

Arts & Entertainment

Sheen exhibits strong sense of humanity

By Bill Allen and Tom Mockler
Staff Reporters

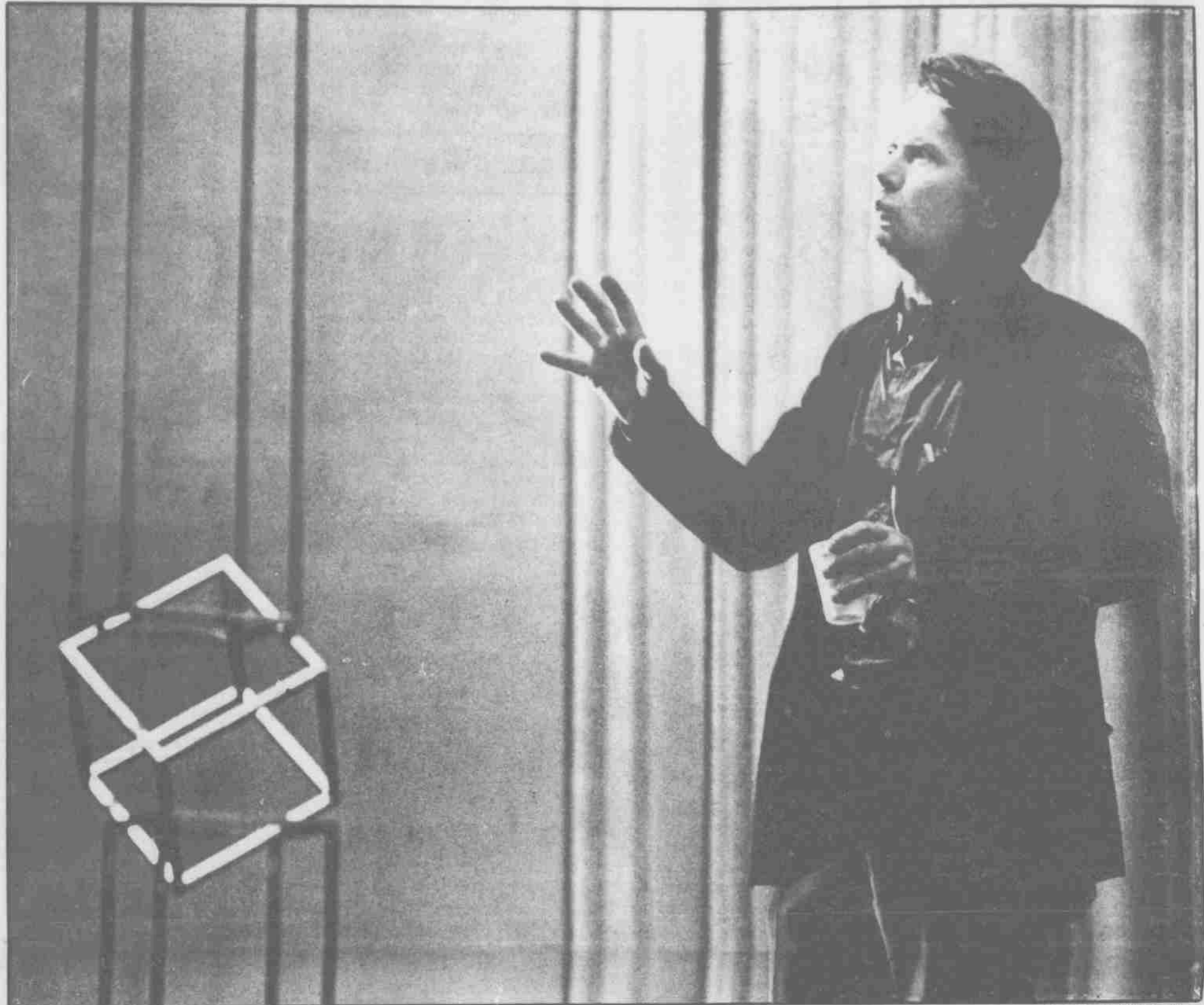
An outspoken yet sensitive Martin Sheen revealed a side of himself Saturday night on the stage of the Sheldon Film Theatre that movie audiences have seen for a long time.

