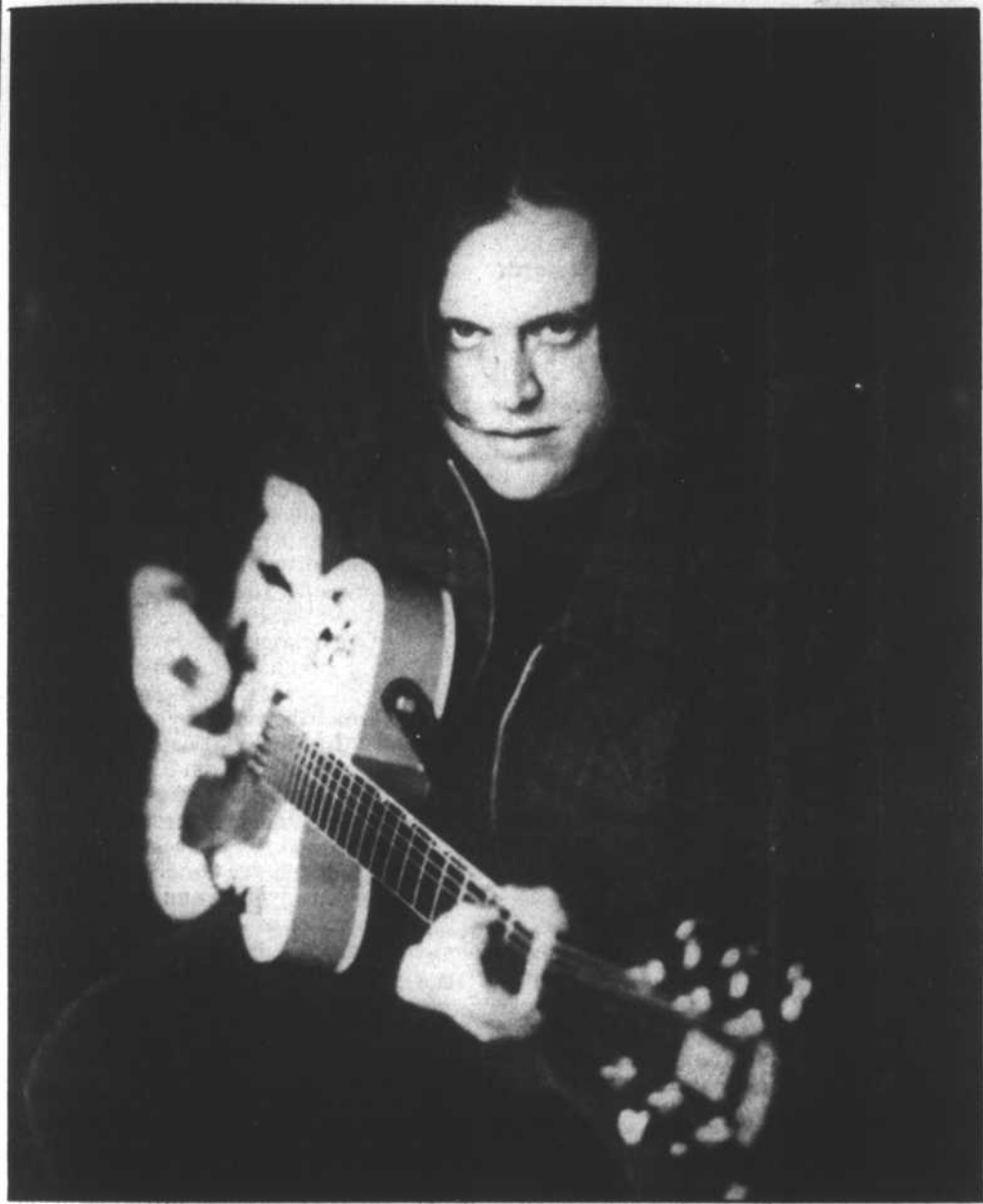


## Alternative rock singer 'sweet' on Nebraska



Courtesy of Zoo Entertainment

Lincoln native Matthew Sweet will bring his music home, performing both at an Omaha and a Lincoln concert.

