

FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

Contact: Bob McGill

Mailed March 7, 1986

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio - Music theatre history is being made at Youngstown State University. Yesterday, today, and every day for the next seven days.

Then on March 14, the world premiere of "Quasimodo," a vibrant rock theatre work will be presented in the Newman Center at Wick and Rayen Avenues. The performance, purposely in a church setting, is free and open to the public.

After that, "Quasimodo" is expected to move on to its professional premiere in New York next season.

The production is an interface theatre effort involving the YSU Foundation, University Theatre, Youngstown Playhouse and the Newman Center.

Four New York artists chose YSU as the site to develop this new work: Christopher Martin, the director-composer-musician and general "ringmaster" who was a Wean Lecturer last year and staged and directed "Harpers Ferry," Karen Sunde, actress and playwright, and musicians-composers Bob Jewett and Jack Maebly.

Based on Victor Hugo's Hunchback of Notre Dame, "Quasimodo" has a libretto by Sunde and Martin and music by Jewett and Maebly. They are continuing to develop and refine their work with a university-community cast and a rock ensemble.

Director Martin said that while working on "Harpers Ferry" at YSU last year he was impressed with the talent in this area, the expertise evident in the Dana School of Music, and the receptivity of YSU theatre coordinator Dr. Dennis Henneman of Boardman and the entire YSU community to working with serious professional artists

"Self motivation is extremely important, and it's here. In many places, theatre is too structured. Dennis provides the opportunity and lets them (cast) develop on their own," Martin commented.

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Musically, "QUASIMODO" is a mixture of contemporary music forms and styles, artfully blending rock and folk idioms with street-singing styles. As such, the work bears a marked similarity to the work of Kurt Weill, who was most noted for his work in Germany with Bertolt Brecht.

Christopher Martin is founder and former artistic director of the City Stage Company in New York, where he was responsible for over 100 productions in terms of acting, direction, and translation. He directed and designed "HARPERS FERRY" here last season.

Karen Sunde, an accomplished actress, has also received several awards for play-writing, including three VILLAGER Awards and an Outer Critics' Circle nomination for "BALLOON," which was produced Off Broadway in 1983. Her play "DARK LADY," is currently in rehearsal for its world premiere in California.

Musicians Bob Jewett and Jack Maeby have been working together since 1982. In addition to playing together in "The Sarcasuals," a popular New York rock group, they have collaborated on the music for the 1985 City Stage Company production of "THE ORESTEIA," directed by Martin, several Sam Shepard productions around the country, and various theatre pieces for the La Mama Theatre in New York. They have also written and produced music for numerous commercials. They've been Clio Award finalists, International Broadcast Award finalists, and won the "Best in Baltimore" award for commercial underscoring.

Appearing in the title role as the Hunchback is Dr. John White, YSU professor of anthropology. He has appeared often on the local stage, both at the Youngstown Playhouse and at YSU. His most recent performance was as John Brown in last year's University Theatre production of "HARPERS FERRY" under the direction of Chris Martin.

Also appearing in the cast are YSU students Diedre Pates of Youngstown as Esmeralda; David McVicker from New Castle, Pa., as Gringoire; Dennis Reynolds of Warren as Clopin; Peter Proctor, Salem, as Phoebus, and chorus members Michael Green of Warren, and Killeen Vogel of Boardman.

Joining from the Youngstown Playhouse are Youngstown residents Mark Serman as

Frollo, Ann Finnerty-James as Sister Gudule, Chuck Mastran as the Inquisitor, and chorus member Brenda Bursan. Leonard Williams, a high school student from Ursuline, is also a member of the chorus.

The stage manager is Paula McConnell, a YSU theatre major from Canton. Production arrangements for this premiere presentation of "QUASIMODO" are being handled by Dennis Henneman of University Theatre, Alice Weiss of the Youngstown Playhouse, and Father John Polanski of the Newman Center.

