

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Modern dancers to manipulate movement

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

Through movement, space, time and energy, the UNL Dance Program will propel its dancers "In Motion" this weekend.

The program, directed by University of Nebraska-Lincoln dance professor Lisa Fusillo, will premiere tonight at the Johnny Carson Theater at UNL.

Amy Ernst, assistant dance professor, said the instructors wanted to build a concert theme that would emphasize the program and its dancers.

"The dance program here is really growing and moving forward and accelerating," she said. "... And so a lot of the dances are very high-energy and dynamic and quite complex, movement-wise."

"In Motion" is a program that features dancers of various backgrounds and experience using modern dance techniques.

"Modern dance explores elements of time and space and energy and motion," Ernst said, "and we deal with those concepts every day in class."

Ernst said dancers within the program always were looking for new ways to expand their movement.

"It's like composers trying to put notes together in different, interesting ways," she said. "Choreographers are trying to do the same thing with movement."

Ernst said dancers experimented with and manipulated movement in order to find new ways of moving.

"It's just like any other art

"It's like composers trying to put notes together in different, interesting ways."

AMY ERNST

assistant dance professor

form," she said. "It's just a different medium. The body is our medium."

"In Motion" allowed Ernst to work with new movement ideals, but it also reunited her with one of her former students, Anita Lemon.

Lemon came to UNL as part of the program's attempt to reach out

and bring in visiting artists from around the world.

Currently, Lemon is teaching a variety of dance and composition classes, but she will leave early next year to fulfill a Fulbright choreographer position in India.

In 1979, Lemon was taking classes from the Bela Lewitzky dance company in California, and Ernst, a member of the company, was her teacher.

Lemon and Ernst will perform a duet to a work by Wade Madsen. Lemon will use Maurice Ravel's "Bolero" for a piece she calls "Ravelian Theory of Relative Rapidity."

In "Ravelian," Lemon taught her students how to incorporate props — 67 chairs of different styles and sizes — into the performance.

"I always like for the dancer and the audience in my pieces to discover things together," she said.

The dance concert performances will begin at 8 p.m. today, Friday and Saturday, and 7 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are \$9 for the general public, \$7 for staff and faculty and \$6 for students.

Quik Facts

Show: UNL fall dance concert

At: Johnny Carson Theater

Times: 8 p.m. today, Friday and Saturday; 7 p.m. Sunday

Tickets: \$9, \$7 for faculty and staff, \$6 for students

Puppet personalities take the stage with a little help

By Joel Strauch
Senior Reporter

Jeff Dunham, comedian and ventriloquist extraordinaire, will be throwing jokes and his voice this Saturday night at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

Dunham has been performing with puppets for more than 20 years.

"When I was 7, I got a dummy for Christmas, and I used it at school for book reports," he said. "I taught myself and was audited by age 12."

Dunham is best known for his grouchy puppet Walter, a dummy with an attitude, but he also will be bringing other favorites, including Peanuts — "a Muppet on heroin" — Jose the Jalapeño, and the newest member of his entourage, Bubba, a backwoods southern boy.

Dunham said, "Peanuts, Walter and Jose are pretty much always going to be the main guys. There is too much about them that I enjoy and the audiences enjoy."

"But I'm always trying to come up with stuff that people haven't seen before and do something new and different," he said. "That's where Bubba comes in."

The attitude that made Walter and subsequently Dunham famous has been seen by everyone from Johnny Carson to Dick Clark.

Walter told Carson that it would be "a cold day in hell" before he came back to the "Tonight Show," and he made it clear to Clark not to "(mess) with a puppet."

"Walter is somebody that people can identify with," Dunham said. "They are either married to him, have an uncle that's him, or they are him."

"He has a lot of attitude that pulls the comedy over the top. There are some good

Quik Facts

Show: Comedian-ventriloquist Jeff Dunham

At: Lied Center

Time: 8 p.m. Saturday

Tickets: \$16.50, available at the Lied box office

jokes in there, but sometimes he gets laughs straight out of attitude."

Dunham doesn't have plans to add that many more characters into his act.

"My act is like an ongoing sitcom," he said. "People get to know the characters, and I like to build new material and situations for these guys."

Dunham said audiences enjoyed the characters, the comedy and the conflict in his show.

