

'Wicked' blizzard hits with emotion

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

On one of the chilliest days of September, a blizzard blanketed Lincoln in drifts of talent.

The winds whirled, dancers twirled and snowflakes spilled on the ground in a trial of "Wickedness."

"Wickedness," a dance/theater interpretation of Nebraska's deadly blizzard of 1888, unleashed its fury this weekend in the State Capitol rotunda.

The performance was the last event for the Wagon Train Project's "Great Plains in Performance Festival."

"Wickedness" boasted a collaboration of national and local artists.

Ron Hansen, author; Janet Lily, choreographer; Andy Kirschner, composer; and Amy Lamphere, producer; trained and directed singers, musicians, dancers and actors for the Friday and Saturday performances.

As garbled sentences mingled with a musical symphony of winds, a man — barefoot and dressed only in a black trench coat — huddled against the wind, shivering.

A blizzard of words enveloped the audience, and dancers swirled around the room like many snowflakes falling to the ground.

Violinist Stephanie Beerling caressed the air with her music and lent an ominous voice to the blizzard's chaos.

"Wickedness" was a most unique performance in the way it created an eerie, almost surreal, atmosphere of fright, ambivalence and danger.

It was broken up into four scenes — "Girl on the Train," "Blizzard 1/ Sin Thomas and Emily Flint," "Hattie Benedict and Minnie Freeman" and "Blizzard 2/ Addie Dillingham."

One could not help but be drawn in by the action, as performers emerged from the center of the audience, on the sides and from the balcony above.

The seats were arranged in an unusual but effective fashion. People sat facing all directions in a circle in the center of the rotunda. Others sat tucked away in corners while the action moved around them.

Dancers in pioneer costumes emerged from all sides of the "stage" and began hissing words of warning and "wickedness."

State Sen. Dave Landis approached a podium on the side of the rotunda, but he wasn't addressing a legislative session. Landis, dressed in a black suit which resembled a conductor's uniform, served as the performance's narrator.

The barefoot man crept slowly from his opening spot and crawled towards and among the audience throughout the performance.

The most compelling of all scenes, "Hattie Benedict and Minnie Freeman," contrasted two schoolteachers and their plight to save their students. Benedict failed when she was lost in the storm and hid under a haystack, while Freeman succeeded by tying her students together with twine.

Benedict (Gail Ogden) and Freeman (Margaret Sheldrick) were incredibly moving in their portrayals, as were the dancers who posed as students. Three dancers took the shape of the blizzards and beckoned for the student lives. "Come here. Come here," they whispered.

Another excellent performance came from the heart and voice of Adrienne Walker who portrayed a young, 17-year-old Addie Dillingham. Dillingham was at a party in Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the night of the storm and tried to walk across the Missouri River on a railroad trestle.

As Dillingham balanced on the treacherous beam, Walker poised on the balcony above the rotunda floor as imaginary snowflakes fell to the ground.

The music, singing, dancing and acting in "Wickedness" was wickedly wonderful. Hopefully, the illustrative romance of Nebraska's history will delight audiences in New York.

The "Wickedness" group will perform at Danspace Project/St. Mark's Church in New York City's East Village in May 1995. The project may eventually tour around the country taking the wind, cold, snow and talent with it.

Bundle up, "Wickedness" has just begun.



Courtesy of Hollywood Pictures

Hot-shot skydiving instructor Ditch Brodie (played by Charlie Sheen, left) freefalls into international intrigue after he investigates the death of diving student Chris Morrow (Nastassja Kinski).

Plotless action film is good for hours of no-thought entertainment

By Joel Strauch
Senior Reporter

"Terminal Velocity" addresses every major issue from kids with HIV in schools to racial discrimination in the workplace.

Just kidding. It's an action flick that provides a couple of hours of mindless entertainment.

Richard "Ditch" Brodie (Charlie Sheen) is a professional sky diving instructor who gets himself in trouble with his death-defying stunts.

Ditch is hired to teach an attractive woman named Chris Morrow (Nastassja Kinski) how to sky dive. He finds himself in deeper trouble than usual when she leaps out of the plane right under his nose — without her chute.

When the FAA blames Ditch for her death and closes down his

Quik Facts

Movie: "Terminal Velocity"

Rating: PG-13

Stars: Charlie Sheen, Nastassja Kinski, James Gandolfini, Christopher McDonald

Director: Deran Sarafian

Grade: B-

Five Words: Accelerates quickly, never slows down

paracenter, he takes it upon himself to uncover the mystery of her supposed suicide.

Ditch is quickly entangled in a web of international espionage involving the Russian Mafia and the KG-used-to-B.

The sky dives are exceptionally

well-filmed, highlighted by one scene with Ditch at the wheel of a plummeting Cadillac.

The acting is good for an action film that often crosses the boundaries for accepted realism and number of amazing coincidences.

Sheen is great as a smart-ass jumper who has no clue about what is going on around him. He rolls with the falls and doesn't pull his ripcord until the last possible second.

Kinski makes her unrealistic character believable with her cold and unrevealing attitude she flips at Ditch.


The plot has more holes than a sieve. There are few surprises, but the incredibly shot stunts make up for the lackluster storyline.

"Terminal Velocity" is an enjoyable action film — no more, no less. If you need to kill an afternoon without getting too deep in thought, check it out.

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Jeremy Kilburn
Manager, Amigos
Manhattan, KS

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Asian Night

The "2nd Annual Asian Night" is presented by the Asian Community and Cultural Center. It comes with dinner, entertainment and cultural performance. Location: UNI Student Union, Centennial Room. Time: Sunday, October 2, 1994, 8:00 pm. Cost: \$10 Adults, \$5 Students with IDs. Call Jessica Chang (A) at 2-6358