

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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the glassy eye



Brian Priesman

Landmarks on television bond people

Something is very wrong here ... I have all of this space to fill with fun little factoids about TV and TV culture and actors and shows and the like and I can't think of a darn thing to say.

Maybe I can't think of anything because I spend all of my free time sitting on the couch, eating bon-bons and watching reruns of "Silver Spoons," "21 Jump Street" and "Star Trek."

I was there when Sam Beckett made his last leap. I was there when J.R. got shot. I was there when Mr. Hooper died and everybody, even Oscar the Grouch, cried a little. I was there when the Challenger exploded on lift-off.

Television has shaped my life. I think it's because I'm part of the original MTV generation. I am part of the original cable generation. I'm not a member of Gen-X; I'm a member of Gen-TV. (Gee, maybe when the name Gen-TV has caught on, I can sue for back royalties and get on either "The People's Court" or "Court TV.")

Who else other than the people who are now age 18-25 can honestly say that they are part of this strange experience called TV? Sure, our parents had TV first, but the shows they grew up with — "Howdy Doody" and "The Donna Reed Show" — are very different from the MTV/Cable revolution we experienced in the early '80s. And the generation after us will experience a kind of TV unlike any that we know.

We already see it changing. Our age groups complain about the lack of videos on MTV, but the kids who are first experiencing it think it's great. We talk about "Cheers" and "Who's the Boss," but the kids only know "News Radio" and "The X-Files."

Historians talk about generations being tied together by common experiences — air raid drills and JFK and Martin Luther King Jr.

Our common experiences are electronic. We've got MTV, HBO and ESPN.

We're joined by images we've seen. Our parents and our grandparents remember where they were when Kennedy was shot or when Pearl Harbor was attacked. But we remember where we were when we saw the Challenger explosion.

We can say where we were when Alex Keaton left home and when Tony and Angela finally tied the knot and when Sam "Mayday" Malone closed the doors at Cheers for the last time. Heck, we can even remember when "Saturday Night Live" was funny.

It's kind of scary when you think about it.

At the touch of a button, we can see what's happening around the world courtesy of CNN. We can catch the latest scores and stats from all of our favorite teams thanks to ESPN. We can see the world and experience other cultures and times, all without ever leaving our living rooms.

Maybe that's why I can't think of anything to say because Dan Rather or Tom Brokaw hasn't told me yet.

Priesman is a freshman news-editorial and theatre major and a Daily Nebraskan staff reporter.

UNL 'blocks' students from seeing movie

By Patrick Hambrecht
Senior Reporter

Dan Polk's new movie, "Sofia," tells the exciting story of a surrealistic '70s-styled chase through the streets of Lincoln. But students in UNL's residence halls won't be able to see it.

CableVision's channel 20, the community access station, is being blocked on campus by UNL's closed circuit television. This double assignment for channel 20 effectively bars the community access station from all campus televisions, including those in the residence halls.

And that has Polk angry. "As a student artist, I think it's very disappointing that my work and the work of other local producers are being blocked," Polk said.

"Why is that? Why are we being marginalized?"

Ken Johnson, the telecommunications director for UNL Nebraska Educational TV, said he would investigate the overlapping programming situation on channel 20.

"I have to sort through this, but we're not trying to block anything," Johnson said.

"I don't live in the city and I don't routinely get CableVision, so that's why I'm a little dumb about this. But I don't know the politics and the reason."

CableVision had made a legal request to withdraw its obligation to provide public access television. That request was followed by the blocking of the station on the UNL campus because of "technical reasons," said Joyce Magorian, an NETV programmer and scheduler.

Later, public access was moved to channel 78 and community access was then moved to channel 20, where it also was blocked by university programming.

The confusion created by the channel changes and the current situation, which keeps residence hall students from seeing Polk's show altogether, have the student filmmaker frustrated.

Polk described his show, "Bohemian Television," as "a mix of music, comedy and drama."

His new short film, "Sofia" is his most extensive project so far, involving more than 100 hours of shooting and editing.

Polk stars in the film as himself. In the film, he is a guitar player who is making a short music video with a beautiful Spanish dancer. As the two leave, she slips a cassette tape into his pocket.

"The tape could be anything," Polk said. "There are a lot of things that aren't explained."

Polk is subsequently pursued through the streets of Lincoln by a killer who wants the tape. Scenery blurs together extra-dimensionally, as a leap over a wall in the Haymarket takes the two characters to a rural field.

"Taxi Driver" and other films from the 1970s are a strong influence on his directing, Polk said. But costs prohibited Polk from using any medium but video.

"It's an imperfect medium," he said. "Otherwise though, we would have used about \$20,000 worth of film. With video, you get immediate feedback. You can even watch stuff in the camera."

Polk graduated from UNL in 1987 with a degree in teaching. After teaching in Oregon for eight years, he came back to UNL to do graduate work.

"Teaching really helped me as an artist," he said. "For kids, everything is new. It helped me keep a fresh perspective on everything."

"Sofia" can be seen in upcoming weeks on "Bohemian Television" at 10 p.m. on Tuesdays and Saturdays, CableVision channel 20.

