

# Sandy's Summers

*UNL instructor teaches, designs Hollywood sets*

By **JASON HARDY**  
Senior staff writer

You may recognize her work in such films as "Father of the Bride," "Home Alone 2" or "Dead Poets Society."

You may recognize her face from seeing her on campus.

She's Sandy Veneziano, Lincoln resident and visiting instructor in the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, and for the past 18 years she has been the brains behind the scenes of many a Hollywood blockbuster.

Veneziano, who received her undergraduate and graduate degrees from University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the '70s, now works as a free-lance Hollywood production designer.

But she certainly hasn't forgotten her alma mater.

She splits her years by spending a semester teaching film classes at UNL and working much of the remainder in Hollywood.

As a production designer, Veneziano works with the film's director and the director of photography to coordinate the look and feel of the film. This includes props, costumes, color, camera angles, lighting and effects. It's often a daunting task but one from which she reaps many rewards.

"It's a lot of work. You're there from 5 o'clock in the morning to 11 o'clock at night for about six months," Veneziano said. "But it's fun being able to one day do a castle and another day do a space ship and have the freedom of design."

Though a far cry from spaceships and castles, the classroom offers its own set of rewards, Veneziano said. That is where she helps groom the actual students who will eventually fill the mythical worlds she

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**SANDY VENEZIANO**  
production designer, UNL professor



MATT MILLER/DN

**SANDY VENEZIANO**, a Lincoln resident and visiting professor in the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, has spent the past 18 years designing scenes in Hollywood movies such as "Terms of Endearment" and "Dead Poets Society."

creates in Hollywood.

Veneziano moved from Los Angeles to Lincoln four years ago and began teaching at UNL a year later. She currently heads two classes, Art Direction in Film and The Art of Film-

making. Through her teaching, she attempts to instill in her students the same values taught to her more than 20 years ago.

"They gave me the basics of design but also the confidence to go out there and get a job," Veneziano said. "There's a work ethic that they teach here and they live by here that a lot of people around the country don't have."

And seeing her students follow a dream she now lives is a reward in itself.

"Watching the talents of the students emerge and their drive reminds me of me when I was young," Veneziano said. "Watching them go out, graduate and go to Los Angeles and get a job is a good feeling."

It was 22 years ago Veneziano herself did just that. After she graduated from UNL, she went from the comforting halls of the Temple Building directly to the mean streets of Hollywood in search of work.

"I just packed up my little portfolio and hit the streets," she recalled.

After scouring the town for work, her perseverance paid off. She landed her first job as a set designer for the television series "Dallas."

Since those early days working for a daily television show, she has gone on to design for Hollywood's lengthier exports.

Her fingerprints are on such pieces as "Home Alone 2," "Terms of Endearment" and, most recently, "My

Favorite Martian," as production designer. Premiering in March, the film features Elizabeth Hurley, Christopher Lloyd and Daryl Hannah.

Despite the glamour and excitement of Hollywood, Veneziano misses her time away from the true Star City - Lincoln. In the future Veneziano hopes to move away from the stress of show biz and into the classroom full time.

"When you're doing a movie there is just nothing else in your life," she said. "You don't have time to do or be anything else. Thank God they feed you, or you wouldn't have anything to eat."

"But I still want to do this for a while yet. I'm still young enough that I don't mind it."

## Widespread Panic succeeds with improvisation



COURTESY PHOTO

**IMPROVISATIONAL GRASS-ROOTS BAND WIDESPREAD PANIC** plays Omaha's Sokol Hall tonight. Widespread Panic has considerably more success in Omaha than in Lincoln.

By **PATRICK MINER**  
Staff writer

Widespread Panic percussionist Domingo Ortiz is not shy about what his band has to offer.

"Omaha is a market that needs good entertainment. We bring a bit of culture into the town," he boasted.

Tonight, Widespread Panic will perform its good-times sound to hundreds of happy listeners at Omaha's Sokol Hall, 2234 S. 13th St.

After a playing to little fanfare in Lincoln several years ago, Omaha has proven to be a big market for the band. Tonight's show will mark Widespread Panic's second appearance in Omaha since July.

Ortiz describes the act's style as a cross between the Allman Brothers, Santana and the Neville Brothers. Widespread Panic also has drawn comparisons to Phish, mostly

because of a solid fan base as well as songs that can be clocked in anywhere from four to 20 minutes during a live performance.

The greater length of some songs is due to the band's use of improvisation, which has been a major draw to its shows.

"We try to make it so (fans) don't get tired of coming to hear us," Ortiz said. "We don't let one night's performance dictate the next."

Before the current tour, Widespread Panic was busy in the studio. From the sessions, the band released the home video "Panic in the Streets," which documents an April concert from the band's hometown of Athens, Ga.

The act also recently released the double-disc live album "Light Fuse, Get Away." Containing 19 tracks, the album comprises songs recorded across five concerts in late '97.

"We tried to create a live envi-

### Concert Preview

ronment with the record," Ortiz said. "We think we captured the effect of our live show."

Much like "Light Fuse, Get Away," fans will be entertained by two sets tonight. The band will play an hour-long first set, take a 20 minute break, then reappear for another hour.

However, other than concert length, anything goes at a Widespread Panic show. All of the band's songs are fair game, including some numbers the band has yet to record. Widespread Panic is heading back into the studio next January to record a new release, so a few of those songs also might appear in tonight's set list.

Doors open at 7 p.m., and the show begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$20.50.