



Dancers strive for perfection during rehearsal

A curtain goes up to reveal the vastness of the dark stage. Slow, steady music begins as a single ray of light finds two motionless figures huddled close together.

As the music intensifies, so does the action until all seasons of Nebraska have been, originally and for the first time, revealed to us in modern dance.

A premiere performance of "Nebraska, the Seasons" is de-

picted for a few lone spectators at a rehearsal of the Nebraska Dance Ensemble. It was a seemingly flawless presentation.

Or was it?

Backstage instructions are being given to various performers for improvement of the dance. And they go over it again.

Yet no one seems to mind. In fact, most are as anxious to perfect their work as are the directors Gayle Kassing, and Barbara Ball Mason.

"We go on in a few days and don't have much time. We want to get it right," says a dancer as she rushes off stage to change her costume.

Serious to light looks

The Nebraska Dance Ensemble will present its annual Lincoln performance Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. in Kimball Recital Hall.

Dances will range from the seriousness of a ballet choreographed by Kassing, to a light hearted look at games people play as choreographed by Mason. This year there also will be a special interpretation of Nebraska's seasons as seen by New York choreographer Fred Mathews.

"I'm having a great time. I never thought it'd be so much fun." These comments can be heard from the dancers as they wait for their cues to go on stage. They describe what they are doing as "work well worth the time."

Work for this year's performance began back in September with the choreography. By January, everyone was "cleaning and polishing" their parts. Even though a great deal of work

was done by the directors and their cast, Kassing acknowledges the efforts of many other people involved.

"Without the work of the production unit before, such as lighting, music, costumes and publicity, we wouldn't have a concert," Kassing said.

'Neat nervousness'

"Our stage manager, Laurel Shoemaker, is very important in our production," Kassing said. Shoemaker is responsible for lighting and music cues as well as getting dancers to their designated positions.

Excitement and enthusiasm are evident in the women's dressing room. Most say they are nervous but said it is a "neat nervousness that you get over." The atmosphere is relaxed yet serious as each person knows he or she has a job to do.

According to the dancers, changing the mood for each dance presented the biggest problem.

"Some of us are in five different dances. It really takes concentration to be ready for the opening of the curtain," said one.

Most agreed the production was going really well.

"We worked hard all year and it's taken a lot of time. It's nice to see it finally pulled together," said a dancer. "But I'm afraid I'll be depressed afterward with nothing to do."

With all the work and time involved, a spectator would wonder if it is worth all the trouble. But by the smiles and satisfied looks on everyone's face, the time spent seems to have been rewarded.

