

Boo! Tap-dancing phantoms haunt Temple Building



By Tammy Marshall
Staff Reporter

Footsteps in the attic. Eerie noises. Moving chairs and a phantom tapdancer. Scary plots have to begin somewhere, and some spirits seem to think the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Temple Theater is the place to start.

Patricia Overton, theater manager, said, "Every self-respecting theater has a ghost." During the 80 years of its existence, Temple has been the home of at least 12 ghosts, she said.

The first ghost appeared in 1906 when Temple was still under construction. It was supposedly the ghost of a construction worker who fell into a hole while working on the building, Overton said.

The most recent account of a ghost in Temple was about three years ago. Ane Meek, graduate student in directing, recounted the story of former graduate student Chuck Bell and the tap-dancing ghost.

One day Bell was alone on stage working on his tap-dance routine. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't get it right.

Thinking he was alone in the theater, Bell was surprised to hear clapping coming from the balcony, so he called out to the person. No one answered, but the clapping continued. So Bell ran up to the balcony to catch whoever was playing a joke on him.

The balcony was empty; however, someone was doing a tap dance on the stage below. In fact, it was the same dance he'd been working on, but whoever was doing the dance was doing it perfectly. By the time Bell got back to

the stage, the tapping had stopped.

Bell decided to run through his routine one more time, and this time he did it right. Up in the balcony the clapping began again.

Overton said ghosts have appeared in all areas of the theater, but the place with the most ghostly activity is the attic.

Nothing in the attic has changed since Temple was built in 1906. Even when the building underwent massive renovation in 1979, the attic was left untouched.

Temple's attic, which serves as the prop room, is right out of an antique shop, with old couches, sinks, tables, chairs, an antique wheelchair and a moth-eaten cowhide. Audrey, the plant from "Little Shop of Horrors," also resides in Temple's attic.

The attic has a wood floor and a raftered ceiling. A light coat of dust clings to the furniture. Chairs hang from the rafters, and the wind or something howls through the cracks.

Tice Miller, acting chairman of the department of theater arts and dance, said when he was a UNL student in 1960 the ghost became a way of explaining strange noises and the feeling that someone else was in the room. Miller said they could hear people walk across the floor in the attic, but when they investigated, no one was there.

Overton said Temple has never had a wicked ghost, just mischievous ones.

She told of a freshman sent to paint chairs in the studio room in 1971. He was to paint each chair entirely red. After finishing a chair, he turned to refill his cup with paint. When he turned back to the chair, it was gone.

He spotted it in a corner, but there were no fingerprints on the paint or other signs of it being moved by a human.

He was alone in the room.

After this happened for the third time, he went to Overton and told her he couldn't finish the painting.

And stories like these — as well as the ghosts — continue to float around Temple.



John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan

Short

- The Fellowship of Christian Athletes will sponsor a picnic 3 p.m. Sunday at Pioneers Park. Nebraska freshman football coach Shane Thorell will speak at the picnic.
- The Office of Campus recreation announced that intramural co-rec mud volleyball entries will be accepted until Tuesday. The number of entries is limited to 16. Interest persons should register at either 1740 Vine St. or the East Campus Activities Building.
- The Office of Campus Recreation also announced that the entry deadline for men's and women's intramural horse-shoe singles is Tuesday. Play begins Sept. 21.

Board to meet

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with companies for scoreboard advertising, and football and basketball telecast rights.

UNL student regent Andy Pollock said he was confident that the regents will approve the issuance and sale of \$4.4 million in bonds for Morrill Hall's renovation.

"It's been approved all along, so it's pretty much expected," he said.

State receive financing from FarmAid Inc.

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• Nebraskans for Peace/Nebraska Peace Foundation, Lincoln.

A \$10,000 grant will be used for projects including an "Outreach and Education" program, designed to build a coalition among Nebraska farm organizations and church groups to address issues of the farm crisis. Another project is the "Peoples Theater," a play with rural and urban cast members. Its goal is to bring the realities of the farm crisis to urban residents. A public forum, also sponsored by Nebraskans for Peace, brings farm leaders together to analyze various issues concerning the farm crisis.

Other FarmAid money went to farm families during holidays, Hope programs and other emergency needs throughout the state.

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