

# Exotic dancer ignores shyness to perform with family's blessing

By Anne Steyer  
Staff Reporter

The lights pulsed in rhythm to George Michael's "Freedom" — an appropriate choice in a conservative society. The dancer about to appear would be topless.

She climbed onto the U-shaped bar in an innocuous white mini-dress and white stiletto pumps. She walked from one end to the other, swaying her hips, warming to the rhythm of the music.

As the tempo of the music increased, so did the intensity of her movements. She danced, unbuttoning her dress as she moved.

Some viewers may have felt voyeuristic, but to Destiny Down, an exotic dancer working under that stage name at The Foxy Lady, they were watching an artist at work.

Down, 20, has been dancing at The Foxy Lady for two years. The legal age for exotic dancing is 18. Down is old enough to dance topless in a bar but not old enough to drink there.

She answered an advertisement in the newspaper that announced openings for female dancers. It promised a better-than-average hourly wage and excellent tips. Urged on by her husband Phil, she decided to audition.

It was no easy decision for Down, who said she is a naturally shy person who had trouble in speech class.

The day of her audition, Down was so nervous she made herself sick and left without auditioning. She gathered up courage to return before the week was out and auditioned on a Saturday night before a standing-room-only crowd.

Down has danced there five days a week ever since. The dancing begins at 11:30 a.m. and continues until close at 1 a.m. Her shifts vary, but generally she dances four to five sets a shift, four to five songs a set.

The music is an integral part of her job. She picks music she enjoys listening and dancing to, generally looking for something with a strong beat.

"I love to dance," she said.

There is controversy and criticism associated with exotic dancing. Some call it pornographic or obscene, while others consider it an expression of artistic freedom.

"It is more or less of an art, you



Robin Trimarchi/DN

Destiny Down swirls to the music on the bar at The Foxy Lady.

know," Down said. "It takes a lot of talent to know how to dance."

"It's not having sex, it's not dirty, the men are not touching you," she said. "I wouldn't be dancing" if they could touch.

The "hands off" rule comes from higher authority than the club owners, namely the city of Lincoln. Clubs do pass some house rules of their own. At the club where Down works, dancers must keep themselves entirely on the bar, the stage or the floor. Straddling is not allowed. Dancers are required to wear full-bottomed clothing, meaning G-strings and T-straps are not acceptable.

Also, tipping is monitored. Dancers only can accept tips that are handed to them with the bills folded lengthwise. No longer are they allowed to take tips mouth to mouth or with body parts other than their hands.

There is no contact physically with the patrons of the club.

In addition to choosing the music and working on the dance movements, Down said costuming is an important part of exotic dancing. Some of the dancers wear actual

costumes, though many wear clothing that is nice to look at and easy to take off, such as dresses and swimwear.

Down's mother is working on an American Indian costume for her act, complete with headdress, beaded bodice and moccasins. Having a costume is appropriate, as Down likens exotic dancing to the theater.

"It's like acting basically," she said.

Some might find her mother's involvement in her career strange. But Down comes from a long line of dancers. Her mother was a go-go dancer at the Royal Grove, three of her aunts have danced professionally at one time or another and one of her brothers is an exotic dancer.

Down intends to dance as long as she can. She said the money can't be beaten. The Foxy Lady currently advertises an hourly wage of \$9 plus excellent tips.

Down said she can't complain about the money.

"I'm buying my house."

# Dance bar to shy away from mainstream

By Carter Van Pelt  
Staff Reporter

Discotheque! A few years ago that word was enough to send people running for the door and sticking their fingers down their throats.

However, times change, and with the undeniable return of dance/disco music to the mainstream of American pop, the discotheque has returned as well.

This weekend, Lincoln will be introduced to another dance club,

Fat City, to be opened adjacent to Barry's at 227 N. Ninth Street.

Club disc jockey David Conover acknowledged the attempt made by The Precinct and The Underground at getting the club scene going, but he said he feels they might have fallen a bit short of their potential.

"I'm interested in playing less of a pop sound, more obscure stuff you don't hear in Omaha or Lincoln," he said. "The Precinct is an ideal club, but it's too big; the scene gets lost in its size. My club is

a little more intimate.

"Omaha isn't doing much either. You can see nationally recognized bands, but you need to be able to play pool and maybe use a golf machine."

Conover said the focus will be on industrial, high energy hip hop, world beat, acid jazz and rap.

Visitors to Fat City can expect to groove to Nine Inch Nails, Front 242, Peter Murphy, Shamen, Pixies, Kraftwerk and occasionally a more

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# Primitive

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of the drums until the guttural yelling begins. (Drums were useful, although not always essential in primitive dancing.)

**Movement #3** — Dancers form a circle, take one arm and slowly raise and lower it toward the opposite leg while bending at the mid-section. Repeat with opposite appendages.

**Movement #4** — Free-for-all for all dancers to whirl into a pseudo-hypnotic trance.

**Movement #5** — One member of the primitive group lets out a howl, signalling dancers to fall flat

to the ground, twitch and convulse until the music stops. (Primitive dancers had incredible muscle control, enabling them to quiver at will.)

As I lay there on the cool dance room floor while the music died down, I glanced over to fellow members of the group. I was the only one still convulsing.

A brief wave of embarrassment washed over me, but as I got up and faced the audience, I felt a sense of elation and a faint sense of freedom.

The Intro to Dance project helped me knock down a few barriers and push into a world of movement that sometimes seems scary.

Now I know why humans danced.

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