

Students lead backstage efforts at Temple

By Jim Hanna
Staff Reporter

The audience files contentedly out of the Howell Theatre, another thought-provoking University of Nebraska-Lincoln theater production under its belts and meaty, searching questions on its lips.

"I wonder how they learn all of those lines?" one aficionado may ask.

"Didn't that one guy look like Uncle Carl?" another curious viewer may query.

Lost in the shuffle to praise or pan the acting in a play, however,

are the technical elements of theater that give actors a place to act, a light to act in and some stuff to act with.

In other words, who does the set, the lighting and the props?

For that answer, just ask the army of student workers that labors in and around the Temple Building's scene shop. Drawn from the endless supply of students taking Theatre 112, Introduction to Theatre, these workers contract to do a minimum of 20 hours of technical work during the semester as part of their course requirements.

To make sure they get it all right,

these students are led by, well, other students. Graduate students in technical theatre (yes, you can get a master's degree in technical theatre) are given assistantships to coordinate the activities of the undergraduates: the partially sighted leading the blind.

"If I work a minimum of 20 hours a week, they'll help me pay for school," said Mike Matthews, a master's candidate in scene design.

This "help" comes in the form of a tuition waiver and a monthly stipend. Three assistantship positions are offered in scene shop-related activities: one for props, one for

lighting and one for set construction.

Chip Mahlman, a graduate scene designer in his final year at UNL, has found himself working in all three areas during his tenure.

"I've done 'em all," he said, not unhappily.

This year, Mahlman has found an assistantship outside of the scene shop but still related to the technical aspect of theater.

"This year, I am the sound designer. It's a real trip, Jimmy," he said, getting personal.

Since the graduate students swap assistantships each year, a particu-

lar student can experience any of the different areas involved and receive a more fully rounded knowledge of technical theatre.

"There's art involved, there's metal shop, there's wood shop — all the courses that little wimps like you probably weren't too good at in high school," Mahlman said, getting even more personal. "Except maybe the art thing."

In his first year at UNL, Rick Goetz, a Master of Fine Arts student, found himself scrambling for needed experience and so was

See TECHIES on 11



WE DARE YOU TO BUY THEIR ALBUM.

SO WE'RE GIVING YOU A SAMPLE OF THEIR MUSIC...

FREE!*

THERE IS SO MUCH NEW MUSIC THROU...
YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS IT...
THEY'RE THE ONLY BAND...
WORTH LISTENING TO...
WE'RE GIVING AWAY A SAMPLE OF...
MAGGIE'S DREAM...

MAGGIE'S DREAM...
THEY'RE THE ONLY BAND...
WORTH LISTENING TO...
WE'RE GIVING AWAY A SAMPLE OF...
MAGGIE'S DREAM...

TO BE A PART OF MAGGIE'S DREAM AND RECEIVE YOUR FREE 5-TRACK CASSETTE SAMPLER, BE ONE OF THE FIRST 5000 PEOPLE TO CALL

1-800-HOT-SONG

THE ONLY BAND...
WORTH LISTENING TO...
WE'RE GIVING AWAY A SAMPLE OF...
MAGGIE'S DREAM...



Backstage

Continued from Page 9

It's a big accomplishment for them, and I think for most people it's going to be a big help. Sometime, they'll be glad they did it."

Most students are surprised how much they enjoy the work they do, he said.

"It's kind of like playtime," Schroeder said.

Rick Goetz, a first-year Master of Fine Arts student, agrees.

"I think it (working on the sets) is a lot of fun, or at least it should be," he said. "It's a small enough program, you have a chance to do designs before getting into the real world."

Ed "EZ" Zastera, a fifth-year senior in theatre arts enjoys the experience he's gaining.

"You get to experience a lot of things as an undergraduate, and you're not pushed out of the way," he said. "If you ask, they let you do it."

Schroeder will have much less work for his crew this holiday season.

In past years at this time, his crew would be setting up for "A Christmas Carol." But since the production is being performed in the Lied Center for Performing Arts this year, a group in Omaha is handling the construction.

"We're going to have to put together something someone else built," Schroeder said.

The costume and prop departments will still be handling all the costumes and props.

April Block is an unclassified graduate student working in the prop shop. She got involved with the Temple Building through her work last summer in the Nebraska Repertory Theatre.

"It's practical experience," she said. "You don't just learn about it, you do it."

"I've seen that theater is hard work... it's not a cinch, it's not glamorous," Block said. "The thing that you learn the most in technical theatre is resourcefulness — to make something out of nothing."

Block said making props is the most thankless job. She said the audience never thinks that the couch it's seeing took weeks to find and

required some serious begging to acquire.

Part of being resourceful, Block said, was never ruling out any place where a prop might be found.

The attic of Temple is the storage place for all the old props. It's full of classics like the bloody child from "Macbeth" and a real dentist's chair used in "Little Shop of Horrors."

Block said one of the hardest things is to coordinate all departments.

"If one area's lacking, it will be very obvious."

That includes the costume department.

The costume room of the theater is literally abuzz. The sewing machines hum steadily in the background, while seamstresses and tailors discuss the fashions of Dickens' time.

The room is cluttered with dummies, patterns and bolts of clothing for the 110 outfits the costume department must make for the production "A Christmas Carol."

Jeanne Long, a general studies sophomore and work-study student in the costume shop, said she enjoys "watching things from the very beginning."

"I like starting with a fabric and seeing it develop into a garment and then seeing it on stage when it's done," she said.

On one wall of the costume room, there is a sign that reads, "People that believe the dead never come back to life should be here at quitting time."

The sign is probably meant to refer to the workers, but when you enter the storage room for old costumes, it's easy to imagine them coming to life on their own and reenacting the parts they were created to play.

There are rows upon rows of wonderful costumes. Cyrano de Bergerac could once again sing his sonnets to his lovely Roxanne in his short skirt and tight tights. Around the corner is a poodle skirt and leather jacket just waiting 'til night falls to rock and roll again.

There are boxes of hats and gloves, shelves of caps and crowns, racks of belts and ties and an entire wall of shoes in every color — including a pair of glass slippers.

DIPPING IS FOR DIPS.
DON'T USE SNUFF OR CHEWING TOBACCO.

AMERICAN
CANCER
SOCIETY