### Concert preview

By Paula Lavigne  
Senior Reporter

Situated in the heartland of America, the fertile soils of Nebraska boast more than corn, wheat, beans and livestock. Flowering in musical stardom, alternative rocker Matthew Sweet traces his roots back to the Midwest.

Born and raised in Nebraska's capital city, Sweet takes pride in his "exotic" Nebraskan heritage. He'll come back home for two concerts in Omaha and Lincoln this week.

"When I got my first record deal, I still wanted to say I was from Nebraska," he said. "It was sort of exotic because a lot of people didn't know where Nebraska was."

With the initial success of Sweet's "Girlfriend," followed by the popularity of his follow-up release "Altered Beast" plus a live remixed "Son of Altered Beast," this Lincoln native continues to bring notoriety back to his hometown.

"I think Lincoln is a really good-sized city," he said. "If it was more closely located to a music industry center, I'd probably live there. People don't realize how safe it is and how cool the standard of living is there."

The singer/writer/guitarist said Nebraska wasn't the cultural wasteland a lot of people made it out to be.

"Lincoln is as good a college place as anywhere," he said. "There were always cool movies going to the Sheldon (Memorial Art Gallery) and import record stores."

Sweet said the only thing Lincoln didn't have compared to big cities were the slums and excessive crime.

As a senior at Lincoln Southeast High School, Sweet said he took a few classes at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Although he's replanted himself in Athens, Ga., with his wife Lisa (another Nebraska native), Sweet's friends and family roots remain in Nebraska.

"Everybody's really supportive of me," he said.

"In the beginning, they were worried about how I'd make my way in music, and now they're glad to see I'm getting some attention."

"I don't think they take it too seriously."

He said his success had given his mother some serious bragging rights.

"My parents are really proud of me, and they just have to talk about it a lot," he laughed.

Although it has given his parents something more than good grades to tuck on the refrigerator, their son's "Sweet" success has caused subtle problems, he said. However, he said the problems weren't too serious.

"When I first started having success, I never admitted anything was going on, because when I did accept it or admit it, it made me feel like a creep," he said. "I don't think I handled it too well, and in a weird sort of way I didn't want it to be true."

"I shunned that concept and blocked it out, and I started getting more pent up and troubled over time," Sweet said. He said touring and working on his albums occupied all his time. Eventually, he did reach a point where he could manage his day-to-day life on and off the road.

Sweet's struggle to deal with his success came right after his hit release "Girlfriend" and may have contributed to the dark overtones of his next release "Altered Beast."

However, Sweet said he himself didn't see that much difference between "Girlfriend" and "Altered Beast."

"All my songs were not that different, not that weird," he said. "It is kind of a darker side, and it got into more sorts of questions and metaphysical topics than 'Girlfriend.'"

Sweet said the devilish attitude on "Altered Beast" didn't correlate with his attitude on life at the time it was written.

"There's a lot of me in my songs, but what I couldn't understand about 'Altered Beast' was that things were going really good for me in my life at the time."

Nerves and anxiety followed Sweet with the release of "Altered Beast." The curse of a new artist reaching a climax of fame and popularity and then fading from existence hounded him.

See SWEET on 10

## Indian music recitals aiming for culture in Lincoln youth

### SPOTLIGHT

By Joel Strauch  
Senior Reporter

Sitting cross-legged on a raised platform and fronted by flowers, an incense lamp and a rice powder floor drawing, Rajeev Taranath plucked out haunting melodies of India on his 25-string sarod.

Taranath's recital was the first in a series of performances that will promote Indian classical music and culture among Lincoln youth, said Radha Balasubramanian, a professor of Russian here at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Balasubramanian, a native Indian, is also the faculty advisor of the Society for Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Amongst Youth (SPIC-MACAY).

This event was co-sponsored by the Indian Student Organization and the Office of International Affairs, she said.

"The goal of SPIC-MACAY is to arrange music performances that will make young people more aware of the different aspects of Indian culture," she said.

One of the more important aspects of Indian culture is music and ceremony at religious festivals.

