

BABY'S NEW PLAYMATES

Lineup change magical for Baby Jason

BY SARAH BAKER
Senior staff writer

"Baby Jason" Davis believes that everything happens for a reason.

Including the breakup of his blues trio, Baby Jason and the Spankers.

Luckily for the band's adamant following, Davis also believes in magic.

And "magic," according to Davis, is exactly what happened when the new, and maybe even improved, lineup of Spankers met for the very first time.

"The first time we practiced, it was painfully obvious that I had made the right lineup choice," Davis said. "Bigger and better things are coming."

The original band plays its final show as a trio tomorrow night at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St. Saturday night the Spankers take the Zoo stage yet again, but this time as a newborn quartet.

Davis said the search for the new lineup wasn't as easy as he thought it would be. He searched for musicians he clicked with musically and psychologically, rather than the most technically skilled or talent-

ed. Although the process was frustrating at times, Davis believes it was worth the search and that the new band is something special.

"We are really into a groove," he said. "We have a great connection. A lot of technical bands do wild stuff but it's totally dry. It's like cereal with no milk."

The new lineup consists of Brian "Pickle" Gerkenmeyer, former bassist for Lincoln's Ripple Effect, Max Thomason on guitar and 18-year-old Ryland Steen on drums.

The new band plans to start where the old one left off, and, according to Davis, there will be nowhere to go but up.

Steen said he was looking forward to being able to play with his new bandmates.

"I'm really excited," Steen said. "It's something I've been working for and I've always wanted to do it, and it finally happened."

The former trio has played at venues across the United States, and last year played over 180 shows.

"We aren't just a local band," Davis

said. "You would be surprised at how many people don't realize that."

Even though he's starting anew, Davis said he never really considered changing the band's name.

"Every time I started a new band, I was back at square one. I am tired of starting over," he said. "It's me and my band and I have worked too hard to get the band's name recognized to change it."

The band's former lineup - drummer Danny Lee Irvin and bassist Jeremy "Warhead" Woerner - decided to give up the rock 'n' roll lifestyle to pursue other career paths.

Irvin plans to seek full-time employment while Woerner hopes to enroll in school.

Irvin and Woerner were the third rhythm section to play with the Spankers, and Davis said they had played with him the longest, and the musicians accomplished a lot while they were together.

Unfortunately, the wear and tear the musicians suffered on the road proved to



Please see SPANKERS on 13

Contemporary Polish art reflects social unrest

■ A new Sheldon exhibition explores the cultural and historical themes of Eastern Europe.

BY LIZA HOLTMEIER
Staff writer

If art imitates life, then the Eastern European art community must have experienced just as much upheaval as their governments this past decade.

This weekend, the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery will open an exhibit of contemporary Polish textile art indicative of the influence of change.

"Different Voices: New Art from Poland" is an exhibition of 28 pieces organized by Wendy Weiss, associate professor of textiles, clothing and design at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. It opens Saturday.

The exhibit originated from a 1992 trip Weiss made to Poland. Weiss attended a Weavers' Emporium to view the new trends in Polish textile art. Poland produced a volume of important textile art in the 1970s after Magdalena Abakanowicz - known for her innovative use of form, texture and materials - burst into the fiber art world in the 1960s.

"I was just really blown away by what I saw. I'd never seen anything like it before," Weiss said. "I perceived that there was a different sensibility, a different use of materials and a different sense of aesthetic than what we're used to seeing in America."

Enamored of the Polish works, Weiss discussed the possibility of organizing an exhibit with Jolanta Rudzka-Habisiak, one of the artists featured in the exhibit. Rudzka-Habisiak supervised the organization of the

exhibit, while Weiss arranged the showing of the exhibit at the Sheldon.

This is the first time the Sheldon has worked with a UNL faculty member to arrange an exhibition.

"It's an opportunity for us to participate in the university community in an important way," said Dan Siedell, curator of the Sheldon. "It is also an opportunity for our audience, which sees mainly 19th and 20th



COURTESY PHOTO
BROUGHT TO THE SHELDON by UNL associate professor Wendy Weiss, "Different Voices: New Art from Poland" is a textured display of 28 pieces of modern art from a country struggling with stability.

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WENDY WEISS
associate professor

century American art ... to see Eastern European art."

Siedell said the Polish textile art emphasizes the relationship between Polish folk traditions and sophisticated western fine art traditions.

"Textiles occupy this very fine space between the two," Siedell said.

Weiss said the works, like American textile art, utilize an experimental approach to materials. The

artists use man-made materials, such as paper and polyester, to refer back to nature as often as they use branches or leaves.

The work also comments on the political and social change that has occurred in Eastern Europe.

"At the same time we're looking at people looking at their traditional, folkloric roots, we're seeing the experience of the current situation of the individual in Poland," Weiss said. "While the works contain a more avert expression of the figure and a sensitivity to nature, there is also a historical theme."

Siedell added that the tension between the functional (e.g. a blanket that keeps you warm) and the artistic (e.g. a blanket that is hung on a wall for show) provides another dimension to the show.

The exhibit takes up three galleries at the Sheldon. The first gallery features a variety of three-dimensional work using imagery from nature. In the second gallery, highlights include a carpet of pages torn from the Yellow Pages in a work called "The Dead Sea."

Weiss said she hopes the exhibit influences area artists, particularly students. In November, Maria Tyniec, another artist featured in the exhibit, will present a series of workshops discussing her use of non-traditional materials. Tyniec works with large-scale environmental space constructions.

"Different Voices: New Art from Poland" will open this Saturday with an invitation-only reception at the Sheldon, 12th and R streets, from 5 to 7 p.m. The exhibition will then be open to the public at 7 p.m.

The Sheldon will show the exhibit until Dec. 6. The exhibition will then travel to Chicago and Topeka, Kan., and eventually arrive in New York at the millennium. For more information, call the Sheldon at (402) 472-2461.