

Daily Nebraskan WEEKEND PREVIEW

For the weekend
of Sept. 30 - Oct. 2

Give it a shot

➤ **"Masters of the Night"** — This touring exhibit about bats will be at the Ager Building in Folsom Children's Zoo at 27th and B streets. It opens Saturday and runs through Dec. 3 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

➤ **Lie Awake** — This popular Lincoln band will be playing on the Broyhill Fountain Plaza outside the Student Union from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m.



Courtesy of The Joffrey Ballet

Pictured are Jodie Gates and Phillip Gardner, who will be performing in The Joffrey Ballet's "Billboards."

Joffrey to 'bump and grind'

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

Drive down any American highway. Billboards of all shapes and sizes shout out "stop here, shop here, eat here, stay here." They mold into just another aspect of American society.

To Jenny Sandler and Adam Sklute, billboards are a way of life. Sandler and Sklute dance in The Joffrey Ballet's production "Billboards," an elaborate dance creation crafted by director Gerald Arpino and choreographed to music by the rock icon formerly known as Prince.

This mixture of two contrasting mediums — rock music and classical ballet — is the signpost for "Billboards," which will be playing this weekend at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

Sandler started her career with the Joffrey when she was only 6 years old. Her Manhattan home

was only two blocks away from the studios, she said. Since then, the Joffrey has become her family.

"I was so caught up in it," she said. "All of the sudden they asked me to join Joffrey II, and that's when it hit me."

Joffrey II does smaller performances and serves as a training ground. Sandler moved up to the main company in 1990 during the "Billboards" tour and has performed in the show more than 100 times.

Sandler said the Joffrey was unique because the combination of a small group of dancers and the artistic staff created a friendly bond.

"It's not the harsh ballet world that other companies have," she said.

This camaraderie, Sandler said, transforms into the essence of the Joffrey's style.

"The Joffrey is youth and energy. There's a lot of love in Joffrey

and it shows on stage," she said. "You feed off each other with that love and energy."

Sklute started his dance career by taking jazz and modern dance classes. Years later, he auditioned for The Joffrey Ballet, and although his feet were in it, his stomach wasn't.

"I got very, very nauseous and ran out," he said.

The audition room was filled with 300 people, Sklute said, but he was able to slip out and come back undetected. He returned and was chosen to join Joffrey II in 1986. He moved to the main company in 1988.

Sklute said he learned to appreciate the Joffrey's unique role in ballet.

"One of our strongest things is our adaptability to style," he said. "Our dancers have to be versatile and adaptable."

See JOFFREY on 13

'Billboards' theme fulfills grand dream, ballet director says

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

Gerald Arpino once thought of how wonderful it would be to have a billboard on Hollywood's Sunset Strip next to Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone.

Arpino, The Joffrey Ballet's artistic director, said he was intrigued by billboards throughout the country.

"I remember saying this to Bob Joffrey, 'I'm just fascinated by billboards,'" Arpino said, "and Bob said, 'Oh, Gerry, how crass can you get?'"

Unfortunately, Joffrey never lived to see the day that Arpino's dream came true. Joffrey's death in 1988 came about five years before a billboard featuring The Joffrey Ballet's "Billboards" — choreographed to music by the pop superstar formerly known as Prince — debuted on the Strip.

"The billboard had a huge drawing of Prince, and it was just great to see one there," Arpino said.

Arpino and Joffrey co-founded The Joffrey Ballet in 1956. Arpino served as the lead of the troupe's six original dancers and was the creative force behind "Billboards."

"'Billboards,' to me, is an American pop culture. It's the only way many of our people who have never experienced a Picasso have a connection with art," Arpino said.

Arpino's fascination with billboards led to his desire to do an all-evening ballet. It became a production he calls "a divine concept" and "heavenly ordained."

"I never dreamed I'd do a 'Billboards' even, and to music of this phenomenal composer Prince — this megastar," Arpino said. "And I never thought he and I would become close friends and associates in this fantastic production."

"Little did I know how fates were dealing out how I was to meet

Prince."

Arpino explained the chance meeting: Prince was renting an estate in Bel-Air owned by Patricia Kennedy. Kennedy was on The Joffrey Ballet's board of directors. Kennedy discovered that Prince had not seen a ballet and invited him to a Joffrey performance. Prince attended a 1991 performance in Los Angeles.

"He sat between me and Pat, and he was dressed in his phenomenal style," Arpino said. "Pat said he was very shy, so we shouldn't be too animated or excited."

After the performance, Arpino said Prince was enthralled.

"He said, 'Oh, Mr. A, I am inspired. You will have to excuse me if I don't come to the dinner. I'm going home and writing music for The Joffrey Ballet,'" Arpino said.

Through luck, coincidence and fate, a series of events unfolded, and "Billboards" premiered at Hancher Auditorium in Iowa City, Iowa, on Jan. 27, 1993. The show continues to draw sellout crowds.

Since then, Arpino and Prince have become close friends.

"Two months ago he came in wearing a big lace shirt with the gold necklaces on, and it was cut way down to his lower back with long lace sleeves, and he had the cane with the gold top," he said. "He has those two magnificent eyes, and he concentrates like a feline ready to attack."

"I said, 'Gee, Prince, you look great. I'd love to dress like you,'" he said. "And then his eyes turned to me and said, 'Well, Mr. A, why don't you?'"

"Well, I laughed and said 'Prince, there's only one Prince,'" Arpino said Prince was a truly dedicated and committed artist.

"He has fantastic vibrations. He's a man who doesn't waste a moment. His energy is used openly and directly with anything he's doing," Arpino said. "He is ... a

See ARPINO on 13

Eagles show postponed; don't panic

By Jill O'Brien
Staff Reporter

Rock supergroup the Eagles won't be taking flight at the Bob Devaney Sports Center anytime soon.

According to Dorene Johnson, the University Program Council event director, the Eagles' concert, set for Monday, has been indefinitely postponed.

Eagle Glenn Frey is suffering from a chronic gastrointestinal disorder, Johnson said, and that has led the group to cancel several shows already.

"It really came as no surprise," she said, especially after hearing that the two Kansas City, Mo., shows prior to the Devaney date

were cancelled.

"It's something we have no control over. It happens," she said.

Unlike the Devaney show, the shows at Sandstone Amphitheatre in Kansas City have been rescheduled for Oct. 14 and 15.

Gary Doyle at the Office for Student Involvement said UPC had no new date at this time.

"Right now, the attitude we're taking is we prefer that ticket holders hold on to their tickets until next week, in case they do reschedule," Doyle said.

Johnson said the 130 people on the UPC Eagles concert staff also were on hold.

"These few past weeks we've been working on making reservations, and tomorrow, we'll start

taking everything apart. ... It's frustrating," she said.

"Everybody has been looking forward to this, and it's something we've been working hard on and hoping for. It's not a complete loss because of the rescheduling possibility," she said.

Doyle said ticket holders who needed an immediate refund could return their tickets to the place of purchase, beginning Monday.

If tickets were ordered by phone, Doyle advised buyers to mail the tickets, along with their names, addresses and confirmation numbers or credit card numbers, to: Ticketmaster, 1010 S. Seventh St., Suite 540, Minneapolis, Minn. 55415, to the attention of the Customer Service Department.



Courtesy of Scoop Marketing

Rock supergroup the Eagles has postponed its Monday concert at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.