

arts and entertainment

Lincoln television production house serves Midwest

By Peg Sheldrick

Not many inhabitants are aware of it, but Lincoln is the home base for an up-and-coming TV production house whose market spans the Midwest. What began as a two-man basement operation in 1976 has grown into a successful nine-employee company with its own building and a branch office in Los Angeles.

Smeloff TV Productions is located in a modest, quiet-looking frame house on 27th Street. Only the sign out front hints at the sophisticated nature of the business that goes on within. Much of the homey atmosphere has been retained inside. In the hallway sits an antique television. Only one room has been remodeled to accommodate

the video equipment. It is inside this room, where lights blink, tapes flash on the monitor, and talk runs rampant of dubbing and mixing that you get a feeling for the complexity of this operation.

Lincoln had a need

Nick Smeloff formed the company in December 1975. He had been working as a producer and director for ETV, and perceived a need for this kind of production organization in Lincoln. In July 1976, Smeloff joined forces with Don Jacks, who was working at UNL's Office of University Information.

The company has had great success in its relatively short history.

Even so, most passers-by have no idea what the Smeloff organization does.

"We are constantly asked if we make house calls because someone's TV set is broken," Jacks said. "People have no concept of a TV production company. They don't think about where the programs come from—they think they come from New York and Los Angeles, not from Lincoln, and they're very surprised."

Directs, records commercials

The company directs and records commercials and programs for clients. Among their clients are Godfather's Pizza, National Bank of Commerce, Old Home, Provident Savings and Loan, and Ford dealers in Omaha and Kansas City.

"We don't write them (the ads)," Jacks explained. "We control to an extent the kind of shots that go in."

The clients specify what they want on the screen, and it's up to the director to choose how it will look and how it will be photographed. Sometimes getting the shot is a simple matter, like shooting a loaf of bread on a table. But it isn't always that easy.

On-location operation

"Primarily we are an on-location operation," Jacks said. The camera and microphones are suited for remote shooting, which can mean anything from up in a plane to down a mountain side in a ghost town. The 150 pounds of equipment has

been "pushed and carried and dragged" up bell towers and into balloons. They haven't mastered underwater photography yet, but that's about the only restriction on the type of shots the Smeloff organizations goes after.

Once the photography is finished, the twenty-minute video tape cassettes are returned to the office for editing. Tapes, unlike films, are not cut and spliced. Editing is accomplished by means of dubbing the usable material onto a master tape. Eventually sound and whatever other elements are necessary are added according to client specifications. The result is the finished commercial or program.

Remote shooting busy

Remote shooting is a busy business. "Right now we're going about 15 days a month, which means we're becoming authorities on restaurant food and motels," Jacks said.

Last week, for example, the three-man crew drove 450 miles, shot two series segments in one day, shot ten more episodes, drove 600 miles back, and were home by Saturday.

"That's the only way you can do it," he said of the intensive schedule that produced two and a half weeks worth of shows.

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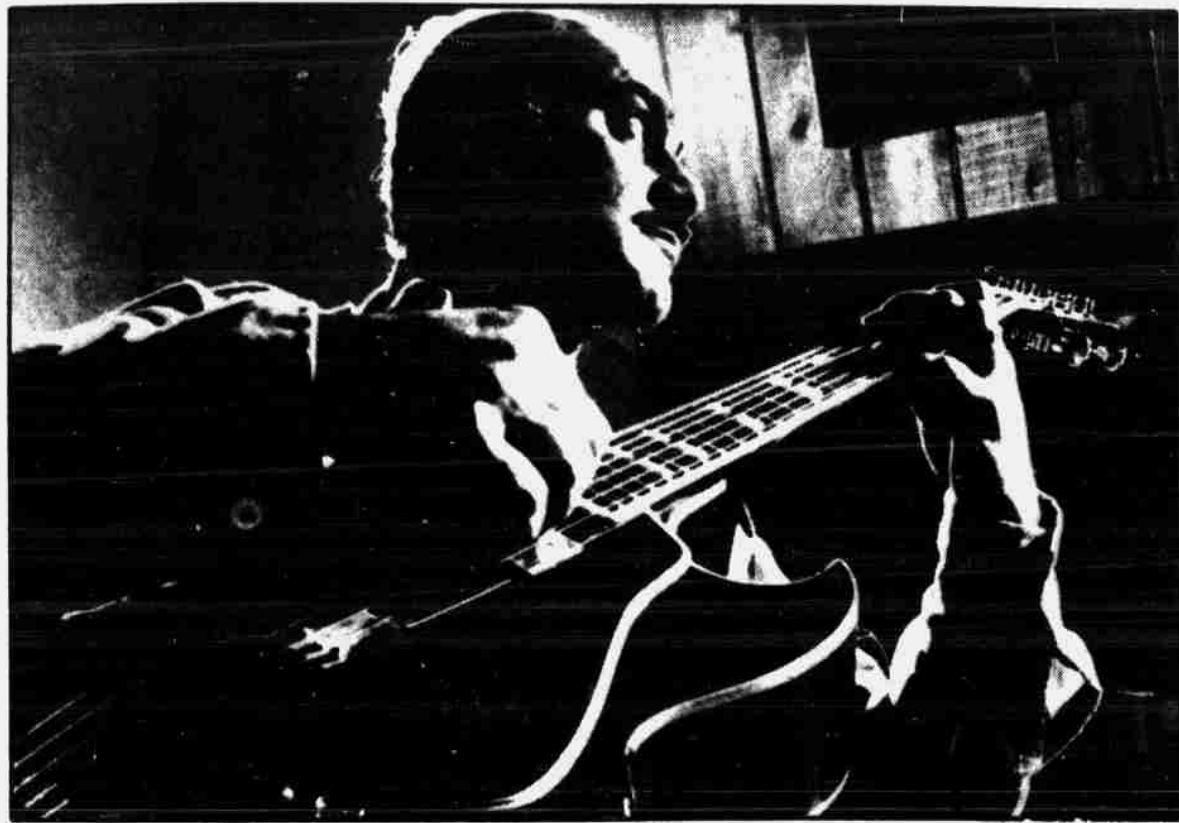


Photo by Pablo

Joe Pass' "unequaled" style and technique earned him an acclaim of world's best guitarist. He is scheduled to appear Saturday in Kimball Auditorium.

