

# Value of public art divides city leaders

DEBATE from page 16

shoulders of Lincoln's private sector, as well as organizations such as the Lincoln Arts Council, an arrangement Berry considers far from ideal.

"We (the Lincoln Arts Council) are not a city agency, and we do not have a big budget," Berry said. "Lincoln has done pretty good, considering it never really committed to the concept of public art as a whole, but there really hasn't been a commitment here to have a public art program that even really matters."

She cites "Torn Notebook" as an example of how Lincoln's private sector has continued the growth of the city's public art collection. But to keep it growing, she said, it will take the support of the entire city, most likely in terms of a willingness to use tax dollars for the procuring of public art.

"Take the State Capitol. If you ask most of the citizens, they'd say that was a good idea, and it was built during the depression. Now times are booming," Berry said. "I think there's something more important than just the money here. I understand. I pay high taxes too, but I don't see the balance."

"I think what we need is a commitment of public funding. A public and private partnership is probably the best way to fund public art - private as well as public leaders saying, 'This is important, and we're going to fund it.'"

Ken Hake is president of Security Federal Savings, a corporation known by most for the 10-foot statue of a bald eagle perched atop its headquarters at 1330 N St.

Hake has helped raise funds for a number of Lincoln's public art pieces. He is as adamant as Berry about the importance of public art but differs in his opinion of who is responsible for acquiring it.

"Money for art has to come from the private sector," Hake said. "Because art is so diverse, and because everybody likes something different, it's impossible to please all taxpayers."

"The city really can't use tax funds, and I think we all understand that, but they have been really helpful and supportive."

Hake said much of the city's

unwillingness to use tax money to fund public art is probably a result of the general public's apparent lack of support for the idea. He also said just because the citizens of Lincoln don't appear to rally behind public art doesn't mean they don't appreciate it.

"That doesn't diminish its value. People are impacted by it no matter how they feel. It might cause them to invest some money into art. It might cause them to read about it, or it could channel some ideas for career opportunities for young people," Hake said. "More and more people will believe over time that public art is a necessary element of our community life and be willing to donate time and money to projects."

Evidence supporting Hake's optimism can be seen in the recent work being put into the Antelope Park play area project, an endeavor backed by a large number of community members, including artists and an architectural firm. The goal is to make a playground accessible to children of all abilities by including a number of specifically designed architectural as well as artistic elements.

Dana Fritz, a professor of art and art history at UNL, is one of the artists working on the project. Fritz said it was an excellent example of how art can prove its worth to a community.

"The playground itself is going to be different, because it's for children of all abilities, so it will be a sensory-rich environment with a lot of things to see and feel and smell," Fritz said. "The art will also be integrated into the landscaping, so it's not just like a statue sitting up on a pedestal."

Berry said she had seen some success in combining certain applicable public funds with private funds to purchase public art. However, for Lincoln's public art collection to grow and have an impact on the city, it will take the support of the people who live there.

"Basically, it always comes back to the citizens of Lincoln," Berry said. "I actually think that we may be at a point here, because we're growing so much, that the time is coming for us to finally see that it's an important value."



**Ann Beretta**  
"To All Our Fallen Heroes..."  
Lookout Records  
Grade: C+

There comes a time in every band's life when a decision has to be made.

It's tough, but defining a group's sound is an essential ingredient in creating a cohesive album.

What's even harder is sticking to that sound.

One such example is the Richmond, Va. four-piece punk outfit

Ann Beretta.

On its latest album, "To All Our Fallen Heroes," Ann Beretta starts out with three quick and punchy tunes that capture the band's essence. They skillfully combine crunchy guitar riffs with interesting tempo changes, crescendos and sing-along choruses that are immediately catchy.

Songs such as "Fire in the Hole," "Eye for an Eye" and "Rumour Town" build on each other and create a great first 12 minutes. From there, however, Ann Beretta sprinkles in songs that totally break from the group's established style - a style they do very well.

With songs such as "Vengeance" and "Like A Riot," much of the band's originality is replaced by stock Oi! street punk or rockabilly chord progressions that sound like either a Pouges or a Stray Cats rip-off. Then on "Burning Bridges," the basic and muddled horn elements are so weak they completely undermine the song's energy.

That being said, when the band sticks to the crunchy punk rock 'n' roll style it started the album out with,

it sounds great. "Haywire" is a hooky and energetic sing-along with interesting guitar leads and some of the tightest drumming on the album. "Bully Me Now" is another rocker that incorporates a number of tempo changes and a chorus driven by a bass line similar to those on Rancid's first album.

It seems the only time Ann Beretta can successfully capture the essence of a genre is when it's doing late 1970s cheese rock. Their cover of Cheap Trick's "Surrender" is excellent and is probably the best anthem on the album.

Still, when the group isn't trying to be the Clash or the Business, it has an original style that is very catchy. It's just that on "To All Our Fallen Heroes," we don't hear that band often enough.

It would have been better off ditching all of its crossover songs and just releasing a 10-song album instead of a 14-song album.

It's just like every after school special always illustrated: No matter what, you have to be yourself.

- Jason Hardy

# Opera converts prose to lyric

PIONEERS from page 12

She described the opera as two different love stories. One is about Alexandra's younger brother Emil, played by Philipp Sulzberger, a visiting student from Berlin.

Sulzberger studied voice in Munich and acting at the Lee Strasberg Theater Institute in New York.

He said Emil is the brother who wants to go to school in the city.

"He feels the setting is too far out there," he said.

Emil is madly in love with his childhood friend Marie, who is the wife of a neighboring farmer.

"The two have known each other since they were little kids but have ignored their feelings for one another," he said.

He said the two do not have an affair throughout but do develop a romance later in the story.

The other love story in "O Pioneers!" involves Alexandra, who reunites with a childhood friend and falls in love.

The story begins with Alexandra as a teen-ager and Emil as a child. It

then makes a 16-year jump to when both characters are adults.

The stage is changed during this jump, which not only shows the main characters' changes in maturity, but also the significant changes made to the land during that time.

The land, which was shown as barren and wild in the beginning, is changed to a controlled, human-settled scene.

Richard Durst, dean of the College of Fine and Performing Arts, was in charge of the set design.

"We have approached the expanse of the Nebraska prairie and Sandhills in an abstract way based on the descriptions from Cather's wonderful prose," Durst said in a press release.

"I don't believe it's possible to realistically recreate the Sandhills on stage, so why try? In my career as a designer, I have always tried to stimulate the imagination of the audience, not force feed them my viewpoint."

Trying to transfer Cather's written thoughts on to a stage is new for everyone.

For many, doing a premiere is a

"*O Pioneers!*" captures the essence of the novel's words with music."

**WILLIAM SHOMOS**  
director of opera at UNL

new experience.

For both Hughes and Sulzberger, this is the first time they have done a never-before-shown opera.

Hughes said she was a little nervous about the first performance, but that was nothing out of the ordinary.

"A work in progress is always frightening," she said.

The premiere on Friday night will be a first for the audience and those on stage, but a good performance can be expected.

"The pieces are coming together" Shomos said. "Everyone will be deeply moved by how White tells the story."

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