

# Special performance marks director McCullough's exit

By Kate Grafel  
Staff writer

Rod McCullough and Rhonda Lake will star in a one-time production of A. A. Gurney's "Love Letters" on Monday at the Lincoln Community Playhouse.

The show is part of a farewell party for McCullough, who has served as executive director of the playhouse for 18 years.

"There was some discussion about a farewell event," McCullough said, "and what I really wanted was to act one last time."

McCullough said he and Children's Theatre Director Lake decided on "Love Letters" because it is intended to be read rather than memorized, and it would be easy to produce.

"There are two actors, a table and two chairs," McCullough said.

McCullough, a Lincoln

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**Rod McCullough**  
executive director, Lincoln Community Playhouse

native, began his association with the playhouse in 1967 when he played Stanley Kowalski in "A Streetcar Named Desire." McCullough graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1970 with a bachelor's degree in English.

Though McCullough did not take acting courses while at UNL, he did participate in shows on the theater department's second stage, which is now known as Theatrix.

McCullough acted in the movie "Miracle of the Heart," which was filmed at Boys Town, as well as an Unsolved Mysteries segment and two other movies.

As executive director of the playhouse, McCullough said he is responsible for "going out and raising enough resources to keep (the playhouse) going, then trying to slow them down before they go out the door."

McCullough soon will be leaving Lincoln to take a job as managing director of the Fulton Opera House in Lancaster, Penn.

The play begins at 7:30 p.m. Monday following a 6:30 p.m. reception at the playhouse. Tickets are available to the public for \$25 by calling the Lincoln Community Playhouse box office at 489-7529.

# 'Picnic' concludes Rep's season

■ William Inge's play will be directed by theater veteran Gene Anthony.

By Kate Grafel  
Staff writer

The Nebraska Repertory Theatre's final production of the 2000 season will open Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in Howell Theatre, featuring William Inge's "Picnic" and guest director Gene Anthony.

"Picnic" takes place in a backyard in a small 1950s Kansas town. The yard is shared by neighbors Helen Potts and Flo Owens, both heads of all-female households.

Helen and Flo are portrayed by Shirley Mason and Mary Douglass, UNL theater professors.

The story line explores the impact that Hal Carter has on these two households when he unexpectedly appears on Labor Day to visit former college buddy Alan Seymour, played by Steve Barth.

Jude Thaddeus Hickey, who plays Hal, said Hal falls for Flo's daughter Madge, who just happens to be Alan's girlfriend.

"When Hal finds out, he tries to stop it," Hickey said, "but it's

just inevitable."

"Picnic" has brought Anthony to Nebraska theater for the first time. A tenured associate professor of theater at Marshall University in West Virginia, Anthony has worked in 56 cities in 40 states.

Anthony, who spent the first eight years of his career teaching high school drama in Toledo, Ohio, moved on to professional work at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago.

During a 12-year stint in New York, Anthony played comic villain "Mr. U." on ABC soap opera All My Children.

Regarding soap opera work, Anthony says: "They hardly pay me enough to do it; they couldn't pay me enough to watch it."

A back injury during his last "AMC" taping sent Anthony back to school. He now teaches stage movement, musical theater and dance, various acting courses and practical courses for the aspiring actor.

Though he acts once a year in a major role to maintain his integrity as an acting professor, Anthony says he is "reshaping his artistic life as a director."

Anthony will be teaching a two-hour workshop on Physical Abstracting at the Nebraska Repertory Theatre Camp next week.

He also stars in "The Last Night of Ballyhoo," which opened July 6 and is being presented in rotating repertory with "Picnic."

Charles O'Conner, a UNL professor of scene design, designed the set for "Picnic."

The front porch of the Owens' cream-colored house faces the center of the stage from upstage right. Opposite is the side porch of the blue Potts house.

The shared backyard, nestled in the fan-shaped area between the two houses, contains a tree stump and rusted 1950s furniture.

O'Conner made use of wet blends and spatters to create an appearance of dirt and grass on the painted stage floor.

Images of clouds, the moon, sunrise and sunset are projected onto the cyclorama, a rigid white cloth that serves a screen, using Gobo templates.

"Picnic" will be performed in Howell Theatre at 7:30 p.m. on July 13, 15, 21, 27, 29, August 2 and 4 and at 3:00 p.m. on July 23 and August 6.

Tickets for both "Picnic" and "The Last Night of Ballyhoo" are available through the Lied Center Box Office at 472-4747. Admission prices are \$20 for patrons, \$18 for UNL faculty, staff and senior citizens and \$7 for youth.

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