"The rice powder drawing is a freehand design done by Indian women on auspicious occasions or outside the home every day to signify that everything is going well."

At the performance, Taranath and his accompanist Swapan Kumar Siva sat cross-legged on a raised platform instead of in chairs or on the floor. Balasubramanian said musicians received much respect in India.

"We cannot make them sit on the ground," she said. "Back in India we would squat below them on a lower level in the temples."

— "The sarod is in an instrument that represents a combination of Arabic and Indian culture."

—Balasubramanian  
faculty supervisor

Taranath's sarod is itself an example of the culture of India and Arabia, Balasubramanian said.

"The sarod is an instrument that represents a combination of Arabic and Indian culture. It is similar to the sitar of India, but it has many Arabic influences, like the sheepskin covering."

Taranath hasn't spent his life playing the sarod. A professor of English for 12 years, Taranath was advised by Ravi Shankar, one of the most popular Indian musicians in the United States, to give up teaching and play the sarod full time.

"Shankar told Rajeev that there were enough teachers and not enough sarod players," Balasubramanian said.

Siva, Taranath's accompanist, played the tabla, a set of two hand-beaten drums from North India. The smaller drum produced sharp, metallic sounds, and the larger drum carried the bass.

The combination of sarod and tabla produced a brand of music that could be intense and moving, as well as soothing and melodic.

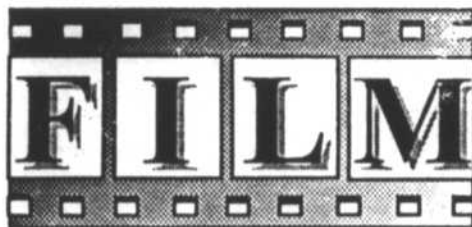
The duo's recital was self-supporting. However, Balasubramanian said, "The more support we get, the more we can do."

"We are trying to run these performances on donations as well as university and community support."

For its summer recital, the group wants to bring in Pandit Jasraj.

"He is one of India's greatest vocal musicians. Hearing his name will make any Indian stand up," Balasubramanian said.

## Pesci unwise to take role in terrible film



### "Jimmy Hollywood"



A wise person once said that good movies fly by timewise, and bad movies seem really long.

In that case, "Jimmy Hollywood" goes on forever.

Joe Pesci, a talented performer who has delivered brilliant performances in movies like "Goodfellas" and "JFK," must have lost a bet with someone to end up in this mess.

For that matter, Christian Slater ("Heathers") must have had the same bookie as Pesci, because he's as out of place in this mess as Pesci.

Director Barry Levinson ("Rain Man") has recovered somewhat from his megabomb "Toys," but he still seems to be relying on star power to overcome bad writing.

Jimmy Alto (Pesci) is an aspiring actor in Hollywood, and he has invested in a bus-bench advertisement in the hopes that someone important will discover him. He has his head firmly stuck among the clouds, lost in the glamour of yesterday's Hollywood, a Hollywood not polluted with drugs, violence and crime.

His sidekick William (Slater) is great with a camcorder and an electronic labeling machine, but he can't remember why he's doing something or what day it is.

Together, they form a vigilante task force known as SOS (Save Our Streets) that videotapes the criminal acts, along with the subsequent capture by Alto, who uses the name "Jericho."

Naturally, the police are more concerned with finding Jericho than fighting crime, and this puts the public behind the SOS. This feeds Alto's ego that he is in the "role of a lifetime," and he can't stop.

As said before, Pesci and Slater must have been asleep when this script came by. They do the best that they can, but "Jimmy Hollywood" just keeps going on and on, and leaving the theater early becomes a much more likely prospect.

However, if the temptation to escape is resisted long enough, there's a surprise guest appearance at the end of the flick from ... someone you'll recognize.

That surprise appearance, plus a couple of good previews, keep "Jimmy Hollywood" from falling into the cinematic Pit of Despair and garnering it a single star.

It's not worth even the matinee price, but maybe getting together with a bunch of friends, you can all pitch in some spare change and rent it when it's released on video.

—Gerry Beltz