

'Zoo Story' tells unconventional tale

Play's director says story challenges cast, audience

BY SARAH BAKER
Senior Reporter

Theater



It's got more excitement, action and suspense than the average trip to the zoo will ever have.

But those weren't the reasons that Director Dana Wall chose to undertake a production of Edward Albee's "Zoo Story."

"I chose it because it was weird," Wall said.

Albee's 1958 play "Zoo Story" begins its run tonight in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Studio Theatre.

"Zoo Story," the play that began three-time Pulitzer Prize winner Albee's fame, tells the story of a bum who entices an executive to commit murder.

Wall said he stuck to the original script for this production.

"There were no real challenges aside from the fact that the play is just really difficult to act," Wall said. "The show is based on dialogue, and it's hard to come up with action to go along with it."

Wall said he likes the show because it challenges many people's domestic values.

"The show really challenges building up a cozy, little nest sort of a life," he said. Wall said the script itself posed some chal-

lenges for the two actors who make up the cast.

"The part of Jerry is technically difficult just because there is an incredible amount of lines," Wall said. "There is a lot more to the character than what's just at the base level. It's a more intellectual part, and Jerry goes to a lot of difficult levels."

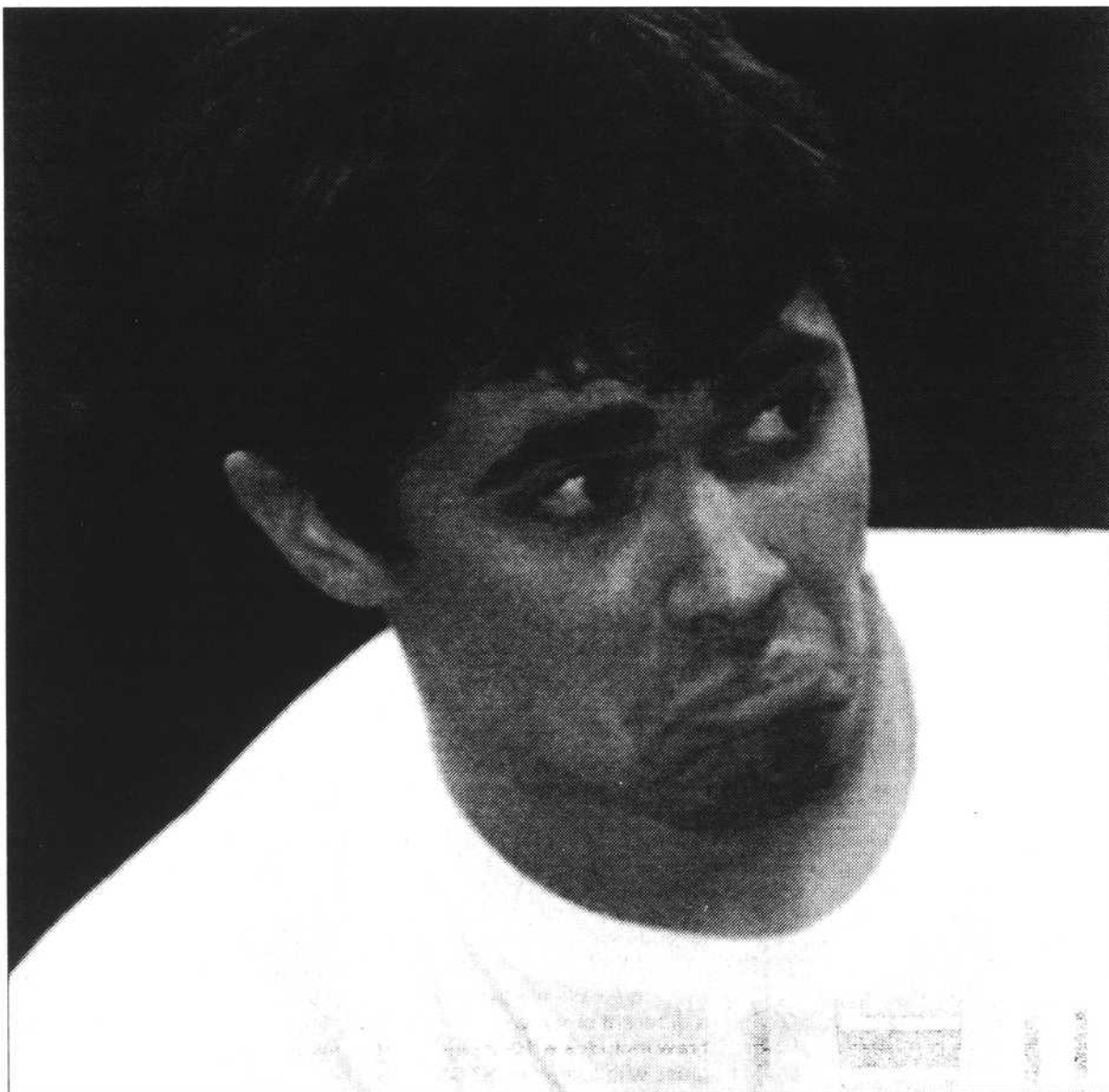
Wall said audience members can expect to be surprised when they see the show.

