

# Arts & Entertainment

## Museums boring? You haven't been lately

By Chris Burbach

**Editor's note:** This story contains opinions of the author.

It's always 9:23 in the General Store in the Nebraska State Historical Museum. It's always 1910 in the doctor's office. It's always cool, and it's always free.

I know what you're thinking — "Museum. Ugh. Boring." Well, according to Wendell Frantz, if that's what you think, you haven't been to a museum lately.

Frantz, Curator of Lincoln Museums for the Nebraska State Historical Society, believes museums have changed.

"Most museums today aren't boring. Instead of lining up a thousand of the same thing, we try to design different exhibits so people will be able to find something they're interested in," he said.

"A historical museum is an educational place, but it's different from education with a teacher. We have to get people interested...we're having to sell ourselves all the time."

A large exhibit on the first floor is one of the museum's major selling points. Frantz said it's designed as an attention-getter, a lure to attract people into the rest of the museum.

That exhibit forms a semi-circle, beginning with a stoneware jar, displaying other traditional artifacts like a buckskin coat and a Czechoslovakian-made Bohemian bagpipe, and ending with a hot pink neon Drive-In sign.

The second floor exhibits are more straight forward education; they're more "wordy," as Frantz puts it. You can traipse through Nebraska's history, from prehistoric times through Native American artifacts through the advent of the white man. The highlights of this floor may be a reconstruction of a Pawnee earth lodge and a genuine looking settlers' soddie.

The third floor features a Nebraska art exhibit and the General Store, which Frantz said may be the museum's best exhibit.

"People can walk through and get a feeling of the past," he said.

Much of the third floor is like that. With a little imagination, you can imagine yourself walking through time through the streets of a Nebraska town, past a dentist's office complete with some sinister-looking tools, past a carpenter's shop and a barber shop and a hand drawn fire engine parked in a brick alley. You become a sort of time lord; although unlike Doctor Who, you'll neither encounter aliens nor save planets. But you may learn something.

"If you're at all even casually interested in history, it's a good way to learn. We present our story through artifacts...if history's important at all, if we feel we can learn from the past, we can learn as much from the objects as we can from the (written) records," Frantz said.

Although the museum's exhibits are designed so adults can learn from them, Frantz said most of the visitors to the museum are families and elementary school tour groups. Frantz believes another group of people may be entertained and enlightened there.

### Correction

The Kampuchean Community Organization food sale will be Sunday at the Church of the Brethren, 3645 S. Sumner St., not 364 S. Sumner St. as incorrectly reported in Tuesday's Daily Nebraskan. We regret the error.

## 'Purple Rain' is summer's biggest washout

By Scott Harrah

This summer's biggest cinematic disappointment has to be "Purple Rain." Prince's early-released soundtrack LP and MTV have hyped this film for

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months, and now that it's in theaters, many are going to feel that they've been cheated out of what was supposed to be a blockbuster.

This musical drama is set in an avant-garde nightclub called the Seventh Avenue. Prince stars as the Kid, the lead vocalist in a band called "The Revolution." The Kid feels that nobody understands his unusual style of music or the pain his unhappy



Craig Andresen/Daily Nebraskan

The general store wasn't in the same league as Miller and Paine but it served the pioneers well.

## Performances sizzle in summer play

By Scott Harrah

UNL Repertory Theatre's last play of the 1984 summer season is Alan Ayckbourn's "How the Other Half Loves." This comedy is like one of those 1700s bedroom farces about adultery and domestic decadence, but it's set in the 80s and done like a witty

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television sit-com. What makes the play innovative is its use of a conceptual set design that is a jumbled composite of two couples' living rooms.

The play opens up with a newscast about Mondale and Ferraro, indicating that the time is the present. Then we see the Phillips and the Fosters enter their amalgamated living rooms after a night's sleep to jog, drink coffee, brush their teeth and bicker.

