

Jazz vocalist highlights county program

By BOB WEBB
Of the Emerald

Five performing artists and five graphic artists in Lane County began to get paid July 1 for doing their art. The reason? The Artists in the Community Program, the first of its kind in this area.

These ten were hired by the Lane Regional Arts Council (LRAC) with funds given them by

Title VI of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). They will be working on projects around Lane County this summer.

LRAC has been accused in the past of being a do-nothing operation, just several artsy-craftsy types who sat around under the title and talked about doing things rather than actually doing them. All show and no go.

"We are moving!" exclaimed jazz vocalist Nancy King, one of the ten. "People have been bugging me, 'Who are you people? What are you going to do together? What is this?' Those are great questions, and we've mashed them over many times."

"CETA gave LRAC the money to hire ten artists in the community," King continues, "cultural folks. They picked 80 people, out

of something like 1,000 applicants, to interview and out of these 80 they came up with the ten of us. Now we're a conglomerate, they've just thrown us together, so to speak. We had no idea really what 'we' did, what 'we' were going to do until we met. At our second meeting we had a sort of Show & Tell, so we could each get an idea of what the others did. Everybody was overwhelmed by everybody else's art."

The artists are now in the process of deciding on ways to present their art, to do what they do best while at the same time help out each other, as well as furthering art in the community.

A few projects have already started. The group is now working on a mural design for the outside of the Marketeria on 24th Avenue. They also have a bid in to paint the outside of the Atrium. In November they will mount their bus project.

"Lane Transit," explains King, "is donating all their buses — 50 buses! — for all of November for us to run art on. They are going to pull all their ads off for one month. We're going to fill the buses with art!"

More immediate projects consist of two concerts, one by Nancy King with Tom Grant and Friends Friday night, 8:30 p.m., at the Community Center for the Performing Arts, 8th and Lincoln, and a benefit for LRAC to be held at 8:30 p.m. Monday in the Oregon Repertory Theatre's space on the second floor of the Atrium Building.

The concert with King and Grant is "really my baby," says King. "It's being sponsored by LRAC but it's definitely a private thing. It's for people who didn't see Tom Grant at the Eugene Hotel. It's also for people under 21 who couldn't get in to hear Tom at the Hotel. There are a lot of young people who love jazz and will come."

King is keeping the price down to \$2 "because it's the end of the month," she explains. "They wanted me to make it \$2.50 at least, but I said no. It's much easier for a couple to get up \$5 for a Friday evening, and a \$2 ticket price gives a couple something extra for a drink or something."

"We decided that I would do this one by myself," she continues. "The group was going to make me something to wear and they were going to create an environment for me onstage, and all that, but I said no, let's put our big push into this Monday thing. I can handle this. I'll just do what I do. We don't need anything like that because Tom's adequate."

"Monday's Benefit is to help us make money," King says, "because we have absolutely zero funds. It's to help us get off the ground. That's why the admission is \$5."

The benefit will be a sort of mixed bag affair. It will feature Nancy King along with other performers from the Artists in the Community Program as well as several talented friends.

Artists slate summer activities

Hired by the Lane Regional Arts Council as performing artists in the community were: Allan Gross, Bobby Hoggard, Nancy King and Cynthia Orr, all from Eugene; and David Wallace from Marcola. Hired as visual artists were: Stephen Bangs, Kay Hockett, Shonna Husbands, and Celeste LeBlanc, all from Eugene; and Steve Oshatz from Vida. Marianne Lewis will coordinate the group's activities.

Below is a brief rundown of the performing artists with the events

they have, by press time, definitely scheduled through August, all sponsored by LRAC:

•Bobby Hoggard is conducting beginning and advanced modern dance workshops through August at the Western Oregon Ballet School, 2649 Willamette St. Beginning classes will meet Mondays and Wednesdays from 7:30 to 9 p.m., advanced classes will meet Fridays from 4:30 to 6 p.m. \$2 will be asked for each session. However, the fee goes toward the space rental, not to the artist.

These are ongoing classes and it is not necessarily important to start at the beginning, they may be picked up at any time.

•Cynthia Orr is Story Telling to adults every Monday evening at 7:30 p.m. at the Book and Tea Shop, 1646 East 19th. On Friday, August 5, she will appear at Gertrude's Cafe at 9 p.m. also.

•David Wallace, co-ordinator of the Scarecrow Mask Theatre, is performing "Billy Buffoon," a children's tale combining music, acrobatics, storytelling and mask characterization at various Eugene parks and schools. Tonight at 6:30 p.m. he will be at Fairmont Park. Next Thursday he will be at Edgewood Playground at the same time. "Billy Buffoon" is available for performances at schools, parks and various functions for children. For fee information and scheduling call 933-2609 or the LRAC office, 485-AART.

