

## Starship Nine blasting off into downtown theater scene

By Gerry Beltz  
Staff Reporter

At noon today, the new Starship Nine, 1311 Q St., will launch into orbit as Lincoln's largest movie complex.

Known to many people as simply the "big pink theater" (for its highly noticeable outside decoration), the Starship will offer nine screens showing second-run movies at a discount rate of \$1.50 per seat, an 'express' concessions center and about 20 video games and pinball machines.

The interior decor of the Starship Nine has a cosmic feel. In some of the theaters, and the entire length of the hallway leading to the various theaters, black lighting has been installed, causing all white clothing to glow, as well as the multi-colored carpeting that was especially selected to go with the black lighting.

Four of the theaters have hanging decorations of stars, planets, and a replica of the Starship Enterprise, all of which pick up the black lighting as well.

All the theaters will feature the ultra-sound system, for a full stereo surround-sound environment.

Debbie Mardock, vice president of Douglas Theaters Company, said the express concessions stand would have a station concept similar to the concession setups at the Lincoln and Edgewood Theaters.

The Starship will have one central concession location with four stations, each covered by one employee. Instead of having to run back and forth to fill a person's request, everything will be right there and the employee need only turn around for the desired item(s).

Seating capacity at the Starship varies from about 210 to 300, depending on the theater. Each seat is padded and body-contoured, Mardock said, and also features a cup holder built into each armrest.

Byron Bonsall, manager of the Starship Nine, noted the advantage of the same-day advance ticket sales option that the Starship would offer.

With this option, a movie-goer may buy a ticket anytime for a later showing that same day.

Bonsall also said discount theaters such as the Starship attracted a wide variety of people.

"We see business people, fixed-income families, senior citizens," Bonsall said, "but our biggest draw here will probably be college students."

On weekdays, the Starship will show one midday matinee, about 3 p.m., along with the typical three evening showings.

Mardock and Bonsall said they thought the Starship would not damage the business of the first-run theaters in downtown Lincoln.

"We are strong supporters of downtown Lincoln," Mardock said.

Bonsall also said the Starship wasn't limited to recent movies, but also may run movies of classic or cult status, such as "Pink Floyd, The Wall," "Heavy Metal," and "Rebel Without a Cause."

Included in its opening movie lineup will be such Oscar winners as "Bugsy," "The Silence of the Lambs," and "City Slickers," as well as box-office hits like "The Addams Family" and "The Hand That Rocks The Cradle."



William Lauer/DN

Head Chef Russ Weddington is surrounded by his cookware at the Elleven Restaurant and Lounge, 11th floor, 1240 O St.

## Culinary creator Chef strives for good taste, look

ENTERTAINING  
PEOPLE



By Mark Baldridge  
Senior Reporter

Chef Weddington runs an informal kitchen. "My employees call me 'Chef' or 'Russ'. But I don't like titles much, or last names. "In some kitchens the only way you address a chef is 'Chef'," he says. Russ is an executive chef. That's one step below master chef, as high as you can go in

the world of culinary preparations. And he's the head chef of Elleven, one of Lincoln's finer restaurants.

I had a chance to talk with him recently in the Sky Room of Elleven about food, art and management.

Russ says there's a tendency to "focus on just the food and not the other parts of the job."

"There's menu planning," he says, "deciding what's going to be on the new season menu."

"There's buying produce, cost management — accounting type work — and communication."

He says a large part of his job is creating

See CHEF on 10

## Australia's baby animals will cry out to Omaha fans

Down-under appeal helping  
Van Halen's opening band  
garner American success

By John Payne  
Senior Reporter

Time was, you could count the number of big-name Australian rock bands on one hand. There was AC/DC, Air Supply . . . let's see, who else? Oh yeah, the Little River Band, let's not forget the Little River Band.

Then, in the mid-'80s, INXS emerged from down under and opened doors for countrymen like Midnight Oil, Crowded House, the Church and the Divinyls.

Add the Sydney, Australia, quartet baby animals to the growing collection of great bands from the southern hemisphere.

