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Nebraska Repertory Theatre offers twist to summer season

Shelley Mika

Staff writer

Theater buffs may have come to rely on the Nebraska Repertory Theatre's summer schedule to spice up the season. And the theater will continue to entertain patrons, but with a few changes.

The Rep. will present two plays, but this year both productions will be presented in rotating repertory.

"Rotating Repertory hasn't happened in ten years," said Julie Hagemeyer, Theatre Manager at UNL. "The cast and crew will move from one script to another."

Hagemeyer said that although this will be challenging for those involved in the play, the two performances do have similarities.

"Last Night of Ballyhoo" is set in the 1930's and "Picnic" is set in the 50's. "Both (plays) are more innocent," Hagemeyer said. "People had a different perspective on life—not quite as global. 'Picnic' is also pretty insular."

The relative innocence and myopic nature inherent in both plays comes to light even in a brief plot summary.

Set in 1939, "Last Night of Ballyhoo" is the story of Atlanta's high society German Jews. At the center of the play is the Freitag family, who are more concerned about the last

night of the theatre "Ballyhoo" than Hitler's invasion of Poland.

"Picnic's" setting is of a more local nature, as it tells the story of neighbors who live in all-female households. This commonality provides a challenge for Hal Carter, who enters the scene and upsets the entire group.

Another commonality between the plays are the awards bestowed upon each.

"Last Night of Ballyhoo" won the 1997 Tony Award for Best Play and was written by Alfred Uhry, author of "Driving Miss Daisy."

Written by William Inge, "Picnic" won the Pulitzer Prize and the Critics' Circle Award.

"I think both plays really have a broad appeal," Hagemeyer said. "People who are in their 20's as well as people in their 80's who have been going to the theater all their lives will enjoy them. Both have won many awards and are quality and proven scripts."

Not only do the plays have the potential to appeal to a wide audience, Hagemeyer said the scripts also allow for a diverse cast. "There's a lot of opportunity for both guest artists and artists we're training," Hagemeyer said.

Among the guest artists involved in this year's schedule is Eugene Anthony, who will share his acting talents in

PREVIEW

Last Night of the Ballyhoo
dir: Ken McCulough

Where: Johnny Carson Theatre
When: July 6-8, 14, 22, 26, 28
August 3, 5 @ 7:30 p.m.
July 30 @ 3 p.m.

Picnic
dir: Eugene Anthony

Where: Howell Theatre
When: July 12, 13, 15, 19, 21, 27, 29
August 2 @ 7:30 p.m.
July 23 & August 6 @ 3 p.m.

Prices: patrons \$20; \$18 faculty, staff, seniors; \$7 students, youth

"Last Night of Ballyhoo" and will direct "Picnic." Anthony's background includes Broadway performances, national tours and appearances on "All My Children" and "Law and Order."

"We've also used local talent," Hagemeyer said. "The Nebraska Rep. is trying to boost its training component."

Hagemeyer said that both local actors and those involved with the University have roles. Among the varied talents will be Dick Nielson Howard, who appeared in last summer's "Death Trap," Shirley Mason, the head of acting at the University, as well as advanced students from the Theater department.

Jazz in June provides casual venue

Shelley Mika

Staff writer

Often times going to a jazz concert involves getting tickets, pulling out dress clothes and arriving on time to get to your cramped seats. Occasionally sacrifices like these have to be made in order to catch a bit of musical culture.

However, for those who crave a little jazz without the hassle of formalities, Jazz in June provides the best of both worlds.

After several years of the annual music event, held in the Sheldon Art Gallery Sculpture Garden, most people are probably familiar with the laid back atmosphere abounding every Tuesday in June.

Many people bring lawn chairs, others make themselves comfortable in the grass. Still

others prefer to mill about, occasionally stopping to say hello to an acquaintance while others in front cling to every note emitted from the concrete stage above.

Regardless of how people choose to enjoy the festivities, every Tuesday in June around 7:00 jazz musicians are guaranteed to share their love of the genre in the warm summer air.

In years past the Jazz in June committee has included musicians from several different geographical areas. However, this year, aside from one artist, the committee chose to include mainly local musicians.

The following is a list of musicians scheduled to perform for this year's Jazz in June:

June 6 UNL Jazz Quintet. The members of the UNL Jazz Quintet (a number of which are UNL music instructors) include Tom Larson on keyboard, Peter

Bouffard on guitar, Darryl White on trumpet, Rusty White on Bass, and Siguard Lyles on drums. The band will perform original compositions as well as music from Darryl White's CD "Ancient Memories."

June 13 Nebraska Jazz Orchestra. Led by Ed Love, the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra contains about 16 members and plays mostly big band tunes.

June 20 Matt Wallace Group. From Omaha, Wallace plays a number of different saxophones. The group will play a wide variety of styles and contains approximately six people.

June 27 Angela Hagenbach Sextet. Hagenbach, a singer from Kansas City, has a group called Musa Nova which does mostly Latin styles. A desire to do more in Lincoln this year inspired her to expand her group to perform at Jazz in June.