

# Group's show boasts variety

BY TOM PREVITE

Pauper Players tossed a little variety into this year's production of "Broadway Melodies" — but UNC's student-run musical theater group kept the youthful exuberance that is its trademark.

Gerrard Hall hosted the annual musical revue, which showcases a variety of Broadway tunes within sets. Each song in a set loosely ties together a story created by the performers. The final "Broadway Melodies" showing is 8 p.m. today.

This year's show featured four sets, running a lengthy 150 minutes.

Things kicked off with "The New Recruits," a mostly upbeat performance in which the actors portrayed members of an upstart corporation. It was an energetic start to the evening.

Director David Geigerman was spot-on in selecting a cast with varied vocal talents and strong acting. Senior Will Jones stole the show with his rendition of "If I Were a Rich Man" from "Fiddler on the Roof," perfectly imitating a drunken stupor, to the audience's delight.

The set also featured one of the more surprising performances, with senior Lisa Offoha performing "One Song, Glory" from "Rent" accompanied by an acoustic guitar solo.

"The New Recruits" set a high standard for the rest of the evening, a level that was too high to be matched by its successor.

The absolutely bizarre "Bear vs. Zombie" featured parodies of Antonio Banderas, Haley Joel Osment and the devil. Also, it included the murder of a personified "suspension of disbelief."

The set proved to be funny.

## THEATER REVIEW

### "BROADWAY MELODIES"

PAUPER PLAYERS

FEB. 18



Unfortunately, it was painstakingly long as well, running about 45 minutes before wrapping into the much-needed intermission.

No matter how funny a show is, if the audience knows the production isn't even half over, there's going to be a buildup of frustration.

Pauper Players diffused any unrest with a 15-minute intermission and a break from routine with an instrumental segue. The orchestrated set featured beautiful renditions of "Façade" from "Jekyll and Hyde" and "One Love," a medley of two songs from "A Chorus Line" arranged by sophomore Jason Brane.

The musicians performed expertly, with the quality of the sound rivaling that of the originals. It was the highlight of the entire production.

Finally, the sultry "America's Suitehearts," a set combining dance and song, closed the show.

The set looked into the lives of club dancers, and the scantily clad ladies did not disappoint in bringing bubbling emotion to the surface.

After the climactic "Nowadays/Hot Honey Rag" from "Chicago," closed the show, all of the production's actors squeezed onto the tiny stage and took a bow.

They had just gone through a marathon of epic proportions.

And the audience members knew they got a good deal.

Contact the A&E Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

# School funding case moves ahead

BY MATT BOWLES

STAFF WRITER

Students from poor school districts might find hope in the decision in a decade-old court case urging the state legislature to increase funding for low-wealth districts.

Judge Howard Manning of the Wake County Superior Court met Tuesday with attorneys in the case, commonly known as Leandro.

In 1994, a lawsuit was filed by families and school boards from Cumberland, Halifax, Hoke, Robeson and Vance counties, arguing that the state had not provided sufficient resources in those districts.

"It was brought because students in these counties were not receiving a sound education," said Allen Strickland, superintendent of Hoke County Schools.

Manning's ruling, upheld twice by the N.C. Supreme Court, found that the state has a responsibility to provide each child with a satisfactory education.

The General Assembly already is taking steps to address the resource deficiencies at some schools independent of the Leandro finding. A bill introduced last week would provide low-wealth school systems with a boost of \$20 million for the 2005-06 fiscal year.

Supplemental funding of low-wealth schools has been included in the state's budget since the early 1990s, said Sen. Walter Dalton, D-Rutherford, a co-sponsor of the Senate bill.

"We began that before any decision in the Leandro case," Dalton said, adding that he is confident that the measure will be approved. "There are a lot of districts in the state that are helped by that funding."

Though the state is the primary funder of public education, local revenue must also be allocated to finance the school systems, said Adam Levinson, a fiscal analyst for the General Assembly. The supplemental money provides additional help for districts with low tax bases so that no system's educational fund is too far below the state average, he said.

The low-wealth fund is used to make sure that each district has the average local revenue for North Carolina.

Daniel Kaufman, a spokes-

man for the National Education Association, said most states have had cases dealing with education inequalities. The courts usually side with the plaintiffs, leaving legislatures with the responsibility to increase funding, Kaufman said.

Although the state has provided some solutions, Strickland said the legislature should appropriate more money for underfunded systems — a sum estimated at \$220 million. "The state is now going to

"(The suit) was brought because students ... were not receiving a sound education. ... Every child is entitled to a Leandro right."

ALLEN STRICKLAND, SUPERINTENDENT, HOKE COUNTY SCHOOLS

have to address this issue because the courts have ruled."

Strickland stressed the importance of a sound education for the entire state.

"Every child is entitled to a Leandro right."

Contact the State & National Editor at stndesk@unc.edu.

## THE Daily Crossword

By Ed Volle

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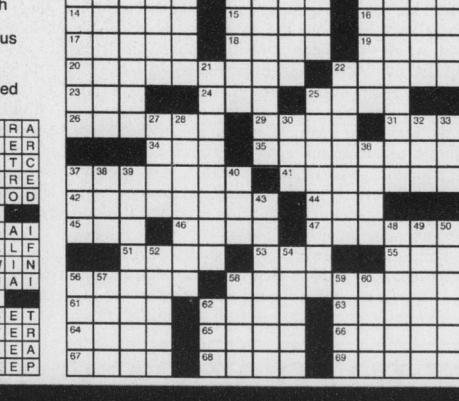
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# Student at UNC-W banned from campus

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WILMINGTON — A UNC-Wilmington junior was banned from campus as a potential safety risk after campus administrators learned he didn't disclose his entire criminal record on a 2003 application form.

Psychology major Robert Helm Jr., 41, said he has given up hope of returning to classes at UNC-W this semester. He was banned Feb. 1, but hopes to be reinstated.

Campus safety has been an issue at UNC-W since last spring, when two female students were killed by male students who hadn't fully disclosed troubled pasts.

The president of the 16-campus state university system convened a task force to study student safety and concluded that most students never would be touched by violence. But the group also recommended better background checks for incoming students.

Helm disclosed an April 2003 misdemeanor conviction for possession of a marijuana pipe on a short re-enrollment form he submitted to the university before resuming studies there after a 20-year absence. It was the same information required on a form Helm filled out to receive federal student aid.

His history of criminal convictions also includes violation of a domestic violence protective order and writing worthless checks. He also was jailed for about one month last year after failing to complete probation imposed after conviction for speeding to elude arrest.

"I wasn't trying to hide anything," Helm said.

UNC-W officials determined otherwise.

"A review of your criminal history reveals a disturbing and extensive history of criminal conduct," Terrence Curran, UNC-W associate vice chancellor for student affairs and dean of students, wrote in a letter to Helm.

Helm lost all his possessions Jan. 21 in a fire that destroyed his

Wilmington apartment. College officials offered him lodging on campus so he could continue his studies.

It was during his on-campus stay that a background check was apparently performed.

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12:45-2:50-4:55-7:00-9:50  
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