

Summer program gives taste of reality

Repertory allows students to interact with professionals

By Jason Hardy

Staff writer

Every summer, University of Nebraska-Lincoln students buckle down and get jobs.

For many students, however, it is very hard to find a job in their specific field without moving out of Nebraska.

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UNL theater student

Theater students especially would expect this to be the case, but the truth of the matter is that Lincoln holds a very special opportunity for students in the arts.

The Nebraska Repertory Theatre, UNL's summer theater program, is one such opportunity. Despite being rooted in the UNL theater department, the Nebraska Repertory Theatre is an entity all its own and is the only equity theater in Nebraska.

Basically, this means that it is part of the professional actors union, so it has the option of bringing in equity actors, directors

and other theater professionals.

These professionals work side by side with UNL students, creating an invaluable experience for many cast and production crew members. Not only that, they get paid as well.

"I think it's a great opportunity for undergraduates and for our graduates to work with professional actors, directors and designers," said Jeffery Elwell, executive director of the Nebraska Repertory Theatre and chairman of the theater department.

"The professional actors are union members, and you have to earn your equity card, so it means you've jumped a certain number of hurdles."

This summer's schedule, as with most summers, includes three shows, the first being a children's presentation of Frederick Gaines' "Sleeping Beauty." Later this summer, the Repertory will present performances of "The Last Night of Ballyhoo" and "Picnic."

Brian Lucas, a senior UNL theater student and cast member of "Picnic," said this summer offers him the opportunity to work in a different type of learning environment.

"I'm hoping to improve myself as an actor and to gain some knowledge from them about how life is out in the real world," Lucas said. "I'm definitely looking forward to it. It's definitely something that I need to work on, getting into that professional attitude since I'm going to be graduating in December."

While offering students a quality experience, the Repertory theater is by no means a summer vacation, though it does have its incentives.

"The pay is a great thing because that's what we're training to do, plus it's been going on for so many years that it's got a great reputation," he said. "It's going to be different. We'll have longer rehearsal days, but hopefully everyone will have a more professional attitude."

Elwell agreed but said the overall experience would be worth the accelerated rehearsal schedule.

"The rehearsal period is much more intense," he said.

"In this case, it takes place over four weeks instead of two weeks, but it's all you're doing. You're not in school," he said. "The professionals who are coming in here were, at one time, in the same positions of the students, but now they have been out working, so they know what life is like trying to do that as a professional."



Delan Lonowski/DN

Bad plot and boring cast sinks 'U-571'

■ Cheap thrills and some great shots fail to salvage this submarine movie.

By Samuel McKewon

Senior editor

"U-571" is a dead submarine movie, absent any real characterization, emotion or palpable threat. It's built out of the "Saving Private Ryan" mold, without any of that movie's fever or thunder, lacking even the basic story context in which "Ryan" unfolded.

Directed by Jonathan Mostow, this World War II adaptation will draw comparison to older, better brothers "Crimson Tide," "The Hunt for Red October" and the vanguard of the genre, Wolfgang Peterson's "Das Boot." But this movie only employs trapping details of a sub. The men that inhabit it could have come right out of a hardware store.

The story is built on a false premise of actual WWII events. In 1942, British subs captured the Nazi German Enigma, a secret decoding device that allowed communication between U-Boats and Berlin. Before its capture, England struggled to find any foothold in the sea war. It changed after the discovery.

Being an American movie, the sub

is no longer full of Brits but built on U.S. shores, inhabited by the biggest horde of dry birds this side of a monastery.

This is a lifeless crew, headed by Captain Dahlgren (Bill Paxton), a first-class stiff board who described his role in a recent magazine article as "Obi-Wan-like."

I guess that'd make Matthew McConaughey Luke Skywalker. His Lt. Andrew Tyler is roughly cut from the same mold, though Dahlgren delivered a bad review when Tyler had a chance to skipper his own sub.

He and Dahlgren ship out together on a secret Enigma mission that apparently can't fail, as one character explains they will either capture the device on the enemy sub or kill themselves, as to prevent the inevitable Nazi torture.

Harvey Keitel is on hand as No. 3 in command, whose full name I could look up, but since it never grows beyond "Chief," there seems little point. After Chief, it's hard to distinguish characters and who lives and who dies.

Jon Bon Jovi has billing and is supposed to play a reasonably important character, but he disappears after awhile. Maybe he dies in the sub raid, maybe not. The movie doesn't care to say.

REVIEW U-571

STARS: Bill Paxton, Matthew McConaughey, Harvey Keitel

DIRECTOR: Jonathan Mostow

RATING: PG-13

(blood, violence)

GRADE: C-

FIVE WORDS: Impressive sound, but dead movie.

I understand the tactic: that war is essentially nameless and faceless, fought by men who are facsimiles of other men, who come from any walk of life. Fair enough.

But it doesn't work in "U-571." The eventual enemy, a German destroyer, has no leader; it's just a collection of guns and depth charges. A movie has the potential to move beyond just simple point of view. My take: Mostow's script chose not to do that, opting for simple thrills.

The last hour devolves into mini-strategy sessions between depth charge explosions, which curiously pick up pace once they start hitting the boat. Tyler's half-baked plan requires several obscure variables to match up.

One guess as to whether or not they do.



Courtesy photo

There are a few spectacular shots in "U-571" (an undernath shot of a sub, while depth charges explode above it, is a nicely composed scene) and a few genuine moments of tension. But the movie was constructed exactly for those moments, and they are too few and too far in between.

The sound, in any theater that has good stereo, is the movie's most impressive fixture; it will be nominated

for an Academy Award nine months from now. Mostow films the inside of a submarine well - he mimics many of Peterson's continuous tracking shots from "Das Boot." Not easy scenes to shoot.

But "U-571" would like to be more formulaic and less specific than its predecessor. The result is half-experience, half-movie. And one very boring set of characters onscreen.