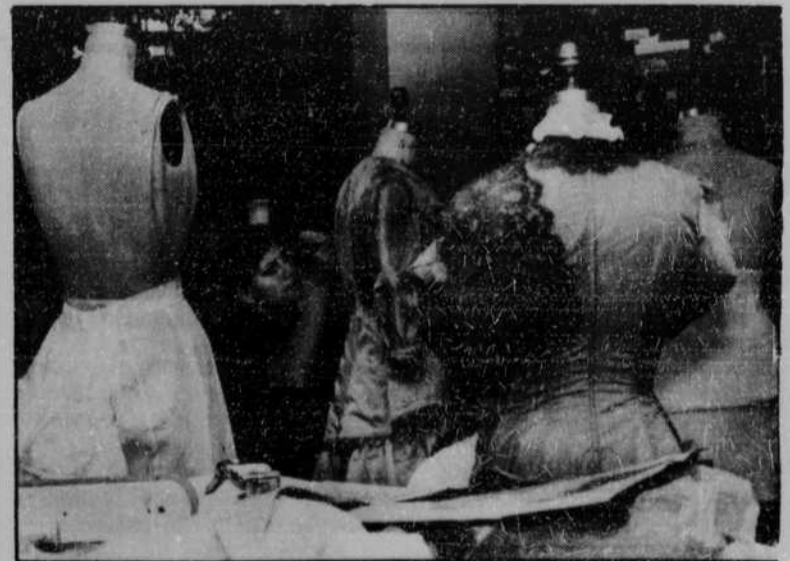




Story and photos
by Robin Trimarchi



PIRATES of Lincoln?

When the Pirate King of Penzance jumps ashore with his ruffians Friday night at the Howell Theater, he promises to enchant the opening night audience with all the swashbuckling action and romance of a Saturday matinee.

Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Pirates of Penzance" begins a 13-performance run this weekend as the Nebraska Repertory Theater's third show of the season.

Director Robert Hall said his production crew's philosophical approach to the late 19th-century production brings "Pirates" to the stage as musical theater instead of the often expected operetta.

From the moment the pirate's ship docks stage-right, Hall said, colorful costumes, upbeat choreography and "lots of sword-play" create a visually beautiful and fun show.

The five-man orchestra, including musical director Vince Learned of Lincoln on synthesizer, sits backstage behind a cloud, barely seen through a dreamlike backdrop.

The Nebraska Rep production of

"Pirates" emerged from a creative liaison of Lincoln, New York and Soviet talents.

Hall, who as Nebraska Rep artistic director selects the season's four productions and supervises the production designs, graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the 1960s. He has worked in New York City since the early 1970s.

Hall directed the first four repertory seasons beginning in 1968. He now has an off-Broadway experimental company called the "New Rude Mechanicals," from the "play within a play" concept of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," he said.

Scenic designer Larry Kaushansky, assistant professor in theater and dance, began the stage designs last April.

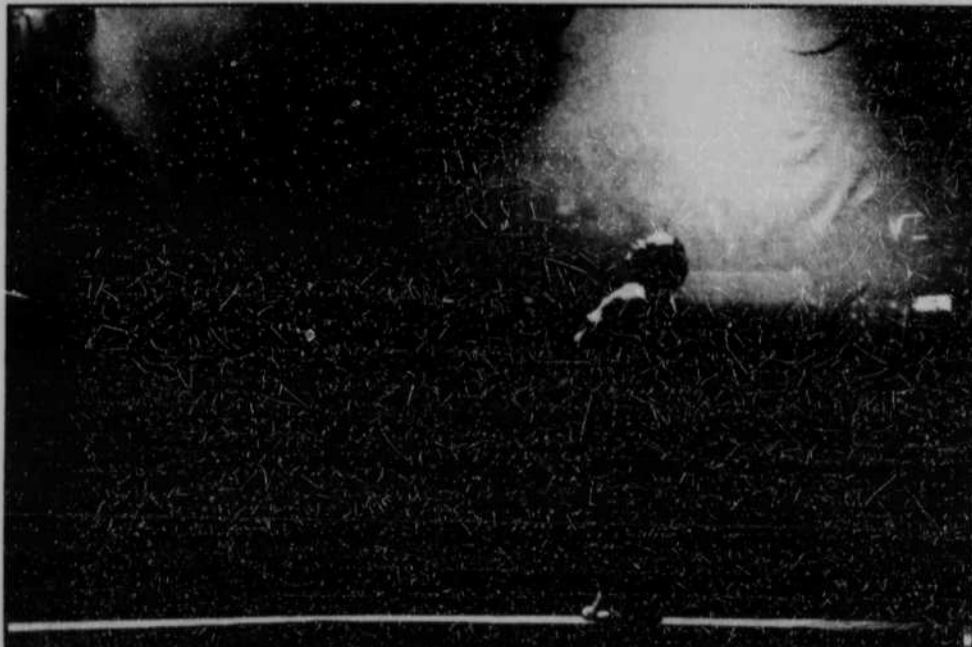
Kaushansky studied in Leningrad and taught in the Soviet Union for 18 years before coming to the United States in 1980. He has designed more than 125 productions, including the "Phantom of the Opera" for the St. Paul Children's Theater and the 1988-89 UNL pro-

duction of "Quilters."

New York choreographer Wendy Taucher also has worked on "Pirates" since last spring.

Costumes for "Pirates" took shape while designer Janice Stauffer was working on the June repertory production of "The Real Thing."

Lighting designer Steve Shelley, also a Lincoln native and former UNL student, has worked in New York City for the Ballet Trockadero de Monte Carlo, the Twyla Tharp Dance Company and the American Ballet Theater.



Clockwise from top:

- The Pirate King and his band of soft-hearted ruffians.
- Charlotte Wittig, left, and Carrie Kline finish two of the show's 43 costumes.
- Charles (Chip) Smith sings out his heart to a reluctant Kristy Breen.
- Lighting director Steve Shelley checks the stage before dress rehearsal Wednesday.