

IN APPRECIATION OF ... THEATER

STORY BY LIZA HOLTMEIER

An evening at the theater.
You can't rewind a scene. You can't reread a chapter. If you return the next night, you may not even see the same thing.

The theater experience is fleeting and intense. Perception is everything, and how you respond to the performance affects how the actors perform.

While these characteristics distinguish the theater experience, they also can make it seem intimidating.

"Sometimes people think theater is going to be too demanding on them as an audience member," said Kevin Hofeditz, chairman of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. "You're sharing the same space and the same air with those actors who are presenting a

very complex and emotional experience."

Although the experience may be intense, Hofeditz said, audiences should still expect to be entertained. If audience members are affected on an emotional level by a play, they should consider that a bonus, he explained.

"Just let it hit you," he said. "When I was

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KEVIN HOFEDITZ
CHAIRMAN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
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THEATRE ARTS AND DANCE

a young theater-goer, I would worry too much about trying to figure it out. That would get in the way of letting it affect me on a deeper level. If audience members find a play funny, that's what it's about. If they find it troubling, they should let it trouble them."

To further appreciate theater, Hofeditz said, people should see and read as many plays as they can. Hofeditz also stressed the importance of being educated in as many areas of knowledge as possible.

"The best theater artists I've worked with have been individuals who were well-versed

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL LUEDERT

in many areas and had a broad knowledge base," Hofeditz said. "On the stage, we represent the wide spectrum of issues in the world. The more a theater artist is aware of the world around him or her the more able they are to communicate that to the audience."

Hofeditz said Lincoln audiences were lucky to have a diverse offering of theater in Lincoln. He said almost every style was performed somewhere in the city.

"Lincoln has a little bit of everything," he said, "including both professional and amateur theater. If you just look around, you'll find what you like."

And even though the experience of seeing a play may only last a couple of hours, chances are the memory of it will last forever.

VENUES

Lincoln's theater community offers everything from the traditional to the avant-garde. Most of the theaters' seasons run from early fall to early summer, and almost all have brochures available for additional information on their performance spaces.

Lincoln Community Playhouse

Located at 2500 S. 56th St., LCP has a season that usually lasts from September to June. However, this year, because of renovation, the season will run through August. LCP has a main stage season and a children's theater season. Works in the main stage season vary from Broadway musicals like "Secret Garden" to classic plays like "Raisin in the Sun." The children's theater season includes classics such as "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" and new productions such as "A Wrinkle in Time."

LCP is always looking for volunteers to help on and off stage. Auditions for productions are held five weeks in advance for musicals and eight weeks in advance for non-musicals. Volunteers also can work on lights, sound, costumes, scenery and set crews. To find out more about volunteering or about the season, call the LCP Box Office at (402) 489-7529.

The Futz Theatre

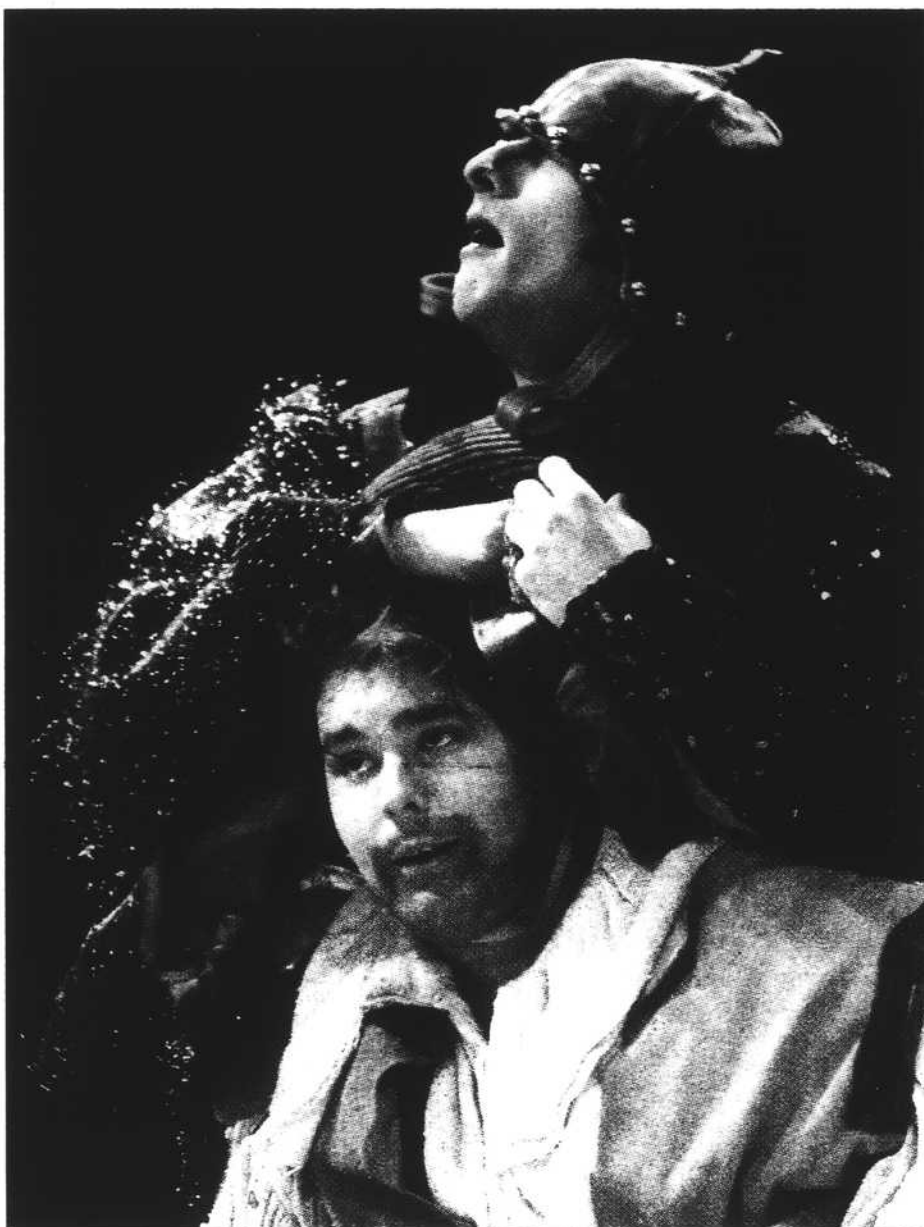
Located in the Mission Arts Building at 124 S. Ninth St., The Futz Theatre is a very intimate, black box style theater whose productions tend to be rather unconventional. Past plays include "Lesbian Vampires of Sodom" and "Marvin's Room." Owner Paul Pearson described the Futz as "in-your-face theater." For more information, call the Futz Box Office at (402) 435-6307.

