

Condensed 'Romeo and Juliet' takes Lied stage

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Several dance forms are featured, including jazz, ballet and modern.

And the music, including works by Peter Tchaikovsky and Leonard Bernstein, also transcends boundaries of time, though all of its pieces are inspired by the original play.

"'Romeo and Juliet' is such a timeless tale," McKercher said. "I wanted to get across the timeless nature of it all."

Costume designer Rhonda Lake said this combination of time periods is evident in the characters' dress.

Older characters, including Lord and Lady Capulet, have traditional, Shakespearean costumes. But the younger characters, such as Mercutio and Tybalt, dress more like today's generation.

"Some characters even wear cargo

pants," Lake said.

This modern quality also extends to how the younger characters of the play relate to each other and the actions they take, McKercher said.

"When Romeo takes on Tybalt, it's not just fancy sword-play, but he kicks the shit out of him," McKercher said.

Mill said this production grew out of a successful partnership last year between the symphony and the Playhouse.

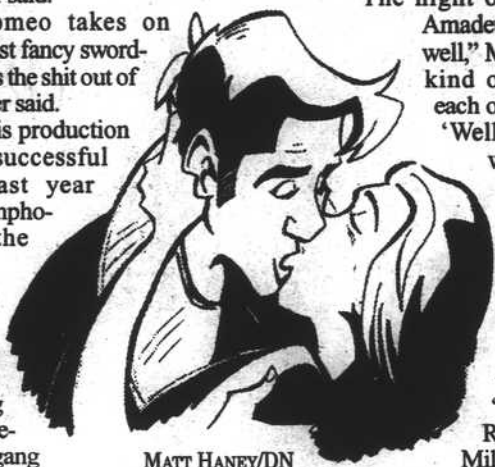
Last January, the two companies joined forces for "Amazing Amadeus," a celebration of Wolfgang

Amadeus Mozart's 242nd birthday.

The symphony and actors shared the stage for the show, but there was minimal interaction between the two.

"The night of 'Amazing Amadeus,' it went so well," Mill said. "We kind of looked at each other and said, 'Well, what could we do to top this?'"

The answer lies in the connection between the music and the drama in "Romantic Rhapsody," Mill said.



MATT HANEY/DN

In "Amadeus," the two were separate entities. But the Valentine's Day performances have music overlapping dialogue, as well as each standing alone.

And the incorporation of the Lied Center gives Playhouse regulars a chance to perform at a much larger venue. The Playhouse seats about 300, McCullough said, while the Lied seats 2200.

Guest artists with ties to Lincoln are returning to play several key roles.

Romeo and Juliet's roles will be performed by two former Lincoln High students, Dylan McCullough and Melissa Marie Lewis, who shared the stage in high school.

And former University of Nebraska-Lincoln professor Paul Steger, one of the most well-known fight choreographers in the country, is working out the swordplay as well as

Lied Center The Facts

What: Romantic Rhapsody
Where: Lied Center for Performing Arts
When: Sunday at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Cost: \$35, \$31 and \$27, half-price for students
The Skinny: A grand collaboration of businesses and art forms

playing Mercutio.

But even with the action, the event is perfect for anyone who wants a romantic mood for Valentine's Day, McKercher said.

"You're going to want to smooch after this one."

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Opposites attract at art exhibit

ARTISTS from page 9

only one I could get into. I really liked looking for anything he had done," Sisson said.

That appreciation is evident in several of his works, which feature twisted human features placed on otherworldly looking creatures.

But Sisson's art is enhanced by the use of found objects; it's a practice that — despite the obvious differences — makes him and Lauritzen-

Wright so similar.

Broken chalkboards, playing cards, threadbare carpet and a piece of something called "rhino liner" are used in both artists' paintings.

"We both like to work within the limitations of these objects that we find," Lauritzen-Wright said. "You can let what you're using in your art guide you to the final product."

And as a result, Lauritzen-Wright and Sisson blend together with the aid of assorted hunks of

garbage. And although they may not share the artistic connection of past collaborating artists such as Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel, that garbage is enough to keep them working together — that and a little bit of mutual admiration.

"I don't like anybody else's art, I just like what I do," Sisson said, casually pointing at one of his paintings.

And then he points at one of Lauritzen-Wright's pieces. "But I do like his stuff."

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