

The Weekend in Preview

The following list is a brief guide to weekend events. Please call venues for more information.

CONCERTS:

Knickerbockers, 901 O St.
Friday: Swerve, Resin 8
Saturday: World Record Players, No Nutritional Value

Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St.
Friday: Kim Lenz and her Jaguars
Saturday: 9 Live Cats

Duggan's Pub, 440 S. 11th St.
Friday: The Rockin' Fossils

Kimball Recital Hall, 11th and R streets
Saturday: University Symphony Orchestra
Sunday: Oratorio Chorus

THEATER:

Lied Center for Performing Arts, 12th and R streets
All weekend: "A Christmas Carol"

Star City Dinner Theatre, Eighth and Q streets
All weekend: "Annie"

Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater, 12th and R streets
All weekend: "Views of Merchant Ivory"

GALLERIES:

Joslyn Art Museum, 2200 Dodge St., Omaha
Recent large scale paintings and drawings and an installation by Cuban artist Jose Bedia, "Allure of the Exotic"

Burkholder Project, 719 P St.
All weekend: The annual holiday art show "Color Me Christmas"

Haydon Gallery, 335 N. Eighth St.
"Small Treasures" featuring works by gallery members.

Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, 12th and R streets
All weekend: "One Hour Smile" and "Pablo Picasso and Peers"

An Easier Ebenezer

Director adds new twist, effects to holiday classic

By LIZA HOLTMEIER
Staff writer

This Christmas, Scrooge has a sense of humor.

The crotchety, old crank still hates the holidays, but this year he receives a lighter treatment in the production of "A Christmas Carol." Presented by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, the biennial production opens tonight at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

Every two years, a different director takes the helm of the show, providing a new interpretation of this classic tale. This year, director William Grange, an associate professor of theater, has tried to speed up the tempo of the show by focusing on the Christmas spirit of merriment.

"Whereas the last production looked at the darker side, this production is lighter and takes a more comic approach," said Becky Key, who plays the Ghost of Christmas Present.

To achieve this end, Grange has made various casting and technical changes.

Professional actor William McCauley will perform the role of Scrooge. McCauley performed with the Nebraska Repertory Theatre this summer in "The Woman in Black."

Cast members said McCauley has brought a new energy and vitality to the show.

"I think this show can be in a real rut if you don't have a Scrooge who's willing to try things," Key said.

But McCauley has been open to experimentation, encouraging the cast to try new things.

Nebraska state Sen. David Landis will play the role of Dickens, who serves as the play's narrator.

Grange has capitalized on Landis' comic ability by allowing the character of Dickens to interact more with the rest of the cast. This interaction has helped to speed up the play's tempo.

"If (Landis) ever decides to get out of politics, he should go into theater," Grange said.

Grange made a couple of additional casting changes by casting a woman in the traditionally male role of the Ghost of Christmas Present and



casting twins as the Ghost of Christmas Past.

Grange has also tried to incorporate elements of 19th century theater by emphasizing special effects such as smoke and explosions.

Through these minor changes, Grange hopes to heighten the spirit that has made "A Christmas Carol" a seasonal favorite.

"What is it in this play that appeals to every human being? The idea of the brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God," Grange said.

Grange said this theme provides "A Christmas

Carol" with a feeling of universality.

"It transcends these very minor things like culture," Grange said. "This proves that all those things are really unimportant. The theater, historically, has always made a living on universals."

"A Christmas Carol" runs tonight and Saturday at 7 p.m. with matinees at 2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$16 and \$20. Half-price tickets are available for students. For reservations, call the Lied Center box office at (402) 472-4747.

Variety of events to bring holiday cheer for everyone

Lincoln and Omaha will feature plays, art exhibits and choirs.

By SARAH BAKER
Senior staff writer

With finals looming just around the corner, a good dose of holiday cheer couldn't be more appropriate for anyone who feels less than in the spirit of things.

And there are plenty of events going on around the Lincoln and Omaha areas that are sure to get anyone ready for the season.

"A Christmas Carol" — one of the holiday mainstays in the world of the-

ater — is showing at locations in both Lincoln and Omaha at numerous venues.

The play will be performed on campus at the Lied Center for Performing Arts, 301 N. 12th St., which will show its presentation of the Charles Dickens classic all weekend in both matinee and nighttime showings. The show continues its run through Dec. 20.

The Omaha Community Playhouse, 6915 Cass St. in Omaha, is showing its own version of the play, featuring the citywide favorite Dick Boyd as Ebenezer Scrooge. The Playhouse also runs its show through Dec. 20.

But "A Christmas Carol" isn't the only festive program celebrating the holidays.

The Lincoln Community

Playhouse, 2500 S. 56th St., presents "Babes in Toyland" for a holiday alternative. The show tells the story of how courageous ballerinas and toy soldiers fight to save Christmas. The show opens Dec. 10 and runs through Dec. 20.

There is plenty to look at in the visual art world as well. Galleries in Omaha and Lincoln frequently coordinate holiday collections for the seasons, and this is a banner year for taking in the colors of Christmas.

The Burkholder Project, 719 P St., begins its annual seasonal art show, "Color Me Christmas" just in time for the holidays. All of the artists in the co-op participate in the two-month-long show.

For those interested in the sounds of

the holiday season, the Joslyn Art Museum, 2200 Dodge St. in Omaha, begins its annual holiday concert series "Holiday Under Glass." The series consists of a number of local high school and university performances by their respective choirs and singing groups.

The concerts begin at noon in the museum's atrium and are accompanied by lunch and a guided tour.

St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 8550 Pioneers Blvd., brings everyone's favorite holiday carols to life this Sunday with "A Nebraska Brass Christmas." The day is set to include "We Three Kings," "Away in a Manger" and "Sleigh Ride," just to name a few.

"Christmas at Union Station" in Omaha at the Durham Western Heritage Museum, 801 S. 10th St., is the

place to be for numerous holiday festivities throughout the month of December. Western Heritage also boasts the city's largest decorated Christmas tree in its main lobby.

Featuring a parade of Dickens characters, horse-drawn carriages and a host of musicians, "Dickens in the Market" has become one of the more popular holiday events in Omaha.

Located in the Old Market in downtown Omaha, the parade and music will take place throughout the weekend.

For more information on any of the above events, please call venues for dates, times and prices.

The holidays roll around only once a year, so be sure to take advantage of these activities before The Ghost of Christmas Past comes to haunt you.