

Omaha
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The Up-Side-Down Sound

LAST week's observation that the musical score printed on a University of Nebraska at Omaha College of Fine Arts brochure was up-side-down produced a tongue-in-cheek phone call from Jim Saker, who is the university's new band director and a man who will be much involved in the upcoming summer workshops.

He tried to blame the whole thing on the printer, but I already know from my brief sojourn as a newspaper-type that printers never make mistakes. But, enough of that.

To the intriguing part: Jim's answer to an inquiry about what that up-side-down score would sound like if someone tried to play it.

About that particular passage he couldn't guess, but playing scores up-side-down and even backwards is apparently commonplace in some 20th century music. The former is called "inversion;" the latter, "retrograde."

Jim explained to me (understand, my musical knowledge dates only from "Mairzy Doats") that Arthur Schonberg, one of the best known of contemporary musicians, was given to "serial" compositional devices. One is: a score whose latter parts are simply the earlier parts written up-side-down.

Saker went on to tell me of a work by American composer Charles Ives in which the second part is nothing more than the first half played backwards.

And then there's "Ludus Tonalis" (that may sound just like you'd think it would) by Paul Hindemith.

Its postlude, according to Jim, is the prelude played backwards... which goes a long way toward explaining why there will always be a market for tunes like "You're the Hangnail of My Life and I Can't Bite You Off."

A Super Show

THE very vision of "Morning Mouth," Dave Wingert, belly-dancing on the stage of the Orpheum could be enough to keep a body away from tonight's "CELEBRATING US: A Super Show," but don't let it.

There'll be another 199 actors, singers, dancers and what all, each working to raise a few bob to send an Omaha Community Playhouse cast to Bulgaria this summer to perform "The Robber Bridegroom."

Finally...

SOME satisfying news to pass along — about a mentally-retarded adult who refuses to roll over and die because his speech is halting and his thought processes a little more deliberate than yours or mine.

His name is Ray Loomis, the 1979 winner of the Jefferson Award, presented by KETV and the American Institute for Public Service.

He's already received his bronze medallion — about a month ago — but now he's been notified that he is one of 16 finalists for five national honors. If he's one of those eventual winners, he'll go off to Washington and on June 26, in the Supreme Court of the United States, he will be rewarded with a gold and silver medal and \$1,000 in prize money.

Bettie Shapiro, who helped to screen the 180 local nominations, says Ray stood so far above the field there could be, plainly, only one winner in the Midlands this year. He is, Bettie says, intelligent, perceptive, with an uncanny range of leadership abilities.

Consider this: He spent 15 years in the Beatrice State Developmental Center and on his release organized (perhaps as much for his own benefit as for others') Project II, a kind of support group for the mentally retarded and otherwise handicapped.

From this handful of frightened people, not sure of their ability to deal with the world around them, has come a statewide organization with hundreds of members — People First of Nebraska — drawing the consideration of national groups and learned individuals who share their concerns.

At its helm: a middle-aged man who scrubs the dried food from a mountain of dishes every day in the steamy recesses of a west Omaha restaurant, who goes home in wet shoes each night to a special woman named Nancy and their small yellow-haired son, Billy.

If you can spare the extra moments it takes to listen as he struggles with his words, this man — this man who, no matter the outcome on June 26, already has his reward — will say to you:

"If you think you are handicapped, you might as well stay indoors."

"If you think you are a person, come out and tell the world."
I ask you: who is handicapped?

children to grandparents, have been evaluated at Creighton University for seven years to help university researchers find ways to predict who may get asthma.

The people, relatives from a number of families in which asthma has occurred, will be seeing Dr. Robert Townley, chief of the allergy section in C.U.'s Medical School, and his

Your Health

staff for years longer, because finding answers takes time.

To date, four markers have surfaced that may point to early identification of potential asthma patients, said Townley, who also heads the allergic-disease center at C.U. It is one of 15 in the United States.

It has been generally accepted for some time that asthma tends to occur more frequently in some families than in others.

9 Million Sufferers

Not every member of an "asthma family" will develop this obstructive airway disease, which can occur in mild and severe forms. It is estimated that about 9 million Americans suffer from asthma.

For preventive reasons, it could be helpful to predict which persons are at risk, Townley said.

"Since 1962, we have tested 1,500 asthmatics. All of them have shown bronchial sensitivity to acetylcholine," he said. Acetylcholine is a substance that plays an important role in the chemical transmission of nerve impulses.

The researchers are finding that some members of asthma families who show no signs of the disease also have sensitive airways, although to lesser degrees than asthma patients.

During the study of the sensitive but not symptomatic people, some developed asthma. More may in the years ahead, Townley said.

Question

One question to be answered is why one person with bronchial sensitivity becomes an asthmatic and another does not.

Bronchial sensitivity also is being investigated at other institutions and may be one of the most promising and predictive markers, Townley said.

Sensitivity testing is done by having a person inhale methacholine, a chemical relative of acetylcholine.

Two other potential markers coming out of the C.U. studies are linked to blood levels of two different substances. One is an elevated level of IGE, a type of

action of the enzyme trypsin. The C.U. researchers most recently reported that asthmatic people have a shortage of a type of cell receptors. The receptors, receiving stations on the surfaces of certain cells, are part of the mechanism by which the body uses its own supply of adrenalin, which can help keep airways open.

Could Be Helpful

Townley said trying to test all families with an asthma history is not warranted or practical based on what is known now.

If a person from an asthma family has begun to show one or two signs which suggest possible asthma, however, testing could be helpful, he said.

One reason to find people at risk is to help them avoid things which might trigger the onset of the disease.

"For the person at risk, for example, it certainly would be important to not start to smoke," Townley said.

Some, but not all, asthma is related to allergy. In certain cases, the advice to persons at risk might be to avoid sub-

Known for asthma plans. It to avoid high exp. cal or potentially disease.

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Iowa Sets Survey Of Grain Probes

Des Moines (UPI) — Iowa Agriculture Secretary Robert