

'La Turista' to initiate theater

By Debra L. Miller

Feb. 14 may mean hearts and flowers to most students, but to the members of the UNL Theater Department who are building, painting and rehearsing in Kozer Hall, it marks not only the opening of *La Turista* by Sam Shepard, but the debut of Studio 12, the new theater facility.

While the Temple Building is being renovated, Studio Theater activities have been transferred across the street to Kozer Hall, formerly a Nebraska Bookstore warehouse. The new facility is between Q and R streets, on the west side of 12th Street (hence the name Studio 12).

Transforming a warehouse into a theater complete with lights, sets and seating is no small task, but with the efforts of designer Ed Stauffer and his technicians the results provide an intriguing setting for theatrical production.

Studio 12's atmosphere has been compared to that of a New York loft theater, where the basic premise is that theater can and will be done wherever there's an audience, actors and a stage.

The theater is located on the second floor of Kozer Hall. Those used to luxurious lobbies and easily accessible restrooms may be confused by the somewhat Spartan accommodations, but the theater is amply equipped with the necessities.

In the round

Theater in the round, with the audience seated on all four sides of the stage, is an unusual facet of Studio 12. With an increased seating capacity of 118 (compared to the old Studio's 99), prospective audience members will find it easier to get tickets for upcoming shows.

Many aspects of theater in the round—such as minimal sets and the possibility of innovative staging—seem to point to newer, more experimental theater. These are two reasons graduate student director Don Renaud chose *La Turista* for the facility's opening.

"I wanted to do something by a modern American playwright," Renaud said. "I wanted to experiment to do something different, branch out. A play by Sam Shepard gave me the opportunity to do these things."

Romance...

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"Oh, but that isn't true, sir. Romance still exists."

"You mean some place other than the pages of Harlequin novels? I think not, dearie. But thanks for saying so."

He sipped his drink.

"No, really. I mean, just last year I heard about this guy in a dormitory. He had been living across the hall from this woman for three months. Never spoke a word to her. Then all of a sudden on Valentine's Day, he knocks at her door, hands her a dozen roses and says 'I love you.' Just like that. Three months later they're married."

Happily ever after

The boyish face brightened. "Really? And did they live happily ever after?"

"Uh, yeah." I didn't have the heart to tell him about the divorce.

"You mean in spite of all the foil-wrapped commercialism and smarmy television there's a bit of the old spark left?"

"I was just going home to make sugar cookies." His eyes sparkled, and the hump on his back seemed to almost—well, *flutter*.

"Well, if that's the case, dear one, I've some work to be doing. Thanks for a lovely chat, my dear. But I must be off. Perhaps we'll meet again someday, eh?" He chuckled as he made his way out.

"Perhaps we will," I called, toasting him with my Shirley Temple. But probably not, I said to myself.

"There were also a lot of factors to consider in terms of a small cast, minimal setting and budget. We weren't even able to rehearse in Studio 12 until a week and a half into rehearsals because it wasn't built yet."

Two-month run

La Turista is Shepard's first full-length play. It was first performed by a New York experimental group in 1967 for a two-month run.

"And as far as I've been able to find out, that's the only other production of the play that's been done," Renaud said. "Certainly the only production by a major company."

Since then Shepard has become one of America's foremost young dramatists, winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1979 for his play *Buried Child*. He was one of the first "violent" playwrights to emerge from the 60's, and looks at the rituals of violence that lie just under the surface of American culture.

According to Renaud, the play explores American cliches, movies and myths. It takes off into flashes of fantasy—Frankenstein, Sam Spade and the big shoot-out, to name a few.

"I'd describe Sam Shepard as an avant-garde playwright, but totally American," said Renaud. "*La Turista* is a totally visual play, full of action, chilling, and often very funny."

The play opens Thursday and runs through Tuesday, Feb. 19.

Play is for charity

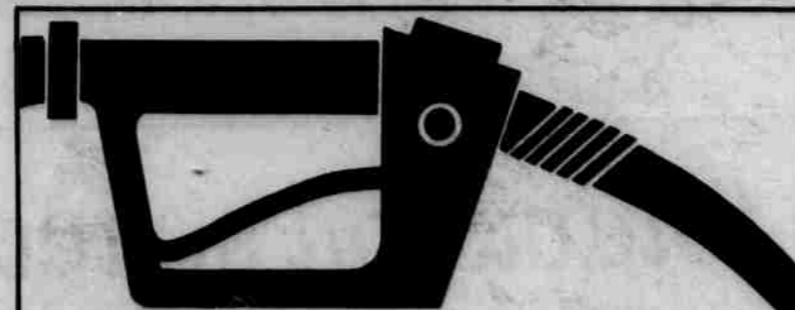
The American Lung Association of Nebraska is to receive funds raised through a special performance of the Lincoln Community Playhouse's production of "Same Time, Next Year", March 12.

The evening will include a wine and cheese reception following the production. Tickets for the event are \$10 each. All seats are reserved.

The two-character play is being directed by Scott Lank, a master's student at UNL. Joyce Ebmeier and Lee Schoonover have been cast as Doris and George. The play follows the couple over a period of 25 years as they meet annually for a weekend affair.

Funds raised through the benefit are to be used to support the lung association's programs for children with asthma, patients with lung disease, smoking education and for quit-smoking clinics.

Tickets are available by calling the lung association regional office at 474-5858.



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