

## Feline musical comes to Lied Center

■ Broadway's longest-running musical, "Cats," is based on children's poetry.

**DANELL MCCOY**  
Staff writer

Since its opening in 1981, "Cats" has continually captured the hearts of audiences around the world.

Beginning tonight at the Lied Center for Performing Arts, 301 N. 12th St., "Cats" will begin its five-performance run featuring the Fourth National Touring Company of "Cats."

The musical is based on a book of 14 children's poems written by T.S. Eliot called "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats." The book was not considered one of Eliot's most famous works by his peers but was adored by children.

The book began as a collection of poems Eliot had written for the entertainment of his friends and godchildren. Each poem defines a specific cat and the personalities of that cat. At the same time, Eliot appears to make fun of the owners and of English society as well.

Eliot's whimsical prose inspired composer Andrew Lloyd Webber to create the musical score for "Cats."

"Cats" opened for the first time in London in May 1981 and became the longest-running musical in Broadway history in June 1997.

Paul Clausen, who plays Munkustrap in the production by the Fourth National Touring Company,

## Omaha's Joslyn recovers its original 1930s beauty

■ Renovations have restored architect's intended look and highlight display features.

**JOSH NICHOLS**  
Staff writer

The Joslyn Art Museum contains beauty that has been hidden for 20 years.

In an attempt to extend hanging and display space in the 1970s, the Joslyn, 2200 Dodge St. in Omaha, covered a majority of its galleries' elegant architecture and wall designs.

Now, because of recent renovations, visitors will be able to enjoy art from past centuries in a setting that highlights some of the beauty in the building's original design.

Last Saturday marked the reopening of the Joslyn Art Museum's Hitchcock and Kiewit Galleries.

Both galleries, which feature 19th century European and American art, have undergone a three-month renovation period. The renovation included revealing the galleries' original marble wainscoting along with adding new color and lighting schemes.

"We have introduced color into the galleries for the first time," said Claudia Einecke, associate curator. "Every gallery now has its own color scheme."

Blue-gray shades enhance the Hitchcock Gallery, while the walls and ceilings of the Kiewit Gallery are a brownish-gray. The new schemes

### Lied Center The Facts

**What:** "Cats"  
**Where:** Lied Center for Performing Arts, 301 N. 12th St.  
**When:** Tuesday, Oct. 26 to Friday, Oct. 29. All performances at 8 p.m. with an added matinee at 2 p.m. Wednesday.  
**Cost:** \$45, \$41, \$37 or Wed. afternoon \$42, \$38, \$34. Student tickets are discounted.  
**The Skinny:** The Broadway musical prowls into Lincoln.

said one reason "Cats" is so popular is its ability to attract a variety of age groups.

"I think that it resonates within a wide group of people," he said. "Most children's shows are not for parents, but 'Cats' is more sophisticated. Children enjoy it, but parents can also enjoy it, because of the poetry and the costumes. The whole musical is crafted smartly."

"Cats" has what Clausen calls "the feel of a family reunion." This is because the plot focuses on a group of cats that gather once a year at a Jellicle ball. At the gathering, the oldest cat of the group, Old Deuteronomy, picks one who will be reborn.

Throughout the performance, different cats are introduced, and their stories are told.

Clausen's character is the narrator of the story who introduces the different cats.

Clausen said that as an actor, his love for the musical comes from the part that he plays.



In June 1997, "Cats" won its title as the longest-running Broadway musical in history.

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"You have to not be self-conscious," he said. "You have to throw away all cares of how you look and go to total abandonment. It's a very physical show and very challenging."

"As for my character, I get to tell the story every night, and I get to communicate to the audience what is happening. To see the audience understand what is going on onstage

is very rewarding."

Clausen has worked with the Fourth National Touring Company since January, but he performed with the tour during its 1987-89 seasons.

Clausen, who saw the musical in New York when it first opened, said "Cats" was a good way to experience theater.

"For a lot of people, their first the-

atrical experience either bores them or it's great.

"Cats" is a great theatrical experience. There is music and poetry, acting and dancing. There are so many layers of art onstage.

"And there is always a new generation to see the show. That helps it to keep running for so many years. I think it deserves its longevity."

