

Clarinetist 'shakes up' conservatism

BY BARB CHURCHILL
Assignment Reporter

To clarinetist Todd Palmer, different is good.

Palmer is the featured soloist tonight in Kimball Recital Hall as the latest in the Lied Center for the Performing Arts' "New Voices" series. Palmer is an accomplished musician who obviously enjoys what he does.

"Music is my calling. It is something I cannot not do," Palmer said.

Palmer especially enjoys "shaking up" musical conservatives who believe there is only one way to interpret a piece. Palmer's interpretation of the Francis Poulenc "Sonata for Clarinet and Piano" is a case in point.

"Interpretation is very personal," Palmer said. "People get stuck with one recording, listen to it over and over, and then think, 'This is the only way it's supposed to go.' Well, this is only one person's interpretation."

"Recorded sound is a mixed blessing because we get too hooked on recordings. Pieces are not meant to be played the same way every time."

Palmer became a clarinetist comparatively late, at age 16. Before that, he played the trumpet.

"Trumpet was loud, so I liked it. Then, I figured out that I was attracted to the clarinet section and sound," Palmer said.

However, he quickly made up for lost time, gaining admission to the prestigious Mannes School of Music in New York at age 19 after one year of study at Shenandoah University in Winchester, Va. Palmer combines an adept technique with a flexible tone, all in the name of one thing: musical expression.

Palmer is playing Aaron Copland's "Sonata for Clarinet and Piano," Franz Schubert's "Du bist die Ruh," Edvard Grieg's "Six Lyric Pieces," Malcolm Arnold's "Sonatina for Clarinet and Piano," Erich Wolfgang Korngold's "Marietta's Lied from Die tote Stadt" and Francis Poulenc's "Sonata." Palmer's accompanist is longtime friend Eugene Asti.

Palmer is looking forward to the recital, as most of his Lincoln itinerary was wiped out by last weekend's snowstorm. Palmer appeared at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln music convocation on Thursday at 2 p.m., and will give a lecture-recital-cum-masterclass today at 1:30 p.m. at Midwest ClariFest in Kimball Recital Hall.

"I have no idea what I'll do," Palmer said. "I hope I don't scare the younger students. I hope they'll play for me and that we'll be able to do a masterclass."

"I really enjoy the younger students; they have so much enthusiasm."

Palmer's recital is tonight at 8 in Kimball Recital Hall. Tickets are \$18 and \$14, half-price for students.



FROM LEFT: ANDREA FERRERO receives dancing instructions from Guillermo Orti. Orti, a UNL biology professor, and his wife Sandra Halpern, a professional dancer, teach the Argentine tango to students at Dance Sport USA, located at 237 S. 70th St.

Biology professor makes time to tango

BY SARAH BAKER
Senior Reporter

Instead of finding him in a tux and tails ready to dance, Guillermo Orti is probably more likely to be found instructing a few hundred aspiring biologists.

But wherever he is, he will be teaching. Orti, a biology professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, spends much of his time out of class in the dance studio, teaching the Argentine tango.

Orti, who is originally from Argentina, said he first got into the dance when he met his wife, Sandra Halpern.

"My wife is a dancer by profession, and a modern dancer by training," Orti said.

Orti said Halpern learned to dance the tango long before the couple came to the United States.

"When she came to the states in 1988, she brought the tango with her," Orti said.

Halpern said it was easy for her to teach the tango to her husband.

"Even though he had never danced it before, he wanted to learn, so that made it easier," she said, smiling. "He has learned well, and has turned out to be a good partner, and he also just happens to be my husband."

Orti and Halpern have been teaching dance classes for the past nine years, and Orti said he has learned a lot from his wife.

"It's like she is the professor and I have been her TA for the past nine years," he said. "You learn a lot when you are working with the same professor for some time."

Orti said he never thought about dancing before he met Halpern.

"All I know about the tango is what she has taught me," he said. "And all she knows about biology I have taught her."

Orti said he keeps his biology teaching and his dancing separate, and said most of his students know about his outside hobby.

"I think they are amused by it," he said.

Orti said he eventually wants to try to teach the traditional dance to UNL students.