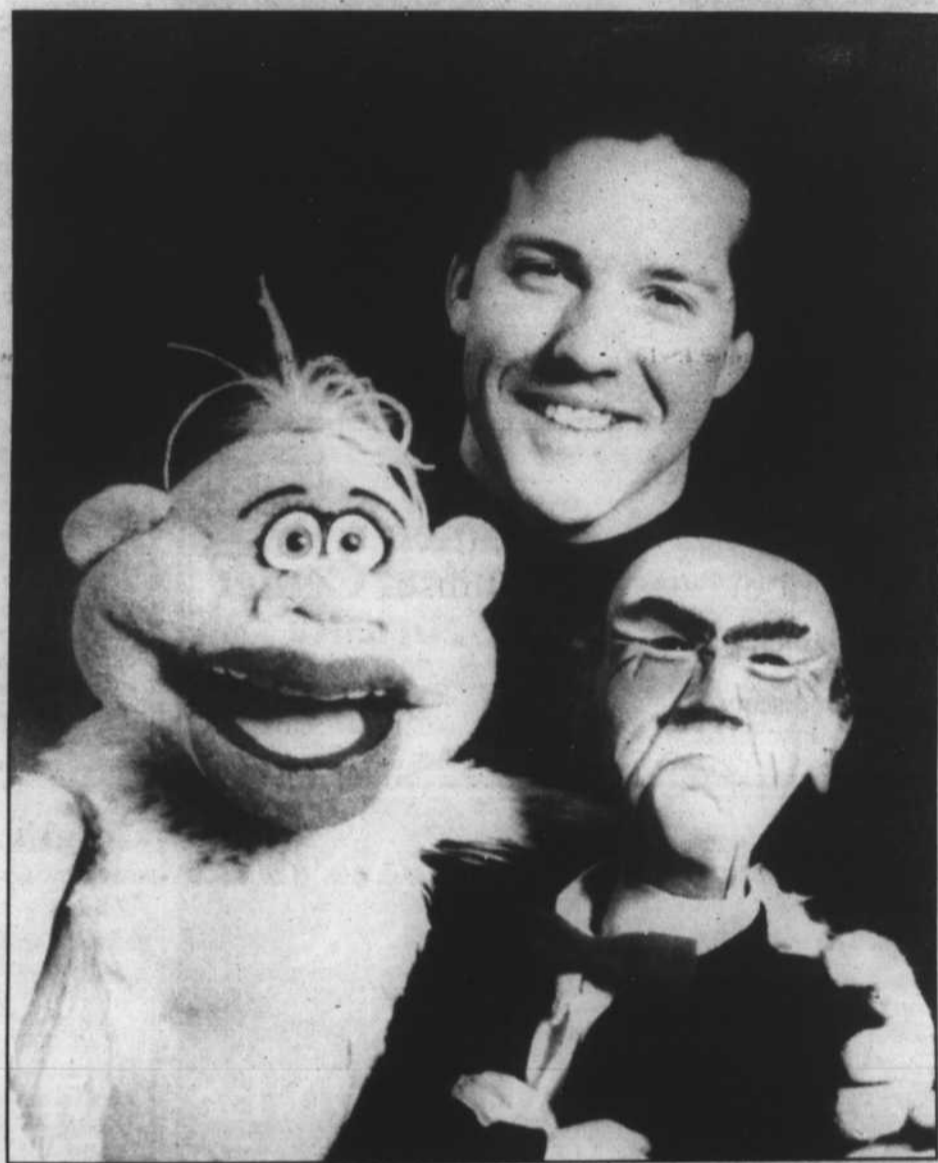
"When I build conflict into the act, it defines the characters," he said. "That's why I think that Warner Brothers' cartoon characters are superior, at least as comedians, to Disney's. They have become so well-defined."

"Mickey Mouse is cute, but how can he stand up to the comedy of Bugs Bunny?"

Dunham said Jose Jalapeño had become a sort of cult hero to his show.

"He only comes out for like 10 minutes, but people are always yelling for him," he said.

"He's the ethnic part of the show, but he's not based on any stereotypes," he said. "He's just a funny character who happens to be Mexican and also happens to be a jalapeño who is based on Slowpoke, Speedy Gonzales' cousin."



Courtesy of William Morris Agency

Jeff Dunham, center, will bring his comedy-ventriloquism act to the Lied Center for Performing Arts on Saturday, with friends Peanut, left, and Walter and more.

Even big names can't save these from mediocrity

By Gerry Boltz
Staff Reporter

Big-name stars and big-name films still couldn't save this week from being incredibly average on the new video release shelves. However, fear not, because the pick of the week is a fun flick from almost a decade ago.

"City Slickers 2" (PG-13) — The sequel to the 1991 hit "City Slickers." Most of the original cast shows up again, even Norman the cow, but the film is sadly in need of laughs and fun.

Billy Crystal and Daniel Stern

are back, teaming up with Jon Lovitz, and everyone is trying to find gold. Jack Palance is back, even though he didn't make it through the first "City Slickers" film.

The film suffers from being not just a sequel but a bad sequel at that. Pass on this one.

"Little Big League" (PG) — Another baseball movie to help the baseball junkies get their fix. Hoorah.

In "Little Big League," a 12-year-old kid inherits the Minnesota Twins and appoints himself manager. Naturally, the film builds to-

wards a climax of whether the Twins will win the pennant.

Like they would have a chance anyway! Rent this one only for the kids, and go read a good book.

"Even Cowgirls Get The Blues" (R) — As good as Tom Robbins is on paper, this film never should have been made. This film has about as much in common with Robbins' book as this year's election had with issues.

Unless you like lots of overacting guest stars, avoid "Even Cowgirls Get The Blues" like a steaming cow pie.

"With Honors" (PG-13) —

This makes two crappy films from Joe Pesci in three weeks ("Jimmy Hollywood" was released on Oct. 26).

A group of emotionally bankrupt college students (led by Brendan Fraser, the only bright spot of the film) take in a homeless man (Pesci), and thus they begin on a journey to complete their barren lives.

Yawn. Next!!

PICK OF THE WEEK — The year was 1985. Prince had a name that could be typed, Reagan was president, and O.J. Simpson was

known for football accomplishments.

Anyone remember "Weird Science?"

Anthony Michael Hall and Ilan Mitchell-Smith pulled a modern-day Frankenstein by electrifying a Barbie doll while wearing bras on their heads, thus creating Lisa (Kelly LeBrock, the former Mrs. Steven Seagal).

The film is a fun-filled no-brainer that may twang a few strings of nostalgia. Watch it with friends.