Students get laughs at comedy competition

By SERENA HOLMES

Nine tons. Eleven USC students faced an often merciless crowd Monday night at the Carolina Program Union's third annual comedy competition.

Co-sponsored by CPU, Circa and USC Comicon, the competition is part of a nationwide promotional tour to find new comedy talent.

Before an expectant crowd gathered in the Russell House ballroom Monday night, 11 hopefuls took a shot at the funny.

Host Brad Reckard, a professional comedian, got the evening on Fox network's "Comic Strip Live," brought the ice with a few minutes of comedy. In true comic fashion, he occasionally went head-to-head with audience members. Render often chose junior Trent Simpson, who good-naturedly played along, to hear the brunt of his jokes.

Criminal justice freshman Jay Tarno started things off by taking a comedic look at television and advertising, questioning the logic of some product usage instructions. Student president graduated senior Jane Anderson did a bit of fan talking while performing a mock work, and made light of the asking done by females during a date.

Small-town law enforcement was the subject of a somewhat stilted setup, as a young police officer went through the motions of "being a cop" before bringing in a major character, the cop's girlfriend. Student journalist Mark Nunn, a second-year graduate student, got the audience laughing with his "Calhoun" routine.

Music major Harold Laizenga made the popular "50-number" craze even crazier with his version. The second round might make you wish you were at the Comedy Club.

Theater and Speech freshman Shane "Studying Iron" Farmer might have earned a bit of a chuckle with the frequent use in his act of, "Don't say that. That's stupid!" Senior Dee Priore and Phil Cahn and sophomore John Klitz directed calling themselves the No Doz. Web; "rappin'" their way to first place.

Creating a new phase in the struggle of the '90s nabob, as well as all other animated characters of the comic's era, the No Do Z's began with their act with a finger-snapping rap about the Elphinston Mall, which brought much of the audience to its feet with approving horns and applause.

Psychology sophomore Chris Love and Sociology sophomore Philip Williams gained both big laughs and second place as well as the poll that the most popular comedian the night.

Third place was garnered by Physical Education major Kevin Feater after he pulled heart strings and toured over fellow house with the built, but concrete tales of trying to succeed in the world. Judging the competition were professional comedian and future host of the Tonight's Amusement Novel Andy Huebner, USC Director of Student Media and a former student associate director of Biju, and Director of Western Operations at WUSM Anthony Krill.

Three regional women will be chosen to compete in Dayton, Fla., Render said. The winner will then be flown, all expenses paid, to New York in April to perform at the Comedy Club.

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Contemporary Classics

Challenges are part of the job for the USC Symphony Orchestra

By KATHY HEBEBBER

When the USC Symphony Orchestra takes the Koger Center stage with virtuoso violinist Young Uk Kim Thursday night, it will play classical and contemporary pieces that professional orchestras rarely perform.

The program will begin with a piece from the late 18th century, Mozart's "Violin Concerto No. 1," and conclude with a piece from the 20th century, Prokofiev's "Violin Concerto No. 1." Korean violinist Young Uk Kim will play with a chamber-sized portion of the orchestra during these pieces.

The entire orchestra, which consists of about 95 undergraduates and graduate students, will perform a very complex piece, Bartok's "Concerto for Orchestra."

"The Bartok is probably a work that most college orchestras never attempt," conductor Donald Pormany said. "Even professional orchestras are reluctant to do this piece, but it was something I felt we needed to do. It's a very exciting piece."

"We have so many students and faculty members that really enjoy the performance of a world-class violinist," Pormany said.

First violinist and doctoral candidate student David Rudge said Kim plays a world-class violin, "He's the biggest name soloist of the year."

Since his performance at USC in 1988, Kim has recorded all of Mozart's violin concertos with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

The first of Mozart's violin concertos surprisingly isn't played as often as the second and third and fifth concertos, but it is very elegant and very simple piece," Rudge said.

Music sophomore Jim Thompson said Kim's violin is amazing, "It would take too long to tell you my impressions of Kim," he said. "Just listen to him play and you'll know what I mean."

Thompson said rehearsing with violinist is always interesting, "You get to see what kind of people they really are," he said.

Music sophomore Cheryl Sweeney, who plays the viola, said "Solos are really scary and I'm really excited," she added that accompanying a soloist is a good experience. "It's a lot harder because the soloist can sabotage your work," she said. Thompson has heard about the soloist's performance before the performance.

"When some people are here, it makes you nervous. It's a good feeling to know that all those people are there to hear you," music junior and violist Susan Ginn said.

The performance begins at 8 p.m. at the Koger Center. Tickets are $5 for students and $8 for adults.