"I have taught the tango at other universities before, and I would like to bring it here, if I can," he said. "I taught through continuing education, and I think the students really enjoyed it."

Orti said he thought there would be interest in the dance from UNL students.

"Depending on how it's arranged, with prices and things like that, I think students would enjoy learning something unique," he said.

The Argentine tango, the dance that Orti and his wife teach, is the classic form of the dance.

"The dance has a rich history, and originated in Buenos Aires," Orti said. "It's hard to say what the original form of the dance was like, but the form we teach is the traditional one. It's the way we saw the dance done as kids and it's been passed down to us."

Orti said once someone learns the basic structure of the tango, there is still more to learn.

"There are infinite, intricate combinations one can learn after they learn the basic," he said.

Orti said the Argentine tango, which originated around the turn of the century, is experiencing renewed popularity, both in South America and the United States.

"The tango was originally an erotic, dirty dance."

GUILLERMO ORTI
professor of biology

He said he thought part of the attraction of the dance was the romantic image that surrounds it.

"The tango was originally an erotic, dirty dance," he said. "It has been toned down and refined for the ballroom since then, but it is still a very passionate piece."

He said the sensuality of the dance is something that makes it fun.

"The upper body of the dancers is in an upright posture, but there are a lot of things going on from the waist down," he said.

Amy Castro, owner of Dance Sport USA, 237 S. 70th St., the studio where Orti and Halpern teach, agreed.

"Most of the people who come to learn the tango are couples," Castro said. "They are drawn to it because of the romantic, passionate image it carries."

Orti said he originally learned the dance to help his wife, but he has come to enjoy it himself.

"It is really fun," he said. "Although there are very few chances to actually use the dance outside of class, it's still an impressive thing to be able to do," he said. "But the main objective for me is just to teach and help people have fun."

Pianist to combine music, mysticism in spiritual recital

BY BARB CHURCHILL
Assignment Reporter

An extremely unusual piano recital is coming your way Sunday night, courtesy of University of Nebraska-Lincoln assistant professor Paul Barnes.

Barnes' recital, themed "Minimalism, Mysticism and Monasticism: Music as Contemplation," is music that leads listeners to the spirit of contemplation. Barnes came up with this unusual theme during his trip to St. John's

Monastery in England last year.

Barnes is performing Arvo Part's "Fur Alina," Cesar Franck's "Prelude, Fugue, and Variation," Act III (Conclusion) of Philip Glass' "Satyagraha" and Ludwig van Beethoven's "Sonata in C Minor, op. 111."

"All of these composers were intensely religious in their own way," Barnes said.

In addition, Barnes will be joined by the UNL Byzantine Choir in its debut performance. Barnes, along with the choir, will perform "Cherubikon" and "Poterion Soteriou," traditional

Byzantine choral works.

"In this music, there is a different approach to time and form," Barnes said. "In traditional, serious music there is one event or a series of events. It's very narrative."

"However, in this music, the music has a non-narrative musical structure. Different conceptions of time, contemplative prayer and voluntary embrace of simplicity as a way of life are highlighted instead," Barnes said.

The two Byzantine choral works are based off of an *ison*, or drone. The *ison* aspect seeks to suspend time, for when time is suspended, the contem-

plative aspect begins, Barnes said.

He will lecture during one-third of the concert. The ancient definition of mysticism, Barnes said, is not about the new age or the occult.

"Instead, it is a direct and objective intellectual intuition of transcendent reality. Whenever humans have an encounter with transcendent reality (commonly called "God" or a higher power), they have a religious experience," Barnes said.

Minimalism in music, Barnes said, is similar to spiritual pursuits. For example, composer Vincent D'Indy has said Cesar Franck's music "is truly

as much the sister of prayer as of poetry, (it) does not weaken or enervate us, but rather restores the soul. ..."

The interdisciplinary appeal of this recital should appeal to many people who would never dream of attending a classical music recital, Barnes said.

"Anyone interested in early Christian theology, mysticism, spirituality or non-Western culture should enjoy this recital," he said. "And, of course, anyone who loves good music."

Barnes' recital is Sunday night at 8 in Kimball Recital Hall. Admission is free.