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Live! From the Memorial



Cable was strung through the theater orchestra pit out a door leading to a wardrobe storage room, across the makeup room (pictured) and through a furnace room and outside window to the video equipment in a truck parked behind the Memorial.



Cameras were put together and positioned in the theater on Friday afternoon. Memorial, although the building has been the subject of television programs in the past.

The technology of the 1970s and the structure of an 1890s theater were joined Friday when the first television film was made of a live performance at the Mabel Tainter Memorial Theater.

"A Prairie Home Companion" featuring the Powder Milk Biscuit Band was taped last week through the combined efforts of Channel 28 Menomonie, the UW-Stout Teleproduction Center and Friends of 28, Inc.

Channel 28 was the major contributor, using funds from the Educational Communications Board which now "owns" the two-hour taped show.

The Teleproduction Center supplied the funding for the production, using its own director, cameramen and engineers. Paul Stankovich and Rosemary Jacobson, both of the, were producer and switcher, respectively.

1:30 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day. It will be repeated from 10 p.m. to midnight on Sunday, Nov. 25.

According to Max Herbach, producer-host with the Teleproduction Center, the program also might be simulcast over the public radio network.

Set up for Friday night's concert started that morning when the stage backdrop was played. Cable was strung from the stage area and theater cameras, under the orchestra pit, through a small door under the stage, down steps into a wardrobe room, across the makeup room and furnace room and through a window to a van (remote truck) behind the Memorial building.

Inside the van, owned by New Life production company of Wilbur, Mass., was the video switcher which coordinated the cameras inside the theater.

After hours of preparation, the final stage was started when Garrison Kellor, host for the Powder Milk Biscuit Band "Prairie Home Companion" show, "warmed up" the audience.

Then the performance began, and Stankovich and Jacobson guided themselves to the video equipment in the van.

Herbach pre-viewed a portion of the tape early this week. "It has a kind of golden glow to it," he noted. "It should be a very good production."



Garrison Kellor, left, played Friday's performance much like the live 52.5N Radio program broadcast from St. Paul, Tuesday through Saturday. It is billed as the last live entertainment public radio program and features blue grass, folk and classical country music and "home-grown" humor.



Paul Stankovich, seated left, and Rosemary Jacobson, back of the Teleproduction Center, man the video equipment controls. Stankovich is director of the production and Jacobson was switcher, selecting tape cameras on the keyboard according to Stankovich's instructions.



During the performance, UW-Stout Teleproduction Center crew staffed the cameras located in the main floor and in the balcony of the theater. Camera setups were completed on Friday afternoon.



The Powder Milk Biscuit Band was featured during the "Prairie Home Companion" show. The two-hour performance will be shown over Educational Communications Board television stations in Wisconsin in November.

Photos by Karen Hannibal & Wally Smetana