Charlie Bachmann plays Frank Foster, the paunchy, cuckolded husband of Fiona (Mari Weiss), who is being told by Frank that she forgot their wedding anniversary the previous evening. She makes up an excuse to conceal the fact that she was really out with Frank's well-muscled co-worker, Bob Phillips, (played by David Boughn).

Meanwhile, across the stage at the Phillips', Bob's sloppy wife Teresa (Carolyn Hood) does her morning exercises and tends to baby Benjamin's needs. Bob would rather complain about the empty box of cereal on the table than help Teresa out with their son. This sets up the idea that there is discontent in both marriages and some infidelity is imminent.

The conceptual set design ties in to the plot as both the Phillips and the Fosters invite their co-worker William Detweiler (Mike Hofacre) and his wife Mary (Lindsay Reading North) to their homes

for dinner on two different nights.

Since the play is live, the dinners are performed in synthesis and the Detweilers divide their attention between the Phillips' at one side of the table and the Fosters at the other.

This play is a complete farce and it's not supposed to be the least bit realistic — so some synchronicity is perpetrated. For example, when Teresa accuses Bob of having an affair, she attempts to throw soap on him, but it accidentally lands on William; then, Fiona, who is supposed to be having dinner with him on a different night, said "Oh, you're all wet!"

The rest of the play is more of the same absurdity centered on adultery and visual puns that are related to the unusual set design.

As a whole "How the Other Half Loves" is entertaining, but it's not hilarious. Sure, there are enough gut-wrenching jokes to make the audience explode with guffaws, but most of the time the play's only amusing enough to make you smile.

The cast's performances, however, are consummate. Bachmann's portrayal of the stuffy, slob Frank is very convincing and it transcends the stage. Weiss' performance is outrageous, for she plays the haughty, elegant Fiona with the same bitchy verve that Joan Collins uses in her Alexis role on television's prime time soap, "Dynasty." Carolyn Hood's performances is well-done but she could have played her character a bit more like the slovenly proletarian Teresa is supposed to be. Boughn is a riot as the beefy Bob, and his romp across the stage in a towel with an "S" written across his chest with shaving cream is one of the play's best moments. Hofacre's portrayal of William is good, but Reading North, who plays his wife, is much more engaging as the meek Mary.

Sizzling performances and a fairly humorous plot makes "How the Other Half Loves" a play that closes UNL Repertory Theatre's 1984 summer season with auspicious skill.

home life causes him. He endures the teases and taunts of the crass plebians in a rival band as well as the fighting and bickering in his own group. So along comes a buxom beauty named Appollonia Koteri (who plays herself) who ignites his libido and seems to take away some of his discontent.

Appollonia is an aspiring singer who tries to get into the Kid's band, but he tells her she must try to make it on her own. They fall in love, but the Kid seems to turn his sweetie black and blue a bit too often, so she leaves him and seeks out the rival band's vocalist. He promises the distraught sex kitten that he'll find her a group to sing with. Meanwhile, the Kid must face problems at home. His black father has a penchant for slapping his Italian mother around. The Kid tries his best to break up these domestic altercations, but his efforts are futile.

The luscious Appollonia does an act with two

other girls at the club and it is well received by the club patrons. This forces the club's proprietor to tell the Kid that he has one band too many, so the least popular band must go. So, "The Revolution," the rival band and Appollonia's trio wrap up the movie with a contest to see which group is the best.

That about sums up the plot of the film, and as you've probably figured out, this movie has a lot to be desired. The worst scenes in the film are the ones involving the Kid's parents. These sequences come off so melodramatic that they are almost campy. And the mawkish dialogue in these scenes is reminiscent of "Mommie Dearest," for when the Kid's mom screams "You never let me have any fun," to her brutal hubby, one remembers Faye Dunaway's "No more wire hangers, Tina!" line from the classically bad Joan Crawford bio-drama that raised the screen to high levels of camp. This scene in "Purple Rain" gets that same effect.

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