•And, of course, Nancy King's concert Friday and the LRAC Benefit Monday night.

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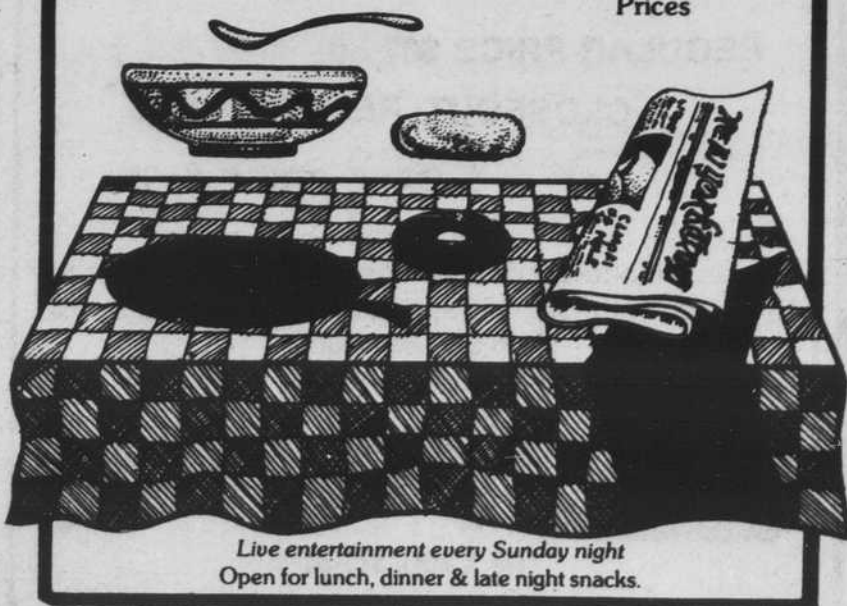


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'Funny Girl' production lacking

By BARB PRICE
For the Emerald

One of the most difficult theatrical events to review is a Broadway musical. It's especially hard when the Carnival Theater presents a production of a well-viewed movie like "Funny Girl."

The problem arises when the reviewer tries to determine why people go to musicals. There's the music, dancing and acting to consider.

Broadway musicals represent two kinds of music — instrumental and vocal. To give you an idea of what the instrumentalists were up against, they were seated in the outdoor arena in a corner. The open air is a tough acoustical barrier to overcome, but the chilly start got off and running as the show progressed, kinks easily ironed out with practice and calmed nerves.

It's also a bit difficult to tell how loudly you are playing in order to get the point and counterpoint across without overpowering the vocals.

By now the 18-piece orchestra

should have the wrinkles ironed out. In most musicals, the orchestra pit lies in front of the stage, but in this case the facilities just don't make it possible. The director must make do with what is available.

review

Another aspect of musicals, especially "Funny Girl," is dancing. As you remember, Fanny is a member of the Ziegfeld Follies. But the production's dancing doesn't compare to Ziegfeld's, but then, whose does nowadays? Ziegfeld had elaborate stages and large gaudy sets to work with. It would be ludicrous to think the Carnival Theater could master Ziegfeld's techniques for one production. It suffices to say the dancing was wanting, but it still functioned to set the mood and get the point across.

A third component of Broadway musicals rests with vocals. Who can compare with Streisand's voice — certainly no one but Streisand. But Sandi Puckett does a rousing job of setting the pace and punching her performance with energy. While Puckett wanders through the audience proclaiming, "I'm the Greatest Star," she convinces the almost capacity crowd.

The fourth aspect of Broadway musicals deals with the acting. "Funny Girl" was filled with some stunning performances. It was hard to believe Kathy Neal, playing Brice's mother, wasn't flown in from New York to fill the roll.

The character of Mrs. Brice is strong to begin with, and her portrayal left me, at least, in awe. But Kathy Neal wasn't the only strong performer. Jane Wojcik as Mrs. Strakesh made poker playing innocent, strong hints delightful and "Find Yourself a Man" a song of fun and whimsy.

Whether you should go see "Funny Girl" remains up to you — and your expectations. If you want to see Fanny singing "Don't Rain on My Parade" from the front of a tug boat, then you're in for a let-down. But if you want to see a tear-jerking, at times side-splitting, local production of a cinematic extravaganza, you're in luck.

"Funny Girl" ends this weekend at the Carnival Theater. Tickets can be purchased at the box office or by calling 686-4191.

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