

UO opera groups stage musical

'A Little Night Music,' which mixes operatic and musical influences, will premiere Feb. 18 at the Hult Center

Steven Neuman
Freelance Reporter

Throw together a mismatched marriage, a two-timing actress, an unfaithful husband, jealousy, lust and an isolated estate. It almost sounds more like a Joan Collins novel than a musical.

The UO Opera Ensemble and University Opera Orchestra are staging a full production of Stephen Sondheim's "A Little Night Music" this month at the Soreng Theatre in the Hult Center.

The musical is based on the 1955 film "Smiles of a Summer Night," in which Ingmar Bergman both directed and starred. It was first produced on Broadway in 1973.

School of Music Assistant Adjunct

Professor and UO Opera Ensemble Director Mark Kaczmarczyk is directing "Night Music."

"Sondheim is, in a way, the quintessential American musical composer," Kaczmarczyk said. "Before him, it was all musicals that you or I might consider pretty cheesy. When he appeared in the 1960s he just revolutionized theater. He writes the music, the lyrics and he fills the play with all this sexy innuendo."

Kaczmarczyk said the production, a bedroom comedy that takes place in the early 1990s, and its convoluted plot are part of its appeal.

"Sondheim catches the idea of mismatched couples," he said. "There are love triangles flying around — it's pretty crazy."

The musical stars University students and will be backed by the University Symphony's instrumental ensemble.

Professor Wayne Bennett, who will conduct the orchestra for the performances, said the production was one of Sondheim's most

ambitious works, adding that it has impressionistic flair. The score is rendered almost entirely in 3/4, or waltz meter, which Bennett called "quite sophisticated."

According to Kaczmarczyk, "Night Music" is neither a musical or an opera.

"It's a big question," he said. "It's actually somewhere in between. Because the songs are so dominant and the music threads through it all. It has been performed as an opera, but it ran on Broadway."

"It straddles the fence between Broadway musical and an opera, but it was originally conceived as an opera," Bennett said.

"A Little Night Music" will show Feb. 18 at 7:30 p.m. and Feb. 22 at 2 p.m. Tickets for the reserved seating are \$10, \$18, or \$20 and are available at the Hult Center Box Office and the EMU Ticket Office.

Steven Neuman is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

Convention reveals obsessions

The Record Convention, held at the Eugene Hilton on Sunday, showcased obscure music and serious collectors

By Ryan Nyburg
Senior Pulse Reporter

The first thing I noticed about the Eugene Record Convention Sunday was the smell. It had only been open for a couple of hours, but already the large convention hall had taken on the stench of an attic. The air was filled with the smell of old, well-worn,

well-loved collectors' items.

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

The convention is held annual-

ly at the Eugene Hilton the week after the Super Bowl and always seems to involve the same people; record collectors tend to look alike. It's a look akin to that of antique dealers, film buffs, bibliophiles and adult toy store owners. It's the look of those who spend their time dealing with the fetishes of other people while at the same time indulging in their own. They look middle-aged even in youth, usually wear glasses and have the odd sense of humor of someone who spends a lot of time alone.

Every year, people like this come together at conventions around the country for whatever their private obsession happens to be. Horror films, computer software, "Star Trek," and what have you. It's all the same: Fetish items for the obsessive.



Ryan Nyburg Senior Pulse reporter

Dealers from all over the state showed up at Sunday's record convention at the Eugene Hilton.

This is not to put them down, of course, but only to explain the atmosphere of the place. Vinyl records are a collectors' items for the most part, and while all the old arguments are brought forth about superior sound quality, they'll certainly never again have the mass popularity currently afforded to compact discs. This is why these conventions exist, anyway. They provide a place for collectors and lovers of recorded music — what turn-of-the-century writer Ambrose Bierce snidely referred to as "the resurrection of dead noise."

Most of the dealers are private, and many aren't doing this for the profit. Often the reasons for show-

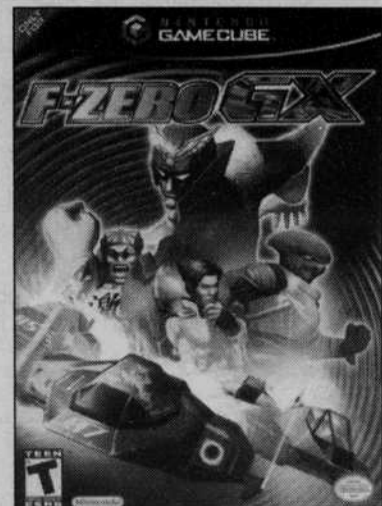
ing up are to unload some of the junk in their collection and talk with other enthusiasts.

"I'm not here to make a whole bunch of money," concert video dealer Mark Strand said. "I'm here to have some fun and talk to people about music."

While there is money to be made in record dealing, the convention doesn't seem to be about that aspect. There is chatter going on everywhere, with people discussing music, bragging over their latest finds, asking about obscure bootlegs, etc. And while many collectors' items

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F-Zero GX surpasses past versions



Courtesy

Nintendo's latest entry to the F-Zero series allows players to pilot vehicles at speeds of more than 600 miles per hour.

Nintendo's F-Zero GX has improved graphics and well-designed courses

By Travis Willse
Editorial Editor

"Everything comes to him who hustles while he waits."
— Thomas Edison

In summer 1991, the world of racing video games changed forever with Super Nintendo's F-Zero. In an intense medley of break-neck speed, triumphant synth-electric guitar tracks, deviously challenging race-tracks, keen AI and faux 3-D graphics (Mode 7 graphics to industry wonks),

GAME REVIEW

the title put players in the driver's seat of a super-fast hovercar and pitted them against an aggressive horde of hovercar-driving opponents.

Three (American) sequels and 12 years later, Nintendo, along with developer Sega, released F-Zero GX, surely the finest addition to the series to date. Players who pick up a controller will immediately notice that the game is simply hard. Or at least it feels that way at first. In Grand Prix mode, the game's crown jewel, it will likely take the casual player a few rounds to get used to the remarkable control stick sensitivity and mind-boggling velocities. Even on Novice and Standard difficulties the typical race speeds are around 1000 kilometers per hour (620 mph) and can reach up to

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