

# Music department celebrates with concerts

By Ken Hardy  
Staff Writer

UNCA's music department is staying busy during this holiday season.

Upcoming events include Christmas in the Great Hall, candlelight tours of the Biltmore House and a New Music Ensemble concert.

The UNCA Community Chorus will perform at Grove Park Inn and Biltmore House as part of their own holiday festivities.

"The Biltmore House and Grove Park Inn pays the chorus and the band to perform for their own holiday festivities. Money goes into the budget for operating costs for each group," said Dorr.

"The performances are valuable. It gives so many opportunities for our groups to perform and it achieves some of our goals, like the outreach program between UNCA and the community," she added.

The Community Chorus will perform at the Biltmore House on Dec.

12 and 19 at 6:30 p.m. They will perform at Grove Park Inn on Dec. 14 and Dec. 28 at 4 p.m.

The New Music Ensemble will perform on Dec. 12 at 12:15 p.m. in the Carmichael Lecture Hall.

"This is a rather unusual type of ensemble. There are not too many opportunities to hear pieces for percussions. The music is not often played. It is literature which is worth hearing, but the only outlet for it is the university music ensemble," said Douglas Ovens, director and assistant professor of music at UNCA.

The program includes a wide range of music from a percussion trio of "Three Play" to a piano duet of "Jeux de Plein Air."

"Virtually all of the performers are students except one," said Ovens. There are 22 performers in all.

The Friday concert is one of two concerts by the New Music Ensemble. Friday's performance provides "a less formal performance opportunity.

There will be an evening performance in April which will contain more difficult pieces," said Ovens.

Many UNCA performing organizations have already started off the season with music and song.

The UNCA Community Band, UNCA Community Chorus, UNCA Jazz Band, the UNCA Biesterfeldt Band and Rhapsodies in Blue performed to a sold out audience in the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium on Dec. 7.

The eighth annual Holiday Concert was comprised of about 250 performers, from both the community and the university and six directors.

"It is a real university and community event. Twenty-five percent are students and three-fourths are community," said Joyce Dorr, artistic director and producer of the Holiday Concert. She is also a lecturer in UNCA's music department.

"One of the things that has made the concerts so successful is the great amount of variety that they

contain. The type of music goes from the very entertaining jazz-rock type music to (Felix) Mendelssohn and Handel," said Dorr.

"But another thing which accounts for the success of the concerts is the pacing. I've designed it like a live TV show where there is no intermission and no time lapse for bowing and walking on and off stage," said Dorr.

The 1986 concert featured a special composition commissioned for the Holiday Concert by the N.C. Arts Council and the UNCA Holiday Concert Committee. Brevard composer Robert Palmer wrote the work titled, "Processional and Carol."

Palmer based the work on the concert's "Joy to the World, Peace to the World" theme.

The Dec. 7 concert concluded with the traditional sing-along of the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah.

# Christmas tradition continues

By Julie Ball  
Assistant Entertainment Editor

A Christmas tradition continues in Asheville as the Land of the Sky Civic Ballet presents the classic story of "The Nutcracker."

This year marks the 11th annual production of the popular ballet. "It was first performed in Russia in 1892. Just about every ballet company in the world does it. It's a real staple of the Christmas season," said Linda Fletcher, director of the Land of the Sky Civic Ballet Company.

"I think it's getting to be a tradition. We hear from people who come every year," she said. "People come from Georgia and Tennessee. They come that far to see it," she added.

Both shows were sold out last year, according to Fletcher.

"The Nutcracker" is the story of a young girl named Clara (played by Jennifer Taft on Friday and Joan Murray on Saturday) who falls in love with a wooden nutcracker (Walter Fletcher) who is really a human. He is under the spell of his uncle Drosselmeyer (Jeff White).

The only way to break the spell is for a young girl to fall in love with the nutcracker and for him to kill the rat king (Johanna Hensley).

A major role in the ballet is the Sugar Plum Fairy played by UNCA student Michele Hensley. Hensley is a freshman math major.

"I'm sure I will be nervous that night. You always have a little bit of butterflies," Hensley said. And the role is physically demanding. "It takes a lot out of you," she said.

She shares the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy with Jennifer Taft, a former professional dancer with the Cincinnati Ballet.

Taft dances the role of Clara on Friday and the regal Sugar Plum Fairy on Saturday. Despite the differences, Taft said it is not difficult to switch roles.

The roles are shared by the dancers to give more of them experience. "They all do it kind of differently, and it makes it interesting," said Fletcher.

"I think it's a very colorful show. It's fast-paced and moves smoothly from one thing to the next. There's a lot of good dancing in it," said Taft.

"It's a Christmas story, a children's story, a fantasy and a nice way for all the citizens of Asheville to have a chance to be exposed to ballet," Hensley said.

The performance receives no public funding; it is funded completely through ticket sales, according to Fletcher.

"The Nutcracker" will be performed Dec. 12 and 13 in the Asheville Civic Center at 8 p.m. Tickets are on sale at the Civic Center and at Fletcher School of Dance.

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