

Revolución de musica



RYAN SODERLIN/DN
GABRIELA RODRIGUEZ (LEFT), 14, Yolanda Rodriguez, 13, and Sasha Chavez, 18, all of Omaha, play the violin at the Virgin of Guadalupe church hall Saturday night. These young people and others learned about Mariachi music and performance all day Saturday and then put on a performance that night.

Omaha group carries on mariachi culture

BY JASON HARDY
Staff writer

During the Mexican Revolution of 1910, encroaching foreign investment and the severe exploitation of Mexican land owners almost wiped out a country's heritage.

However, a man named Emiliano Zapata enlisted the help of his fellow countrymen and fought to defend the Hispanic culture's livelihood.

And while the Mexican revolution has long since passed, the struggle to save Hispanic heritage still continues throughout North America, including Omaha.

This time around, however, the defenders come armed with music.

Over the past ten years the Mariachi scene in Omaha has been growing in size and in quality. At the helm of this revival are the members of Mariachi Zapata, one of the

Midwest's premier Mariachi groups.

On Saturday, as part of the group's continuing effort to rejuvenate interest in Mariachi music among area youth, the band acted as a host at a musical workshop to aid in understanding both the method and the significance behind the music.

"Mariachi music is functional in terms of keeping culture alive," said J. Ramon Hernandez, who plays the guitarron, an instrument similar to the bass, for Mariachi Zapata. "When you have a culture that is alive and flourishing, you have a culture that feels good about itself."

"For that you need to have the children understand that this is a part of you and you need to appreciate it."

Hernandez, who proudly recalls listening to his parents and uncles play the music he now passes on, said children today don't have that kind of exposure to Mariachi music, so it's up to older generations to keep it alive.

Artistic Differences

An ongoing look at ethnic contributions to Nebraska state culture.

And so far, they are.

Miguel Gutierrez, violinist for Mariachi Zapata, is the director of Omaha's student Mariachi group, Mariachi Estrellitas. The group has been offering musical experiences to younger generations through practices and live performances around the Omaha area since 1990, and Gutierrez said it's been great to see younger people getting involved.

"Mariachi music is a true symbol of Mexican culture because it's ours. It exists all over the world but it's definitely Mexican. It doesn't get more Mexican," Gutierrez said. "It's important for young people to get in touch with that because it seems like, especially in the United States, a lot of that culture is being lost."



RYAN SODERLIN/DN
RAMON HERNANDEZ PERFORMS Saturday night. Hernandez, a member of Mariachi Zapata, and other professional mariachi performers taught young people how to play and perform mariachi music all day Saturday.

Prior to the formation of Mariachi Estrellitas, opportunities to learn about Mariachi music were few and far between. But a community grant from the Nebraska Arts Council in 1990 gave Omaha's Mariachi move-

ment a much needed boost.

With that grant, Mariachi Estrellitas was born and so was the Cuicacali Centro De Arte, an art cen-

Please see MARIACHI on 10

'Childe Byron' captures both sides of historic poet

BY LIZA HOLTMEIER
Senior staff writer

Lord Byron was a womanizer, a rake and a poet.

And in "Childe Byron," he's also a father, a husband and a son.

The play, produced by the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, explores some of Byron's lesser known roles. It continues showing tonight through Saturday at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

"Childe Byron" begins with Ada, Lord Byron's only legitimate daughter, writing her will as she suffers through

the last stages of cancer.

Plagued by the bitter memory of her father, she summons his image to life. During the first act, the two confront Byron's past to find the source of his lecherous lifestyle. And Act II explores the ill-fated marriage between Byron and Ada's mother.

With its multifarious layers and conflicts, the play engages both the intellect and the emotions.

Ada and her mother are played by the adept Moira Mangiameli. Mangiameli, who has been playing emotionally charged characters since she came to UNL, vacillates easily between biting anger and aching sad-

ness. One moment, she's the bitterly resentful daughter. The next, she's the confident, coy, manipulative wife.

Mangiameli provides the play with intelligence and wit, but also with humanity and pain. Her voice is effused with the richness of the British accent, yet she avoids the stuffy, aristocratic tone actors can be so susceptible to. Her Ada and her Lady Byron seem natural and human; and she plays drama and comedy with equal skill.

Jude Hickey takes a crack at the legendary Lord Byron. On Friday night, Hickey took a while to warm up to the part. In his approach to the mythic man, Hickey seemed to overplay Byron's

Theatre Preview
The Facts

What: "Childe Byron"
Where: Studio Theatre, Temple Building, 12th and R streets
When: 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday
Cost: \$6 for students, \$9 for faculty/staff/senior citizens, \$10 general admission
The Skinny: Play takes a contemporary look at a historical figure—Lord Byron

cheeky attitude and sexual potency. Rather than emphasizing Byron's humanity, Hickey succumbed to the

cliché of the man.

By Act II, Hickey appeared a little more comfortable in the part. His best scene was during Lord Byron's victimization by his fans and wife. At this point, Hickey achieved the perfect balance between Byron's cocky yet insecure nature. His body relaxed into Byron's haughty stance while his voice calmly decried his rough treatment.

The play is carried by director Patricia Behrendt's staging. Behrendt creates beautiful pictures on stage, infusing the play with energy and pas-

Please see BYRON on 10