The actor revealed humanity, good and bad.

Sheen, speaking after the screening of his 1973 film "Badlands," one of his self-proclaimed best works, openly answered questions from a capacity crowd for 90 minutes, not limiting the questions to any one topic and covering a range of his political, religious and

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— Martin Sheen



Andrea Hoy/Daily Nebraskan

Martin Sheen shows some of the intensity that makes him a versatile actor as he talks on the Sheldon Film Theatre stage Saturday night.

professional beliefs.

About "Badlands," an independent film loosely based on the exploits of former Lincoln residents Charles Starkweather and Caril Fugate, Sheen said the movie was mainly the artistic creation of director Terrance Malick.

"It makes a statement about how we view our criminals — sometimes with great admiration," Sheen said. "Kit became a hero. That disturbed Terry greatly. He wanted us to think about our criminals."

Sheen reiterated his views on some of the issues he addressed in a Friday talk at College View Seventh Day Adventist church.

"Mr. Reagan is an ancient mummer who doesn't read very much and is not involved very much with people. He has no women around him. He has no blacks. He has no Hispanics... he doesn't really have his hands on the pulse of this country. He has been isolated by a group of mostly elitist men, rather right-wing thinking militarists, and there's very little compassion in that group... (their policies) are indicative of rejectionist thinking which I think is somewhere in the last century."

Sheen was equally as outspoken when speaking on the injustices of the Vietnam War and the changes that took place in his personality during the making of his epic film "Apocalypse Now."

"What we were saying was, basically, it doesn't matter who your commander-in-chief is, or even who your field commander is; if you engage in acts of war and you take human life, you, as French author Albert Camus said, cross a certain line which you cannot return to... we are saying you have to take personal responsibility for the acts you commit. In this case, we tried to show that war is insane — it is disharmony... very often taking personal responsibility for such acts is a devastating situation."

Sheen carried the point further by saying this is where the Vietnam veterans are today in their thinking.

"You (veterans) must accept the responsibility for the facts... In that respect, the movie was anti-war," he

said. "Today the veterans have to accept the fact that the government who sent them there is gone... the ideology is over."

Sheen, who is very active in the peace movement, was thanked for his comments by a Vietnam veteran in the audience.

On almost every question about his acting career, Sheen expanded into some statement about life, or his philosophy on it. Raised a Catholic, Sheen said the film "Gandhi" helped him return to his religion. He has been an active Catholic ever since, he said.

"Gandhi said that poverty was the worst form of violence," Sheen said.

"When Emilio (his son, actor Emilio Estevez) and I were walking along the streets of India, I was somewhat horrified by the poverty and the deprivation, particularly among the children, and I resisted it for a long time. But Emilio kept diving into the crowds, giving away his shirt, his shoes, his trousers, anything. He said, 'You've got to understand you can get out of here anytime you want. They will never leave...' You can close your eyes for so long before you must surrender to what's in front of

you."

On the topic of South Africa, Sheen criticized U.S. involvement in the country and said the matter is simple — it is racism.

Sheen sprinkled a quick wit and humor throughout his talk, especially when talking about his present work. Yet he managed to reveal a high level of caring and humanity not common to many of today's popular actors.

"Sure I travel a lot. It goes with the trade. Most of the work I do these days is for charity activities more than pro-

motion... I don't go in for the very 'popular' diseases. I go for the ones that not a lot of people get anymore but are still with us.

"You might see me on TV this spring telling how to do PCR (laughter). What is it called? They really have a good spokesman... I can't even swim."

In Sheen's professional work, he will stand on the other side of the camera for the first time. He will direct an Afterschool Special about teenage pregnancies that will star another family member — his daughter.

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