

Arts & Entertainment



Lincoln jazz bands jam past problems with 'family' form

By Kevin Cowan
Senior Reporter

The horns swell, moving — gliding — slowing, to lucent azure tones. The drummer, in two-four time, rolls down the toms — to the bass — then the high hat, leading by the ear to the blessed bridge.

Jazz in Lincoln resembles a small family. It's interfunctional. There are many players and only a couple of well-organized groups. Everyone knows the

others; if you're good, they're always happy to have you jam.

Mother's Big Band Jazz and the Lincoln Jazz Underground comprise the majority of the jazz scene. Both play at regular intervals, but as Craig Lenz of Mother's and Bill Wimmer of the Jazz Underground both said, the field is not as lucrative as it could be.

"I think a lot of the problem," Lenz said, "is simply that people don't really know when or where we're playing."

Lenz started Mother's Big Band Jazz about 1 1/2 years ago at Chesterfield, Bottomsley and Potts on Monday nights. They enjoyed a moderate following. But it's hard for a bar to support an 18-piece ensemble, sell imports for \$1 and still show a profit, Lenz said.

Something had to change. Mother's Big Band Jazz now plays at the Zoo Bar from 7 to 9 p.m. on Mondays.

Different from any other nondescript local band, Mother's has about 50 members, all of whom play at any given time. Those same 50 also play with eight of 10 other jazz bands.

"Mother's is a practice band," Lenz said, "We try and do modern arrangements of classic pieces that everyone wants to do. We trade off doing the solos."

Lenz said he thinks a big band has the advantage of more structure over a smaller — say, four-piece — jazz band.

Because all the people in Mother's sight-read well, the band does many reasonably complicated pieces of *creme-de-la-creme* jazz. Contrary to the stereotype, jazz musicians hold hard reservations about mainstream jazz tunes like "In the Mood."

"Yeah," Lenz said, "everybody hates that one."

Mother's is sponsored, logically enough, by Mother's Music Co., 5610 S. 49th St. Lenz is considered the leader but "it's really a mutual effort by a bunch of different guys."

The cover for Mother's on Mondays is \$1.

The Lincoln Jazz Underground "jams" at the Clayton House each Friday from 5 to 7 p.m. Like Mother's, different people play on idfferent occasions — sax to vibraphone, piano to stand-up bass.

The Clayton House hasn't always been the Underground's sanctuary. For a long time they played at McGuffey's on Thursdays, where they enjoyed a large following. But since jazz night and McGuffey's died, things have been a little slow for Bill Wimmer, organizer of the Jazz Underground.

"McGuffey's gave us a place to play," Wimmer said, "and the Clayton House hasn't had music for a long time. People just don't really know that we're still playing."

Up and coming for Wimmer and the Underground are duo jazz jam sessions on Saturdays and a gig at the Cornhusker Place on New Year's Eve.

Poet to read works at Andrews Hall

Marilyn Krysl, nationally renowned poet and essayist, will read from her works in the faculty lounge of Andrews Hall at 3:30 p.m. Monday.

Krysl has written three books of poetry, "Saving Things," "More Palamino, Please, More Fuchsia" and "Diane Lucifera" as well as two books of short stories.

Krysl's work has appeared in The Atlantic, The Nation and the New Republic.

Krysl received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and in 1986, was awarded the University of Colorado Faculty Book Prize for a book of short stories, "Mozart, Westmoreland and Me." She teaches creative writing at the University of Colorado in Boulder and is a past director of the creative writing program there.

Sharon Kreimer, a vocalist for the Brunettes, sings "Willow, Weep for Me" with Mother's Big Band Jazz at the Zoo Bar.



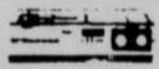
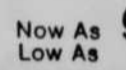

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