

'Lear' music called often ridiculous

By D. B. AXELROD

Because the music for the production of "King Lear," composed by Eric Jensen, managed to remain separate from the dramatic action for most of the play and was given a good deal of individual pre-production publicity, it seems to warrant a separate review. From a theater goer's point of view, there was little more to be said of the accompanying music in "King Lear" than "what odd sound effects." From a drama critic's point of view, those sound effects were unpleasing, incongruous, often ridiculous or even worse, an out-and-out distraction from the fine efforts of

the acting company. I suspect even the avant-garde music critic or enthusiast would only be able to discuss the first brief interlude of electronic music for its musical virtues. The remainder of the electronic sounds seem, at best, to have been ineffectual accompaniment, as good to a connoisseur of music as a bad film sound track.

When the sound effects (as I can only call them) are successful, they blend quietly into the background, or do manage to heighten the dramatic tension of the play. One of the best sound moments came when the electronic manipulators (electricians? surely not musicians?) successfully simulated a kettle drum to pick up the old and nearly always successful drum beat that forbodes some critical action.

Then, there were moments when entire fleets of helicopters landed on stage. At one moment a train chugged and whistled for the audience: King Lear, now departing on track U.T.! But beyond my subjective response to the various sounds, during one long scene of the play a damnable hum made the voices on stage difficult to hear, and made the audience nervous. It took years to perfect noiseless air conditioning. Eric Jensen was able to stamp out the progress.

Why, when he had his heart and interpretation in the right place, director Cosmo Catalano was intent on putting some "remarkable innovation" into a play that had been simplified and trimmed to emphasize the language and inherent drama. I don't know. I suspect it was the "lets-be-modern - and - innovative - because - we - are - a - university - theater" bug that bites nearly every university theater director at one time or another. Alas, the gimmick didn't work.

Grad questions Garr review

To the Editor:

Rick Garr's review of "In the Name of America" (see The Daily Iowan, Feb. 20), strongly suggests that he did not bother to read much of it, particularly the first 27 pages entitled "Perspective for Readers."

He attacks the validity and applicability of the International Conventions Relating to the Conduct of War. This would be a valid criticism if the book had claimed to be making a legal case. Garr really ought to have read page 18 of this book which states, "This documentation is not a legal document: it is not an indictment, or a lawyer's brief, or a judgment of a court of law. This documentation is a portrait of behavior in violation of minimal moral constraint as defined by various laws of war."

International law is basically a consensus of opinion of civilized nations of