Holiday Faire rings in the season

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Hearing Christmas music, singing songs, sipping hot chocolate and watching a performance of "The Nutcracker" is standard for the holiday season.

Tonight and Saturday, the department of fine and performing arts presents Holiday Faire, a production that guarantees to bring holiday spirit. The production will take place on the Lied Education Center for the Arts' main stage at 7:30 p.m.

This show will feature the talents of the Creighton Dance Company, University Orchestra, Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Chamber Choir, University Chorus, University Gospel Choir and theater students.

This is the third year that Holiday Faire has taken place. What makes this year’s production special is that the entire fine and performing arts department has collaborated on this production. This marks the first year that dance, theater and the gospel choir have performed at Holiday Faire.

The Christmas favorites "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" and "Carol of the Bells," will be sung, and the three choirs will combine to sing "Hallelujah Chorus."

The wind ensemble and orchestra will play songs to promote the holiday spirit, and several theater students will perform Anne Coulter Martens' adaptation of O. Henry's short story "The Gift of the Magi."

Dr. Frederick Hanna, music coordinator for the department of the fine and performing arts, is the conductor for the orchestra and wind ensemble. He said that the holiday season is a good time to showcase all of the talents of the department.

"The nature of what we do as performers is in the public eye. We like to promote the university and goodwill," he said. “Christmas is a time of festivity and celebration, and this goes hand-in-hand with music and dancing. We are happy to play that role."

Hanna hopes the audience will get into the Christmas spirit through the festive atmosphere and the high quality of student performances. He also hopes the audience appreciates the hard work and talent the performers have.

The Rev. Charles Jurgensmeier, S.J., assistant professor of music and conductor of the Chamber Choir and the University Chorus, is also excited about the collaboration.

"This gives people the knowledge that we are the fine and performing arts department of the university. The students share part of themselves while performing, and their talent needs to be celebrated," he said.

Jurgensmeier has several goals for the Holiday Faire.

Holiday Faire is the fine and performing arts department's gift to the university. The students share part of themselves while performing, and their talent needs to be celebrated, he said.

Jurgensmeier would also like to bring some recognition to the department. Since the department is headquartered in the Lied Center, across the street from the main campus, sometimes people forget about the arts, he said.

He hopes that as the campus expands east, more students will be drawn into the Lied Center.

"I wish we could get more students involved," Jurgensmeier said. "Students can take our classes, even if they are a physics major. This is something they can explore and create."

Jurgensmeier and Hanna will have their own collaboration during the show. The orchestra and the Chamber Choir combine for "what Jurgensmeier called a fun and important piece."

He picked "'Twas the Night Before Christmas," a piece that features the famous poem set to music. This 1950s piece presents the mood and sentiment of the season.

The University Orchestra will also combine with the dancers for selections from "The Nutcracker." The Creighton Dance Company will perform the ballet, and the orchestra will play Tchaikovsky's music that accompanies the ballet.

Lisa Carter, assistant professor of dance, is looking forward to this collaboration.

"This gives a professional feel to our ballet," she said. "This overview of dance will hopefully give people an appreciation for dance, and this will instill a care for the arts."

Students have been practicing since the beginning of September for the Holiday Faire. This program is a culmination of a semester's work, Carter said.

Kristin Eisenbraun, who will perform the Spanish dance of "The Nutcracker," wants the talents in the fine and performing arts to be recognized.

"It is really appreciated when people support it," she said.