



**STUDENTS** in Dance Professor Ann Shea's Dance Composition II class will perform their own works this weekend in two separate performances entitled "Last Chance to Dance." MATT MILLER/DN

## Dance class students prepare to take stage

By LIZA HOLTMEIER  
Staff Reporter

For months, they've striven to bring their artistic vision to the stage. Their personal experiences, some joyous and some not, have served as the inspiration for their movement.

Now, as the curtain rises and a hundred pairs of eyes turn to watch, the students from the Dance Composition II course feel their hearts start to race, their palms begin to sweat, and the butterflies in their stomachs start to tickle.

"How will the audience react?" they ask. "Will they like it? Hate it? Laugh or cry?"

"The choreographic process can be painful, tearful, stressful and fearful," said Ann Shea, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln dance professor and the Composition II instructor. "It is really hard to have that curtain come up on your piece."

Nonetheless, the curtain will rise this weekend when the Composition II students and other UNL dancers present their works during "Last Chance to

Dance."

Composition II students choreographed the majority of the works to be presented. To take Composition II, students must be dance majors and must have taken Improvisation and Composition I.

"In theory, the students are pretty sophisticated and seasoned by this time," Shea said.

But experience does not lessen the nervousness of baring your soul on stage, Shea said.

Fortunately, Shea designed the class to provide the moral support needed for opening night. Students said Shea's understanding and supportive attitude eased the risk-taking of the choreographic process.

Shea also allowed input sessions after students showed their work in class. During the sessions, students could discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their pieces.

Senior Sara Schmid, who will perform her solo, entitled "Maybe," said the commentary sessions allowed her to see how detached she was from the piece's subject matter.



**PERSONAL EXPERIENCES** and reactions to musical works inspired many of the students in the creation of their own dance pieces. MATT MILLER/DN

## Actor spreads magic of classical music to all ages

By BARB CHURCHILL  
Assignment Reporter

Pratfalls, pies in the face and Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky usually don't mix well.

But Dan Kamin believes otherwise.

Kamin, an actor/magician who has worked on physical comedy routines with actors such as Johnny Depp (in "Benny and Joon") and Robert Downey Jr. (in "Chaplin"), is bringing his love of classical music to town Sunday for a performance with the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra.

The program, entitled "The Lost Elephant," features Kamin as a zoo keeper in search of, appropriately enough, a missing elephant.

Kamin has toured the country to promote classical music. He has appeared with the Baltimore,

Pittsburgh, Minnesota, Colorado and Phoenix orchestras in what he terms "Comedy Concertos," which combine classical music with theater to create a unique comedic and musical experience.

Kamin did this because he thinks people have become less receptive to classical music.

"We have become a culture of segmentation," he said. "Just think about it. In the 19th century, the symphony orchestra wasn't the only thing for the audience to listen to or look at."

Kamin said concerts used to feature singers, actors, dancers, magicians and trained animals as well as the musicians to "lure in" audiences.

With "The Lost Elephant," Kamin is attempting to bring that sense of showmanship back to classical performances.

"All ages can respond to the interplay between the narrator, the zoo keeper, the musicians and the

audience," Kamin said.

In "The Lost Elephant," the zoo keeper has lost Elmer, his elephant, and collaborates with the orchestra to throw a concert to try and lure him back to the zoo.

Jeth Mill, executive director of the Lincoln Symphony, said Kamin "engages the audience with physical comedy, word gags and sleight of hand but then gets out of the way of the music."

"The physical comedy helps, but there also is a clever script involved," Mill said.

Kamin said this type of concert really appeals to him.

"My mission - and I am on a mission - is to expose kids to the message that classical music is exciting," Kamin said.

"(Classical music) can be fun and funny. It can be exciting theater, especially in a piece like this,

because everybody gets into the act - the orchestra, the conductor and the audience."

In a sense, Kamin said, the audience is the "elephant," because just as the zoo keeper is looking for Elmer the elephant, the symphony is looking for an audience.

"Many people would rather go to the dentist than attend a classical music concert," Kamin said.

"People don't think classical concerts are 'date events' like movies unless they are marketed as such. Some symphonies are attempting new things."

The perception of classical music as "a yawner" is common, Mill said.

There's only one problem with that assumption, though, he said: It's wrong.

Please see **DANCE** on 15

Please see **MAGIC** on 15