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## Operas at UD

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## university of dayton

### OPERAS AT UD

DAYTON, Ohio, February 6, 1976 --- The world premiere of anything has a certain element of excitement, especially when it is going to happen right in your neighborhood. On February 25, 26, 27 and 28, the people of the Dayton area will have the chance to view the world premiere of three one-act operas, performed through the combined efforts of the University of Dayton, and the Dayton, Springfield, and Wilmington communities.

The operas are original works, composed by James Haskins of Wilmington College and Allen Kopenhaver of Wittenberg University, based on three favorite American classics.

Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," with its headless horseman and Ichabod Crane, the school teacher, will provide the audience with some chuckles and light moments, combined with a supernatural effect. Herman Melville's "The Bell Tower" is a drama of another mood, described as a type of "symbolic Frankenstein." The third opera, "The Masque of the Red Death," is typical of Edgar Allen Poe's eeriest and best work.

The three classics were chosen by the composers, and approved by the Gund Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Based on a recommendation by the Ohio Bicentennial Committee, the Gund Foundation awarded a grant to cover many of the costs of producing the operas. The Gund Foundation Grant, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, plus sponsorship by the University of Dayton Theatre Division and Arts Series, will make the idea of the operas into reality.

The cast for the operas has been chosen from the three communities involved. Charles Schultz, head of the UD Theatre Division, feels that the blending of talents is important. "We wanted to blend the talents of the University and community because, as an institution, we do not belong in an ivory tower. We can learn through each other."

The cast of 40 is under the staging direction of Kopenhaver and Schultz, and the music direction of Haskins. "We were very surprised at the amazing amount of high quality talent in the area. We really had no problem finding voices that were well suited to the roles," explained Schultz.

The accompaniment to the opera singers is a 19 piece orchestra, directed by Haskins, who has been aided in the opera preparations by Richard Benedum and Carol Baxter, both from the UD Music Division.

The dance segments in "The Mask of the Red Death" were choreographed by Gregory Clough. Clough is a member of the Dayton Ballet and an instructor of ballet at Sinclair Community College. Darrel Anderson, of the UD Theatre Division, designed the sets which are constructed by UD students.

Tickets for the performance which will be held in the Kennedy Union Ball Theatre, can be reserved by calling UD's Information Center at 229-3244, and are still available for the Wednesday and Friday nights and the Saturday matinee. Tickets are \$2.50 for adults and \$1.25 for students.

The world premiere of the operas is only part of the University's participation in the Bicentennial Celebration. In recognition of UD's celebration of the Bicentennial, Representative Charles W. Whalen, Jr. will present University President Raymond A. Roesch, S.M. with a certificate and Bicentennial Flag on February 21, immediately before the UD versus Akron basketball game.