great Britain, and also performed them recently in Grand Island during the city's "Sunday Afternoon Music" recital series.

McMullen will perform Herbert Howells' "Sonata for Oboe and Piano," Gordon Jacob's "Seven Bagatelles for Solo Oboe," Richard Rodney Bennett's "After Syrinx I for Oboe and Piano" and Lennox Berkeley's "Sonatina for Oboe and Piano."

The most unusual piece on the program is

Bennett's "After Syrinx I" because it was inspired by the much better-known "Syrinx for Solo Flute" by the French impressionist composer Claude Debussy.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's professor of flute John Bailey, in an inspired bit of programming, will perform Debussy's "Syrinx" immediately preceding Bennett's "After Syrinx I." This is an extremely unusual sight in a conventional classical music recital.

McMullen believes this recital will serve a valuable educational purpose.

"I enjoy playing recital literature that hasn't been heard before," McMullen said. "It's an educational experience for the students and for the general public. They've never heard this music before, and they should enjoy it."

McMullen's oboe recital will be held Sunday night at 8. Admission is free.