Polls call Pass best guitarist; to appear Saturday evening

Joe Pass, one of the world's most honored jazz guitarists, will appear this Sat Saturday at 8:00 in Kimball Auditorium.

In the last year Pass has been named World's Best Guitarist by the *Down Beat Reader's Poll*, *Critic's Poll* and the 15th Annual Reader's Poll of *Swing Journal*.

entertainment notes

Jon Sievert in *Guitar Magazine* said: "Pass has developed an improvisational style and technical virtuosity perhaps unequalled in the instrument's history."

The Lincoln Jazz Society is sponsoring Pass' appearance. Tickets still are available for \$6.00 at Dirt Cheap and the Kimball box office.

The Sheldon Film Theater will be showing *1900*, the four hour Bernardo Bertolucci epic November 12 through 16 as part of the UPC Foreign Films series.

The film, which stars Burt Lancaster, Robert De Niro, Dominique Sandra and Donald Sutherland, centers around two boys born on the same day in 1901, on the same Emilian estate.

Olmo, the first born, is the son of a peasant; Alfredo is the son of the padrone. Olmo and Alfredo are set as children

against the backdrop of the peasant strikes and rebellions of 1908, as young men just after World War I, and through the rise of Fascism and the Second World War. They are seen again on April 25, 1945, Liberation Day, when the peasants of Emilia for one day seize the land and Alfredo, the new padrone, with it.

Finally, the film shows Olmo and Alfredo set in the early 1970s—very old men fighting the battle of history they've been waging all their lives.

Screenings for *1900* are at 7:00 p.m. only.

The Union Program Council-East, will be sponsoring two showings of the films *The Goodbye Girl*, and *The Great Train Robbery*. They can be seen in The Great Plains Room of the Nebraska East Union at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, November 12, and at 9:00 p.m. Monday, November 13.

Also on Sunday, there will be a disco dance after the show, until 11:00 p.m. It is free with a movie ticket, 50 cents without.

The Collegium Musicum of UNL, will present a concert of early music on Sunday, November 12 at 8:00 p.m. at the Wesley House, 640 N. 16th St. In addition to works of early instruments and of vocal soloists, the program will feature early choral music, sung by a newly-formed choral ensemble.

Stewart reaches big time without following formulas

By Jeff Taebel

The world of rock music is one of many strange hybrids. Funk has united with bubblegum to give us disco, jazz and rock have merged to give us fusion and frustration and alienation of the '70s have joined with the musical simplicity of the '50s, yielding punk.

album review

Somewhere in the midst of this confusion stands Al Stewart, who has hit the big time without following any of the aforementioned formulas. Stewart's music has always been a breath of fresh air on the airwaves, providing an excellent antidote to the monosyllabic mindlessness that is continually foisted upon us by the powers that be.

Stewart, like Paul Simon, Dylan and precious few other songwriters can produce a catch hit song that can leave the listeners with more to think about than your average AM fare.

Fine fillers

In addition to his commercial success in the singles market, Stewart has continually turned out fine songs to fill out his albums, rather than being content to produce an album which contains two hits and eight throwaways.

As a matter of fact, many of Stewart's more evocative pieces do not receive much airplay, a perfect example being his poignant "Roads To Moscow," which was a titanic undertaking for a rock songwriter.

Stewart's latest album, *Time Passages*, breaks no new ground as it is filled with material which stays in the same basic framework, yet it is not merely a rehashing of old songs.

His backup band is as strong as ever, the lead guitar work of Tim Renwick and Peter White along with the big, buzzing sax of Phil Kenzie, pick the songs up in all the right places.

Production good

The production chores are handled admirably by Alan Parsons, who succeeds in capturing the subtle essence of Stewart's vocals, which certainly are not overpowering.

However, as is often the problem with Parson's work, the sound quality is a little too artificial. The acoustic guitars and drums sound crisp, and the solos jump out into the forefront at appropriate interludes, yet the music seems to lose some of its immediacy in the process.

Stewart's songwriting touch remains as deft as ever and, while he misses his mark with a few tunes, he turns in a strong performance throughout most of the album.

Heavy-handed

Side one is highlighted by "Time Passages," "Valentia Way" and "A Man For All Seasons," all of which have fine melodies and expressive lyrics. But the references to Henry Plantagenet and Thomas More in the side's closing number are a bit heavy-handed.

Side two gets off to a good start with "Almost Lucy" and the grandiose "Palace Of Versailles" but finishes on a low note with "Song On The Radio" and "End Of The Day."

However, one drawback *Time Passages* has is the fact that the music and lyrics are, for the most part rather subdued, inducing moods of dark introspection which are not balanced by any good, clean fun. Even Dylan and Simon occasionally cut loose in an exuberant fashion, but Stewart seems to be caught in a perpetual state of melancholy and, as a result, much of his material is often better suited for late night listening on the radio than for playing in your home on a Friday afternoon.