"They will come out with more understanding of life for several reasons," he said. "This is an important show by an important playwright, and it says a lot of good things."

Wall said he hopes the show changes the way people think about their own lives.

"Since it does challenge so many values, it can help people to drop the values that are wrong and strengthen others."

"Zoo Story" opens Thursday in the Studio Theatre located in the Temple Building. Show times are Thursday and Friday at 8 p.m. and Saturday at 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. Tickets are \$3 at the door. For more information, call the theater department graduate office at (402) 472-1610.



DRUMMER BILL STEWART is a featured player in A Band in All Hope, a jazz trio that will perform tonight at Westbrook Recital Hall. The band's lineup also includes pianist Bill Carrothers and saxophonist Anton Denner.

COURTESY PHOTO

Trio hopes to revive live jazz in Lincoln



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BY BARB CHURCHILL
Assignment Reporter

Live jazz in Lincoln may be on life support, but it is not quite dead.

At least, that is what Ray Gehring believes.

Gehring is the good friend and jazz

disciple of Bill Carrothers, pianist for jazz trio A Band in All Hope, which is in town for a concert and masterclass tonight in Westbrook Recital Hall. Gehring serves as tour manager, representative and (as he put it) "bitch" for the jazz trio.

Gehring is pleased to promote this concert and help this band, because he

believes the members to be unsung jazz masters.

"I've never heard three players interact like this," Gehring said. "I've never heard a pianist like Bill Carrothers, a drummer like Bill Stewart or a saxophonist with the sensitivity of Anton Denner."

"After getting to know Bill (Carrothers), I wanted to create an interest in their music. I wanted to get these guys heard and get them some recognition."

Gehring said A Band in All Hope enjoys playing at universities, because "they need this music. They want it, they appreciate it, and they will pay for it," he said.

"After all, what else are (the universities) going to use as an example of the music they play and study, other than by hearing live performances?"

Gehring said he thinks too many people miss out on hearing live jazz, because the popularity of the jazz idiom just can't compete with more popular types of music.

And that's a shame, he said, because jazz is creative music.

"(A Band in All Hope) play different styles easily. They play Broadway standards, Civil War pieces and originals. They can use anything as a starting point because their music is pure expression based off of the jazz style," Gehring said.

A Band in All Hope has several interesting things going for it, Gehring said.

First is its name, a clever play on words based off the phrase "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here," from Dante's "Inferno."

Second is its unusual style. Gehring compared pianist Carrothers to his much more famous counterpart Herbie Hancock, saying Carrothers' stylistic

influence is "profound."

Third is its atypical structure. A Band in All Hope is a bassless trio, which consists of pianist Carrothers, drummer Stewart and saxophonist Denner. Usually, the doublebass is used to help keep the rhythmic motivation going in jazz. Playing without a bass shows a marked convergence from the norm.

Fourth is its refusal to play more remunerative forms of music. Carrothers is in demand as a pianist, Gehring said, and has many projects going at any given time.

However, Carrothers really enjoys playing what he terms "chamber jazz," or jazz in a small-group setting meant for the concert hall.

This enthusiasm has helped keep Carrothers on the road for A Band in All Hope's tour, which stopped in Saint Paul, Minn., Monday and continues in Des Moines, Iowa, Saturday.

Of course, no concert happens in a vacuum. One University of Nebraska-Lincoln professor, as well as the influential Butch Berman Jazz Music Foundation, has helped bring A Band in All Hope to Lincoln for its concert and masterclass.

The professor who took an interest was Rusty White.

White, professor of doublebass and jazz at UNL, "really took an interest in this band, and helped get them into Lincoln. He also has helped to coordinate this concert," Gehring said.

A Band in All Hope's masterclass is at 5 p.m. in Westbrook Recital Hall, located on the first floor of the Westbrook Music Building. The class is free and open to the public.

A Band in All Hope's concert is at 8 p.m., also in Westbrook Recital Hall. Admission is \$10, \$5 for students with ID.

Actor to appear at screening

From Staff Reports

John Beasley, who plays the role of Brother Blackwell in "The Apostle," makes a pilgrimage to Lincoln tonight.

Beasley will speak with audience members about his work after a 7 p.m. screening of "The Apostle" at the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theatre, located in the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery.

Beasley, who was professionally trained with the renowned Royal Shakespeare Company, lives in Omaha.

Beasley has starred in many movies, including "Rudy," "Losing Issaiah" and "Untamed Heart."

Admission to the screening is \$6, \$5 for students and \$4 for senior citizens, children and members of the Friends of the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theatre.

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