

Band attributes style to diverse influences

SPOTLIGHT

By Joel Strauch
Senior Reporter

A dank basement. Red carpet hangs as a sound absorber. A dim, uncovered bulb swings from the ceiling.

This is the home of The Geckos, a Lincoln band with an intense brand of grungy mood music.

"This place is a lot better than 'The Dungeon,'" lead guitarist Matt Silcock said of their current practice pad.

"We used to play in a basement with a dirt floor, and if you'd move around too much, you would kick up a dust cloud," he said.

In addition to Silcock on guitar, The Geckos consist of Jeff Valenzuela as lead singer, Mitch Kline on bass and Chad Steskal on percussion.

Steskal recently graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Kline, Silcock and Valenzuela are enrolled at UNL. Besides studying, all four band members have jobs.

"There are a lot of time constraints, but we manage," Valenzuela said.

Steskal said, "Sometimes it's difficult finding time to practice and for shows."

The band has managed to find time to perform a lot in Lincoln at places such as Duffy's Tavern and the Edge.

"We've played around 20 shows here in Lincoln and two shows in Lawrence (Kan.) and Wichita (Kan.)," Kline said.

"We'd like to branch out a little bit and start playing more out of town," Silcock said.

The band has been together for about 14 months.

"Our next show will be a one-year anniversary of our first show," Silcock



Jay Calderon/DN

Three of four members of The Geckos practice for their Friday night performance. From left: bass player Mitch Kline, lead vocalist Jeff Valenzuela and guitarist Matt Silcock. Not pictured is Chad Steskal, percussionist.

said. The members attribute their style of music to multiple influences.

"It's hard to pinpoint the specific bands that have influenced us," Kline said.

"We're sort of a Helmet, Primus, Black Sabbath, Run DMC kind of band," Steskal said.

"We like playing heavy music like

these bands, but the more we play, the more we move away from our influences and develop our own style," Silcock said.

The band has recently recorded a 13-track compact disc at Lincoln's Studio Q.

This debut album, "Thistle," shows the diversity of the musical influences this band has felt.

Ranging from the heavy sounds of

"Loss" to the more mellow tune "It's Alright" and the didactic lyrics of "Trap," The Geckos demonstrate the many styles of music they are capable of playing.

The title of the album originated with Valenzuela's sold job digging thistles.

"I saw thistles in my sleep," Valenzuela said.

As far as the name of the band, the members insist that it means nothing.

"You never see a band with 'The' in front of the name," Kline said.

"We're trying to bring it back. We're like The Beatles," Silcock said. The Geckos will play at the UNL Culture Center on Friday. They will be performing with Throttle, Filter, Gregory, Mousetrap and Mercy Rule in a benefit for Ecology Now!

Lecture tonight to explore Nazi theft of Jewish music

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

In the midst of Adolf Hitler's reign, millions of Jews were robbed of their possessions, relatives, heritage and freedom.

While trying to destroy any will left to live, the Nazis stole yet another aspect of Jewish tradition — its music.

An aspect often overlooked, music played an important part during the rule of the Third Reich. This, and the prejudices that linger in today's society, will be the focus of an anti-Semitism lecture tonight.

"Anti-Semitism In German Universities Before Hitler: The Case of Music Scholarship," led by Pamela M. Potter, a music history professor at the University of Illinois, will be held at 7:30 p.m. in Room 229 of Andrews Hall.

Potter, who received her doctorate in music history from Yale in 1991, has conducted extensive research in Germany during the past several years.

"Ever since I've been in college, I've been interested in the connection between music and politics in all periods of history," she said.

Potter said once she started working with music in Nazi Germany, she realized no one had carefully analyzed it before. She said she discovered there were many successful musicians in Nazi Germany who remained successful after World War II, such as German composers Richard Strauss and Carl Orff.

"There were very strong reasons for leaving that whole subject untouched," Potter said.

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— Potter
University of Illinois
music history professor

— 99 —
She said music was important to the Third Reich because it provided yet another example of how Nazis believed they were superior to Jews.

"They pointed to composers who were writing atonal music and most of them were Jewish," she said. "There was basically a lot of discussion of how Jews were, through music, destroying German culture."

She said the revolt against Jewish music went as far as tearing down a statue of Felix Mendelssohn, a Jewish composer, in front of Germany's Leipzig Concert Hall.

