

Canterbury . . .

(Continued from Page 6)

period of the play as long ago without being specifically identified.

"In a musical comedy like 'Canterbury Tales' the costumes can't be completely accurate reproductions," Gloekler says. "There is a bit of artistic license involved to get the effect that is needed."

One of the important effects the costumes must provide is the adding of color to the production. "In this show, the sets are fragmented and suggestive of the environment, rather than literal. Therefore a feeling of continuity and most of the color in the play are provided by the costumes. Color also helps keep the mood in musical comedy," the designer explains.

According to Gloekler, there were a few unusual problems which had to be coped with in the Canterbury production. For instance, the actors who play the pilgrims also appear as characters in the tales. No one is off the stage long enough to make a major costume change, so parts of costumes were developed that, when added to the basic ones, create the change of character.

Is it difficult to make believable medieval costumes from today's fabrics?

"It's easier today than it used to be," says Gloekler. "The trend in modern upholstery materials is to the tapestry look and to cut velvets. So we often find the cloth we need at upholstery shops."

Shopping for cloth is done after the costumes have been decided upon and the color scheme determined. Then any kind of establishment which sells material might be visited, fabric and department stores, even bag companies.

And there's a cost incongruity about costumes that wouldn't be found in a regular wardrobe, because costumes are created for effect. "We have one dress in this production, for instance, which is made of 49c-a-yard cotton, one of the cheapest materials we could find," Gloekler says. "But the long, draped sleeves are lined with brocaded satin which sells for \$7 per yard. One sleeve lining costs more than the entire dress."

Gloekler, who is also Acting Director of the University Theatre, became interested in costume design while he was a student at San Jose State College. The school is noted for its strong theatre production program. While working on his master's degree, he worked as an assistant costumer and eventually taught at San Jose for two years. He's been at the University for three years.

Costume workshop is part of the regular core of courses that theatre majors are required to take. Since there is always a production coming up, the class has plenty of projects. For "Canterbury Tales," 15 students worked alone with 4 paid work-study employees to complete the show's costumes in five weeks. That adds up to well over 900 man-hours just for the construction of the 60 costumes.

"That's actually more time than we sometimes have for a production," the professor says. "Last quarter's major production required 260 costumes and we had to complete them in 4 weeks."



Last performance of 'Canterbury Tales' will be Saturday night. Curtain time is 8 p.m. at the University Theater. From left to right are Eric Lundun, Frank Muir, Barbara Garratt and Gwen Jackson.

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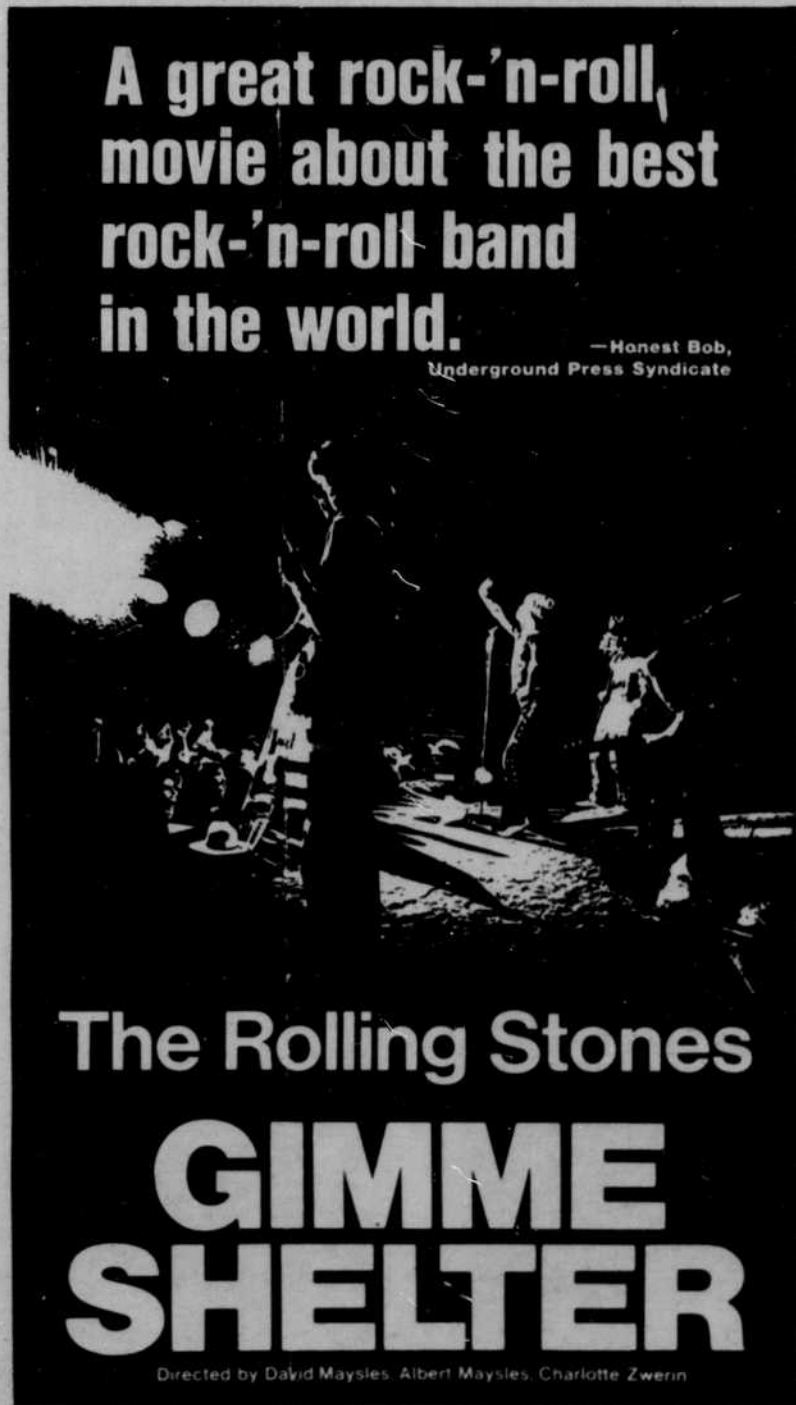
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