

## New arrival

### UNL student invests interests in producing reggae disc

#### SPOTLIGHT

By Anne Steyer  
Staff Reporter

The spread of reggae fever has infected one University of Nebraska-Lincoln student, and he's turning the passion into profit.

Lincoln native Carter Van Pelt, 23, served as executive producer of "Kilimanjaro," the debut disc of reggae band Les Exodus.

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—Van Pelt  
student producer

the first time he heard the band.

"I went in there, and I saw them," he said. "After one or two songs, I was out there dancing."

Van Pelt said he developed a relationship with the members. Later he approached them about recording.

Les Exodus had been contacted by a record company, but no deal had been completed yet. So Van Pelt jumped in.

"Maybe I was bluffing my way through it," he said, "but I didn't see any reason why I couldn't do it."

Van Pelt said he had no idea where to begin, but he received help from local music producers and spent a lot of time on the phone with production companies.

The thing that spurred Van Pelt's interest in reggae was, ironically, the rock band The Police.

"One of the first albums I ever bought was The Police's 'Ghost in the Machine,'" he said. "There's a song called 'One World' — very reggae inspired."

Van Pelt's interest in reggae did not start with Les Exodus. The senior broadcasting major has been the host of "Reggae Fever," a KRNU music show, since last September. The show airs every Friday from 8 to 10 p.m.

Van Pelt said that experience stuck with him so much that he wanted to release "Kilimanjaro" under a label called "One World Records." Unfortunately, Van Pelt said, he couldn't because a label by that name already existed.

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Instead, he launched the label "Umoja Records." Umoja means "unity" in Swahili. Van Pelt said the label was appropriate for Les Exodus and what they stood for.

Van Pelt said he never expected to be involved with reggae as an executive producer, but it has been a positive experience — and one he's finished with a certain amount of pride.

"I'm as proud of this as anything I've ever done. It's a monster of a project, but look at it," he said, "It's beautiful."



Robin Trimarchi/DN

Carter Van Pelt stuffs jewel boxes with the Les Exodus CD covers.

Les Exodus hails from Minneapolis but has found a strong following in Lincoln. The band frequently stops at Rockin' Robin, 1435 O St.

Van Pelt said his role as executive producer did not involve him in the recording process.

Instead, he helped create the concept, design and final product. He also helped plan which songs, in what order, made it on the album.

Les Exodus' lead singer, Innocent, came up with the basic concept for the cover. But, otherwise, Van Pelt said, he had "total creative liberty."

That was a tall order for someone who had never before been involved in music production, but Van Pelt said he wasn't daunted by his inexperience.

"I didn't think about how difficult it would be long enough to get intimidated," he said.

Van Pelt began work on "Kilimanjaro" in February. The final cost of his part of the production was nearly \$3,800.

Van Pelt said he delved into his life savings for the project, but he didn't consider it a risky venture.

"I had no intention of losing my ass," he said. "I know how good this band is."

If half of the compact discs and cassettes sell, Van Pelt said, he stands to break even. Everything past that is profit that Van Pelt and the band will split proportionately to their investments.

Van Pelt said the album's production went over budget, but everything does.

And Van Pelt believes in this project. Van Pelt said he was hooked

## San Francisco reggae band debuts with songs of social relevance, love



Les Exodus  
"Kilimanjaro"  
Umoja Records

Les Exodus' debut disc, "Kilimanjaro," is a laid-back reggae fest.

The band, temporarily based in San Francisco, has been playing out of Minneapolis for some time, and Lincoln has become a regular

stop for the band.

The 10-song, one-dub disc is comprised of fairly diverse "socially relevant" material.

"United States of Africa," in particular, has much to say without being preachy: "United States of Africa/We've got to raise up a new nation/And unite..."

A couple of upbeat love songs — "My Number One" and "African Woman" — break up the serious mood.

Just the opposite effect from "Sorry," an apology in song from singer Innocent to his parents, a lament about what promises were broken and what expectations were not met.

The real highlight, though, is the stirring title track, "Kilimanjaro." The melody is beautiful; the lyrics, inspirational. And the funky "Africa Dub," complete with the body-swaying rhythms that make reggae so great, is a great ending to the disc.

Les Exodus puts on a fantastic live show. The dance floor is always overflowing, and the audience is encouraged to sing along.

The opportunity to see them presents itself at Rockin' Robin, 1435 O St. Les Exodus will celebrate the release of "Kilimanjaro" there tonight.

— Anne Steyer



Exodus

Courtesy of Umoja Records