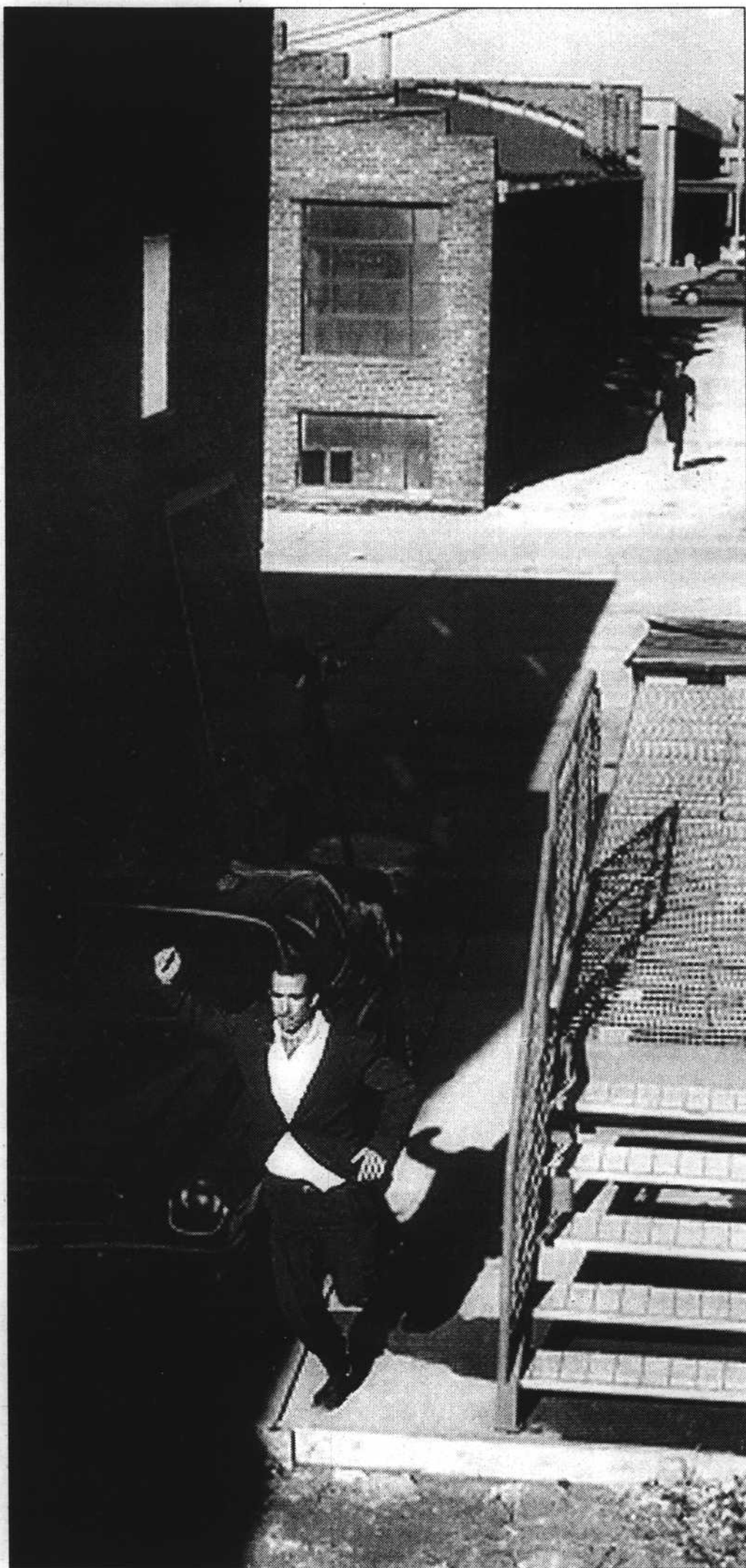


Photo by Peter DeMarco

Dan Polk (foreground) is chased through the streets of Lincoln by Troy Montanez in a scene from "Sofia," a short film directed by Polk, a graduate student at UNL. The film will be shown in coming weeks on channel 20, CableVision's community access station.

Blues band ready to howl at the Zoo Bar

By Cliff Hicks
Staff Reporter

Thursday night at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St., Omar and the Howlers will tear into a "World Wide Open."

A blend of blues and rock, "World Wide Open" is Omar and the Howlers' second album on the Watermelon label. The band's first album on the label was "Muddy Springs Road."

The band members are: Kent "Omar" Dykes, guitars and vocals; Paul Junior, bass; Steve Kilmer, drums; Gary Primich, harmonica; Nick Connolly, organ; Robert McEntec, guitar; Bradley Kopp, guitar; Mark Hallman, percussion; and Chris Searles, percussion. Omar and the Howlers have a lineup packed with talent.

Dykes was born and raised in McComb, Miss., the small town where Bo Diddley was born. He

started playing guitar at age 13. There was only one place to play — the black clubs at the edge of town.

"I played there as the only white guy with the black musicians. We played a very rough kind of blues. In fact, I understood very little of it; I was only a kid," Dykes said. "Looking back on that period, it must have been a bit like Hound Dog Taylor, but even more primitive."

In 1976, Omar and the Howlers

moved to Austin, Texas, where they quickly began to gain an audience. Since then they have changed labels four times and released nine albums.

"Well, you know I've been lots of places," the title track of Dykes' last album, "Muddy Springs Road," reads, "and you know I'll always sing the blues."

Omar and the Howlers will take the stage at 9:30 p.m. The show has a cover charge of \$6.