The rock ensemble consists of Glenn Brady on bass, Jim Richley on drums, Jeff Sanders and Teddy Pentaless on guitar, and Rob Gehardt on piano. Composer Jack Maeby will be on synthesizer.

This YSU-INTERFACE presentation, as well as the New York premiere, will be staged by Chris Martin.

There is no charge for the performance or the reception that will follow Friday. Seating will be on a first-come basis. Because of limited seating at the Newman Center, doors will open at 7 p.m. Curtain time is 8 p.m. Persons may call 742-3631 for information.

A "Meet the Artists" reception, sponsored by Youngstown Playhouse, will be held immediately following the performance to allow audience members to interact with the directors, writers and performers.

Free parking will be available adjacent to the Newman Center in the YSU parking lot on Rayen Avenue, in the Pilgrim Collegiate Church lot on Wick Avenue, and the Youngstown Board of Education lot across Rayen Avenue.

"Quasimodo" is being presented as part of the cultural offerings of YSU's College of Fine and Performing Arts. This production is being funded by the YSU Foundation as part of the Theatre Interface program involving University Theatre, the Youngstown Playhouse and the Newman Center.

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*Fri March 7*

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

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THE NEW YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE-COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA WILL PRESENT ITS FIRST "POPS" CONCERT AT 8 P.M. ON MONDAY, MARCH 10th, IN THE CHESTNUT ROOM OF YSU'S KILCAWLEY CENTER...

MICHAEL GELFAND, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MUSIC IN THE UNIVERSITY'S DANA SCHOOL OF MUSIC, IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE 60-PIECE ENSEMBLE... MEMBERS INCLUDE FACULTY, STAFF, STUDENTS, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND AREA MUSICIANS...

THE CONCERT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC...

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NEWS SERVICE - BT  
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FOR RELEASE:

CUTLINE

Karen Sunde of New York City, right, composer of the rock theatre show, "Quasimodo" discusses a scene with popular Youngstown actress Anne-Finnerty James of Canfield. Produced at YSU in cooperation with Youngstown State University Theatre, Youngstown Playhouse, the YSU Foundation and the Newman Center, it will be premiered at 8 p.m. Friday, March 14, in the Newman Center at Wick and Rayen Avenues.

(YSU photo by Elise Cleary)

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NEWS SERVICE  
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FOR RELEASE:

CUTLINE

Jack Maeby, far left, composer/musician from New York City, rehearses with the band of "Quasimodo" the rock theatre work to be premiered at 8 p.m. Friday, March 14, at the Newman Center. The production was created at YSU through cooperation of Youngstown State University Theatre, the YSU Foundation, Youngstown Playhouse and the Newman Center.

(YSU photo by Elise Cleary)

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NEWS SERVICE  
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FOR RELEASE:

CUTLINE

Christopher Martin, right, director of the interface theatre production, "Quasimodo," goes over stage directions with two of the leading players. YSU's John White, center, portrays the hunchback, Quasimodo, and Anne-Finnerty-James of Canfield, plays Sister Gudule. The rock theatre show was produced through the cooperation of the YSU Foundation, University Theatre, Youngstown Playhouse and the Newman Center. The free premiere performance will be at 8 p.m. March 14 in the Newman Center

(YSU photo by Elise Cleary)

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NEWS SERVICE  
85-404

FOR RELEASE:

CUTLINE - The band for the new rock theatre work, "Quasimodo," goes through the score with the director and composers during a work session at YSU's Dana School of Music. Standing at left are Christopher Martin, director/composer, Jack Maeby, pointing, and Bob Jewett, wearing cap, both of whom are musicians and composers. The world premiere of the show will be at 8 p.m. March 14 at the Newman Center. It was produced at the university through cooperation of Youngstown State University Theatre, the YSU Foundation, Youngstown Playhouse and the Newman Center. (YSU photo by Elise Cleary)

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NEWS SERVICE  
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