## UNL's "The Lion in Winter" lacks cohesion, comic hook

■ The Theater department's production continues through Saturday.

**BY LIZA HOLTMEIER**  
Senior editor

"The Lion in Winter" is often called a dramatic comedy. In the UNL Department of Theatre Arts' production, it's easy to see why the drama comes before the comedy.

In Saturday's performance of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln production, the cast carried off an emotional royal family's feuding well, but the actors' perpetual regalness drowned out many of the more comic lines.

The play takes place on Christmas in 1183. Henry II, King of England, has gathered his wife and sons for a holiday celebration. And celebrate they do, with back-stabbing, conniving plots over who will be the next king.

The play's comic elements suffer most from pacing problems. Many of the actors present each of their words with a plodding gravity, forsaking the quick repartee needed to make this royal family's sparring effective.

Each set change is also solemnly drawn out, interrupting the show's flow.

For the part of Henry II, the department brought in Equity actor David Wiles. While Wiles' voice provides his Henry with a regal and often imposing nature, his stilted mannerisms inhibit the character from developing fully. He lacks the variety needed to make Henry into the cunning, spirited fox he should be.

### Theater

Shirley Carr Mason, a UNL theater professor, is the highlight of the show. Mason plays the deliciously shrewd Eleanor of Aquitaine, Henry's wife. Mason brings a vigorous strength to the role, making Eleanor humanly greedy and alternately nurturing.

Karen Kumm, a UNL theater major, plays Alais Capet, Henry's mistress. Kumm resorts to stony glares and head-shaking disdain. Only near the last act do we see the range of emotion she is capable of.

Steve Barth plays the sullen John, Henry's youngest son. Barth brings the immature youth to life with his smug walk, snotty head tosses and curt remarks.

The second eldest son, Geoffrey, is cleverly played by Kyle Johnston. Johnston knows when to raise his voice and when to be subtly forceful. He delivers Geoffrey's lines with a dry, intelligent wit.

Matthew Bross plays Richard, Henry's eldest son. During the first act, Bross delivers his lines with a relentless morbidity. But in the final act, he rounds his character out with telling softness.

At one point, amid all the deception and treachery, Eleanor remarks, "What family doesn't have its ups and downs?"

The same holds true for this production, which shines with several individual performances but fails in cohesiveness.

The play continues tonight through Saturday in the Studio Theatre of the Temple Building.

“The changes have created a warmer, more welcoming feeling.”

**CLAUDIA EINECKE**  
associate curator at Joslyn

years," Einecke said. "They make quite a nice group."

One of Joslyn's goals in the renovation and reinstallation project was to provide visitors with more information about the art they were looking at.

"We are offering more material for people to read and look at if they like," Einecke said. "Every piece of artwork has an individual label and text explaining the artist and work on display."

Einecke said the museum also is providing more information about groups of work and explanations about the time period they came from.

Every gallery also has gallery cards explaining the different art themes. People can pick up the cards and keep them.

Marsha V. Gallagher, chief curator of the museum, said the gallery renovations were an attempt to recreate the gallery's original appearance.

"We were not trying to put the galleries back exactly how they were in 1931 but put back what the architects intended the building to look like," Gallagher said.

bring out details in the architectural designs.

"The changes have created a warmer, more welcoming feeling," Einecke said.

Significant changes have also been made in the galleries' art displays.

The Kiewit Gallery now presents 19th century European and American art side by side. In the past, the gallery displayed European art alone.

"A lot of American art is very closely related to European art of the same time," Einecke said. "Back then, many American art students went to Europe to study, because Europe was the leading place in art production of the time."

This display will give people the opportunity to see the parallels and differences between works from the two continents, Einecke said.

Another change in the Kiewit Gallery was the construction of a separate, smaller space within the larger gallery as a home for smaller-scale paintings.

"The reason for doing that was a lot of a 19th-century French collection contained small paintings. A smaller space was more appropriate and suitable," Einecke said.

The Hitchcock Gallery, dedicated to early, European-derived art from America's colonial and post-colonial eras, also had some changes in its display. The museum has added a new feature display of Spanish Colonial paintings to the gallery. Some are on display for the first time in the museum.

"Some have been hung in other galleries, but the paintings haven't been made as a feature for many