Brussels actor to perform in 'It's Raining'

By Sandy Bolam Drummond
Entertainment Editor

Creighton's Fine Arts department is not putting on just another school play. "It's Raining In My House" is a play with international significance.

When it opens Oct. 5, "It's Raining" will feature actor Ralph Darbo, who composed the music and originated the character of the sand merchant in a Brussels professional theatre.

Darbo first began working with this play in 1962 when the director of the Brussels theatre asked him to compose the music for the play. This began a lifelong working relationship with the play and its author Paul Willems.

This is Darbo's second trip to Omaha for the American premiere of the play. He also performed it in Spain, Italy, Russia, Canada, France and Holland.

Darbo, who speaks very little English, said through translator Dr. Suzanne Dieckman that he is equally an actor and a composer.

"I try to keep a balance between the two," Darbo said. "When I am acting too much, I try to pull back and work on music and vice versa."

Most of "It's Raining" is performed in English.

"Ralph sings in both languages and we have improvised some interactions for him that are in both French and English," Dieckman said.

Darbo says that he does not feel uncomfortable working with a play that is performed in an unfamiliar language.

"I find myself so close to the world of the play, that I fit into it like a shoe," he said. "I have worked with it for so long that I have had no trouble composing the music or coming back to the play after working on something else."

Darbo said American universities teach theatre differently than European ones.

"In Europe, theatre is not taught through the universities," he said. "There are theatre schools and conservatories as opposed to theatre departments."

Darbo said that American actors are also very different than Europeans.

"For instance, French actors are much more intellectual," he said. "They can be brilliant but there is not always something emotional behind their action. Americans are emotionally based."

Darbo said that "English speaking actors are more relaxed and don't very much." Darbo said he feels that this is a good quality.

Darbo does much more than just limit himself to different revivals of "It's Raining." This February, Darbo will perform in "Pygmalion," a play by George Bernard Shaw, in the Brussels professional theatre.

Darbo said he feels that working in Omaha has been one of the greatest experiences of his career.

"While I am here, I want to promote the play, enjoy performing it, and enjoy the company of the actors," he said.

Dieckman said Paul Willems will also be in Omaha to attend the play. She said he will be available to answer questions from the audience after the Oct. 5 performance.