Curtain opens on fall theater

By Kathryn A. Ratliff
Staff Reporter

What do William Shakespeare and Sam Shepard have in common? They were both married to Jessica Lange?

No, no, a thousand times no! They both have plays appearing on the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance main stage this fall.

William Shakespeare's "Richard III" is a passionate tale of power and greed. Richard, one of Shakespeare's most treacherous villains, kills one brother, overthrows the throne of another, murders his young nephews and offers to trade his kingdom for a horse.

Shirley Carr Mason, assistant theater professor, will stage "Richard III" in the Howell Theatre, a 382-seat auditorium, Oct. 19-21 and 24-28 at 8 p.m.

Sam Shepard's "Fool for Love" will run Nov. 9-11 and 14-18 at 8 p.m. in the Studio Theatre. The two main characters in this drama have a strong but destructive bond. Gregory Tavares, a graduate student, will direct.

Michael Brady's "To Gillian on Her 37th Birthday," a romantic drama, places several characters in a Nantucket cottage over a summer weekend where they work through an overwhelming grief. The main character, a bitter professor, has retreated from life to keep alive the memory of his wife, Gillian, who died two years earlier in a boating accident.

"Gillian," directed by assistant theater professor Paul Steger, will run Sept. 28-30 and Oct. 3-7 at 8 p.m. in the Studio Theatre.

Theater Manager Juliana Hagemeier said designers had already begun constructing sets for the shows. She said the Studio Theatre, a 180-seat black box stage formed in the round, presented special concerns because of its small size.

"It's a challenge for designers to create what they want," Hagemeier said.

Student tickets are $6. Senior citizens, faculty and staff tickets are $7, and all others are $9. Student season tickets are $15. Tickets can be purchased at 109 Temple Building.

Open auditions for main stage plays will be Aug. 21 and 22 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. in the Howell Theatre. Those who wish to audition can sign up for a time in the Commons in the lower level of the Temple Building and should prepare two two-minute contrasting monologues. One monologue should be Shakespearean.

Hagemeier said no specific dates for the fall dance recital had been set. The recital will include the talents of producing artistic director Lisa Fusillo and choreography by University of Nebraska-Lincoln dance faculty and guest artists.

In addition to the main stage productions, five Theatrix shows will run this fall, Hagemeier said.

Theatrix, Hagemeier said, is an organization run by graduate and undergraduate directors.

"Theatrix creates an opportunity for students to direct and for students who may not be right for main stage productions to do some acting," Hagemeier said.

Theatrix is more experimental, with minimal use of costumes and props. Instead, it focuses on directors and actors, said Rob McKercher, Theatrix artistic director.

"We do theater in its barest scale and the results are wonderful," McKercher said.

Theatrix shows won't be selected until the fall semester starts. Students who wish to direct a show should present a proposal to McKercher during the first week of classes. Directors will be auditioned Aug. 28-29.

Each Theatrix production receives a $50 budget and access to all theatrical facilities. McKercher said he hoped to produce the shows in alternative venues outside the Temple Building this fall. Theatrix shows cost $2 for students.

The Nebraska Masquers, UNL's drama club, also will produce a show this season. The Masquers produced a festival of original one-act plays last year, Hagemeier said.

Theatre 203, an undergraduate directing class, will also produce a variety of short one-acts throughout the semester.

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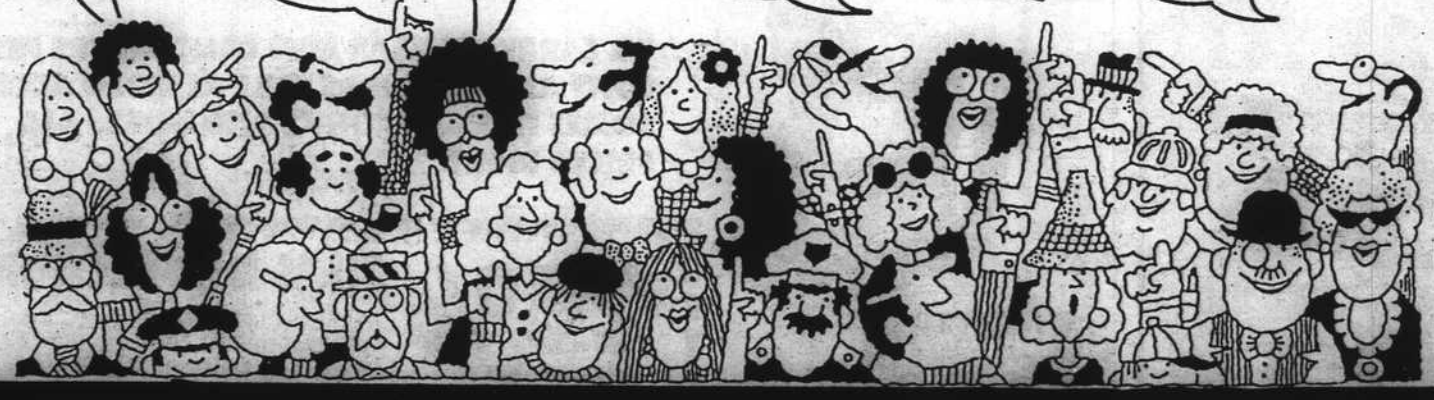

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