The Star City Theatre

The new Star City Theatre, to be located in the Lincoln Haymarket starting in May, will be run by former Downtown Dinner Theatre director Bob Rook. The Downtown Dinner Theatre season featured shows like "Forever Plaid," "Godspell" and "Side by Side by Sondheim." The Star City Theatre plans to offer a full season of similar shows as well as comedy, musical acts and educational theater opportunities. For more information, call the offices of CORE Entertainment at (402) 477-8722.

Nebraska Wesleyan University

The Nebraska Wesleyan season runs during the fall and spring semesters. Each semester, the Department of Theatre presents two main stage full-length plays. Since the goal of the department is to introduce stu-



MIKE MEYER (top) and Robie Hayek play Robin and Wagner during a rehearsal of "Dr. Faustus," which will be showing in the Howell Theatre tonight through Saturday.

Huntington Avenue.

Wesleyan also has a Black Box Theatre where student-produced one-acts are performed. These performances are offered usually once a semester and are free to the public. The student one-acts range greatly in style and tend to be unconventional. For more information on the Wesleyan season, call the McDonald Theatre Box Office at (402) 465-2384.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Theatre Arts and Dance

The UNL theatre department has a main stage season and a second stage season called Theatrx. The main stage season consists of three full-length plays a semester, with the last play in the fall semester being a musical. The Theatrx season also presents three events a semester.

Auditions for the main stage season are held the first week of each semester. Theatrx auditions usually are held the week after. The auditions are open to all students, and students can also get involved backstage through theater classes.

The department's performances are given in the Howell and Studio theatres in the Temple Building and sometimes in Kimball Recital Hall. For more information on the season, call the Temple Box Office at (402) 472-2073.

The Wagon Train Project

The Wagon Train Project, 512 S. Seventh St., fills a unique space in Lincoln. With a season that offers

everything from solo theater artists to residency projects, the Wagon Train is intimate, funky and a little on the edge. The Wagon Train's mission is to be supportive and inclusive of all arts. Performances are given at the Seventh Street Loft, 512 S. 7th St. The Wagon Train has a variety of opportunities to offer those who want to get involved. Volunteers can work on technical crews and help with residency projects, while others can apply for work-study programs and intern positions. For more information, call the Wagon Train at (402) 435-5592.

Nebraska Repertory Theatre

The Nebraska Repertory Theatre is the professional wing of the UNL Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. Since 1988, it has been a member of the Actors' Equity Association, allowing it to bring in professional actors and directors from across the nation. Its season consists of three main stage productions and one Theatre for Family audiences production. Each play runs for 11 performances during the June to August season. This year's season includes main stage performances of the musical "Carnival," the mystery-thriller "Woman in Black" and "Noises Off." The Theatre for Family production will be "Aladdin."

Performances are given on the UNL campus in the Temple Building or Kimball Recital Hall. For more information, call the Temple Box Office at (402) 472-2073.

PRINTED MATTER

"The Oxford History of Theatre" is a book that provides a comprehensive look at theater from Sophocles through Shakespeare to Samuel Beckett. It's a fairly dry read, but it gives a good overview for those interested in the progression of the art form.

The book "Broadway: Day and Night" is for those interested in a behind-the-scenes look. It is infused with the energy and passion that make Broadway the place where dreams are made. It contains interviews with various Broadway icons like Nathan Lane, Hal Prince and Julie Andrews. In it, the stars share their love for the art and their most memorable moments.

WEB SITES

Web sites are by far the best way to keep up to date with what's new in the world of theater. Musicals.net (<http://musicals.net>) gives an excellent overview of more than 80 Broadway musicals from "Annie" to "The Wiz." It provides plot summaries, song lists, images and additional links to Tony award winning productions like "Chorus Line," "Titanic" and "Rent."

For those who are looking for something specific, Yahoo has an excellent directory on theater under arts and performing arts (http://www.yahoo.com/Arts/Performing_Arts/Theater). The directory includes sites on acting, play writing and regional theater.



JENI FABIAN (right) adjusts the costume of Robert S. Hurst, who plays Lucifer in the UNL theatre department's production of "Dr. Faustus." "Dr. Faustus" runs tonight through Saturday.

dents to a wide variety of theater, the plays range in time period and style. Every other year, the department collaborates on a musical or opera with the musical department. Main stage plays are performed at the McDonald Theatre at the corner of 51st Street and