"They also claimed that Jews and blacks worked together to create jazz, which they considered a destructive force," she said. "They wanted to replace this music with strong, healthy German folk songs, marches and symphonies."

She said a lot of good composers, both Jewish and German, were buried by the rubble of Nazi Germany.

A separate seminar, "Race and Musicology in the Third Reich" will be held today at 2:30 p.m. in Room 114 of Westbrook Music Building.

Artist's life reflected in his prints

By Steven Sparling
Staff Reporter

The 90 prints filling Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery reflect the life of a 20th-century urban artist.

New York artist Donald Sultan's "A Print Retrospective" will be on display at the gallery until April 10.

"Donald Sultan is one of the foremost artists of the 1980s and probably will remain a very important artist throughout the history of 20th-century art," Sheldon curator Daphne Deeds said.

Sultan said he got inspiration for his art from a variety of areas — in particular, artists Andy Warhol and Clyfford Still.

"The inspiration comes from the work itself. Each picture inspires the next picture, or each group of pictures tells me something else," he said.

Sultan not only creates prints but also does sculpture and designs sets of china, rugs and "paintings," which include the use of tar, plaster, linoleum tile, latex paint and other mate-

rials. "I've tried to combine the two. I'm not really a pop artist, but I'm not metaphysical," Sultan said.

Similar to various series of prints at the Sheldon, such as "Lemons," "Black Roses" and "The Female Series," Sultan is in the process of doing other work. He said he already started on a new series of dark landscape prints.

During a public lecture last Saturday, Sultan said each painting had its own theater. He said his art revealed his life, history and industrial environment in New York.

"I've been always interested in the architectural quality of painting, and I always felt more comfortable with the physicality of it — more the illustrative qualities of it."

Further inspiration came from working in an art gallery.

"I happened to see some men laying linoleum tile, and I decided to start working with that," Sultan said.

Such themes of architecture and industrialization show in the textural, grid-like geometry of his paintings

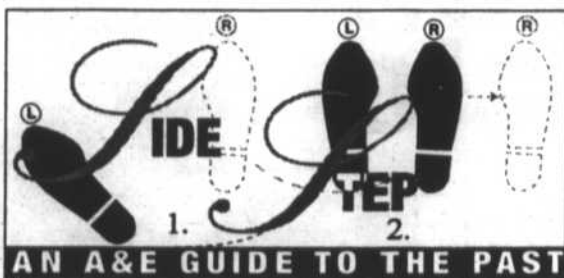
and prints, which began with his use of tile. One print series at the Sheldon, which deals with smokestacks and cigarettes, is the best example of this influence.

"(I get the ideas) from living in the city, looking out the window at the factory that makes things and being inside working on a table where things are made. I just started flipping them around," Sultan said.

Sultan became interested in fine arts early in life. He said he was originally a part of the Straw Hat circuit when he was younger. It was on this circuit that he toured, designing sets for plays and often acting in them.

"I did everything from acting to building the props and so on. When I went to college, I moved right into painting. It seemed a natural thing to do," Sultan said.

Sultan said his father, also an artist, took influences from the work of artists of the 1930s and '40s, an influence that Sultan shares. Sultan said he often worked with his father in his art studio in the basement of their home.



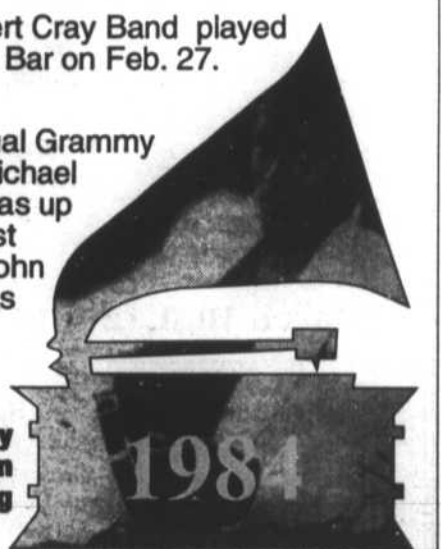
Week of February 28-March 4.
Ten years ago this week:

-New Album: The Pretenders, "Learning to Crawl."

-The Robert Cray Band played at the Zoo Bar on Feb. 27.

-26th Annual Grammy Awards: Michael Jackson was up for the most awards. John Denver was the MC.

-Compiled by Steven Sparling



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