"I guess there hasn't been that many," concedes baby animals bassist Eddie Parise.

"People are starting to hear more about Australian bands, but music is still dominated by American and English bands."

Sunday night, the baby animals will perform at Omaha's Civic Auditorium, opening for the biggest of American bands, Van Halen. The show is sold out.

While playing Australia's "pub circuit" last year, the baby animals caught the ear of Terry Ellis, president of the upstart imago record label, and the band was quickly signed.

Powered by vocalist/songwriter/sempot Suze DeMarchi, the band's debut album recalls the best work of Lone Justice or the Motels' Martha Davis. Their emphasis on no-nonsense guitars, coupled with DeMarchi's tough-chick appeal, make the animals suitable for both AOR radio and college rock markets. In fact, their LP recently went double platinum in Australia.

Still, the baby animals isn't the first band you'd expect to tour with metal giants like Van Halen.

"I actually asked Eddie (Van Halen) this question," Parise recalled. "Because we wondered about it, too."

"I guess what happened was they all sat down to figure out who they could tour with. They wanted a new band, and his wife Valerie (Bertinelli) bought our cassette and they all liked it. They went through about 12 other bands and finally decided on us. We were really lucky."

Lucky or not, the video for "Painless," the first single from "The Baby Animals" was added to MTV's "Buzz Bin" last month, while the band broke away from the Van Halen tour for a handful of European shows.

Parise said the transition from clubs to arenas had been a smooth one, made easier by a tour with Bryan Adams last year.

"We learned a lot on that tour, and we got accustomed to the big arenas," he said.

"We still like the clubs better, though, because everything sounds so much tighter, and the people are really close. It's just a different atmosphere."

The atmosphere may be different, but the band's outlook has remained the same. With a mixture of rock 'n' roll attitude and Aussie charm, Parise still refers to a 12,000-seat concert as "a gig." It may have been that sort of

See BABY on 10

## 'Mambo Kings' sparkles with melodramatic potency



"The Mambo Kings"



By Paul Winner  
Staff Reporter

While a sizzling mambo number pulsates in a Havana nightclub, a man's

throat is being slit in a scuffle in the backroom. The in-your-face opening of "The Mambo Kings" (Lincoln) preludes and sets the tone for the movie, which never once lets its audience get bored.

Based on Oscar Hijuelos' novel, the movie tells the story of two Cuban musician brothers who flee Havana amid mobster tensions to find their dream in the glittering nightclubs of 1950s New York. The boisterous rivalry between the two headstrong men is as tense as the love they have for each other and the dreams they long to realize.

With winning enthusiasm, Cesar

and Nestor Castillo (Armand Assante and Antonio Banderas) play their way to the top of Manhattan's mambo heap, which in the '50s was a pretty hip place to be. Along the way, they make enemies with a big-time mambo manager, yearn for their homeland, fall in love and jam quite impressively with Tito Puente.

Novice director Arne Slimacher has crafted an unpretentious but stylish period piece with the help of dashing performances by the two lead brothers.

Banderas, making his American film debut, has Nestor's sweet naïveté and conflicting soul down pat.

Assante, who is often reduced to portraying minor historical figures on NBC miniseries with Jane Seymour, seems to relish his role as Cesar. His trademark style of lucid bravado is perfectly suited to Cesar's tragic swagger. Their performances elevate the story above the melodrama it is destined to be.

Adding to the brothers' inbred tension is the relationship Nestor forms with Delores (a startlingly radiant Maruschka Detmers), a young girl who falls for the younger Castillo but harbors a strange affection for his charismatic brother. All three sparkle with genuinely moving passion on-

screen, though their relationship is somewhat abridged. Their emotions cut deep through the noise of the swirling Latin music playing in their heads.

In condensing Hijuelos' story, the film sacrifices a certain level of psychology and emotion that the book spelled out in technicolor detail. What is (thankfully) retained onscreen is the breathtaking pace and vibrancy of the mambo kings' songs of love, especially the poem "Beautiful Maria of My Soul," which becomes Nestor's swan song. When the film builds it-

See MAMBO on 10