

Performances



In Tulsa for the off-campus Centennial performance of "OU Arts: Ten Times Ten," Emmy Award-winning OU graduate Larry Drake of "L.A. Law," left, visits with Connie Leffingwell, Trula Roberson and Elisabeth Blue, wife of the Tulsa alumni club's president Chuck Blue.

The Centennial could have been observed without the participation of the fine arts, but celebrated . . . ? No, without the element of entertainment supplied by the musicians, actors and artists, the Centennial would have been a colorless thing.

PUTTING OUR BEST ARTS FORWARD

Fortunately nothing of the sort was necessary. The University of Oklahoma is strong on the arts, and nearly every facet of the celebration was made more enjoyable by the participation of fine arts students and faculty, as well as visiting artists booked for the occasion. Likewise, nearly every performance staged by OU artists throughout the year had a Centennial flavor. The following were among the officially sanctioned Centennial performances.

OU Arts: Ten Times Ten

The College of Fine Arts took its talents on the road to Tulsa's Performing Arts Center on April 19, 1990, with "OU Arts: Ten Times Ten." This Tulsa tribute to the Centennial showcased student performers in a stage presentation in the Williams Theater, directed by OU Fine Arts Dean Nat Eek, and later at an art show and reception in the Mid-Continent Tower.

A special feature of the evening was the appearance of Emmy award-winning actor Larry Drake, a Tulsa native and alumnus of the OU School of Drama. Drake, who plays "Benny" on TV's "L.A. Law," was welcomed back to his home town by Mayor Rodger Randle and received an award from OU Provost Joan Wadlow for his outstanding contribution as a representative of the University and the state.

Spotlighted in the stage production were the OU Trombone Choir, the OU Chorale, the Modern Dance Repertory Theater, a student string quartet, the Oklahoma Festival Ballet and the OU Symphony Orchestra. OU drama students also presented scenes from "Nonsense" and "An Enemy of the People."

Among the works displayed at the OU faculty-student art show was a specially commissioned commemorative painting by Norman senior Edith Walker. Limited edition prints of Walker's painting, featuring OU arts in action set amid historic campus buildings, were sold at the reception to benefit the scholarship program of OU Tulsa Alumni Inc.

Komparu Noh Theater

A host of dignitaries in the audience added even more glitter to the Rupel J. Jones Theater when the silk and gold-clad actors of the Komparu Noh Theater began their three-day residence at the University of Oklahoma on March 29, 1990.

The government officials, educators and businessmen on hand at the opening to affirm ties between Oklahoma and Japan also were witnessing the American debut of the world's oldest theater company. In all, more than 2,400 attended the two public performances and two invitation-only area school performances.

Noh theater is a highly stylized dramatic



form utilizing song and dance, performed by two or three actors (always male), a chorus and an orchestra consisting of a transverse flute and three drums. The opulent, 150-year-old costumes worn by the Komparu company and their antique wooden masks are priceless treasures of Japanese culture.

The Komparu family has performed Noh theater since the 14th century. The current director of the Komparu School, Master Kinzo Komparu, the 80th generation of his family to hold the position, is one of 60 Japanese officially designated a "human treasure."

Coinciding with the visit of the Komparu Noh Theater performers was an OU Art Museum exhibit of Noh masks and Japanese woodblocks.

Manhattan String Quartet

The four quartets by Dmitri Shostakovich, as performed by the Manhattan String Quartet in OU's Catlett Music Center October 15, 1990, were as much history lesson as musical experi-

ence. Lectures prior to each performance helped the audience place the compositions in the context of the 20th century Soviet cultural and political life in which they were written.

The Shostakovich quartets are considered by many to be the single most important body of quartets of any composer since Beethoven. The only American quartet to record these works, the Manhattan String Quartet began working on the Shostakovich cycle in 1983.

The President's Own U.S. Marine Band

A capacity crowd packed Holmberg Hall for the October 31 concert by the President's Own U.S. Marine Band, the nation's oldest musical organization. The Centennial program of classical, popular and martial music was sponsored by the OU schools of drama and music and *The Norman Transcript*. Founded in 1798, the band has performed for every U.S. president since John Adams.

ABOVE LEFT: Perhaps the most extraordinary musical contribution to the Centennial Celebration was a brilliant performance by the OU Choirs and the Academia Filharmonica Orchestra of the seldom-done "St. Matthew Passion." The three-hour tour de force, directed by Dennis Shrock, took place in Norman's First Christian Church.

TOP: The campus appearance of the Komparu Noh Theatre added an international flavor to the cultural events of the Centennial.

BOTTOM: The Manhattan String Quartet performed the Shostakovich quartets to an enthusiastic audience in Catlett Center.