



(FROM LEFT) Little Slim swings his jacket around as rhythm guitarist, Joe Manthey, introduces him as the lead singer of the Back Alley Blues Band. Ryan Larson, drummer, and Jeff Boehmer set the melody of "Shame" at the Zoo Bar in downtown Lincoln on Feb. 11.

DANIEL LUEDERT/DN

CHILDREN OF THE Blues

Zoo Bar and Magic Slim birth sons and blues machine

BY DANIEL LUEDERT
Staff writer

The world spins from the steps of the young.

The first lessons of youth come from parents: to walk, to talk and even to play.

Sometimes what a child learns is that the world can be a better place, and sometimes he learns the blues.

Sometimes it's both.

"He's going to change things," said Joe Manthey, a guitarist and friend of Shawn Holt, also known as Little Slim, of Little Slim and the Back Alley Blues Band.

Manthey said this before the Back Alley Blues Band took the stage in the small club with a long history in Lincoln, The Zoo Bar, on a cool Thursday evening, Feb. 11.

The Zoo Bar drew two of the members of Little Slim and the Back Alley Blues Band together as children in the

early '80s.

Little Slim, son of blues man Magic Slim, came to Zoo Bar owner Larry Boehmer's home at the age of 7 and met Larry's son, Jeff Boehmer, also 7. "His family would stay for a couple of weeks,"

Boehmer remembers. "(Little Slim) grew up where there were guards at the park. Here, in Lincoln, it was a different world where I grew up."

As the light from the bar falls over the sound board, Boehmer and Little Slim talk about growing up around the Lincoln blues scene.

There is no quiet table in the Zoo; the music is what presides here, making it a challenge to catch the words of the blues men.

Little Slim had trouble with the

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"Blues is so much of a feeling, when you know the people you're playing with."

JEFF BOEHMER

Little Slim and the Back Alley Blues Band guitarist

schedule of Morris Holt, a.k.a. Dad, a.k.a. Magic Slim, when he was young. As he grew older he realized his father had a job, but not an ordinary 9-to-5, he said.

While Little Slim was growing up in Chicago, Magic Slim toured the local blues circuit frequently, spending stretches of time away from his home and son. Meanwhile, Boehmer was soaking in the emerging Lincoln blues culture and picked up the guitar at the age of 14.

By 16, he was teaching Manthey,

who now plays rhythm guitar in the band.

Talk drifts to Manthey and drummer Ryan Larson. Larson began to take lessons under jazz musician Jim Miller at about the same time.

Boehmer remembers that Larson was "enthused by the music; (Larson) was always excited about playing."

Boehmer gets up with Little Slim to adjust the amplifiers - gifts from their fathers. Larson and Manthey continue to talk of playing together in high school.

It was a rich learning experience for them - it was where they learned to play the blues.

About five years ago, Little Slim moved to Lincoln. He preferred rap at the time, but "after listening to us play (in high school), he got into it,"

Please see **BLUES** on 10

'20s film gets avant-garde spin

Local improvisational group, Howlooseanation, re-creates a black-and-white classic.

BY DIANE BRODERICK
Staff writer

Dr. Frankenstein gave life to the monster, a magic fairy animated Pinocchio and the Rabbi of Prague enlivened the Golem.

Although not as exposed in popular culture, "Der Golem," a 1920s German-expressionist film, delivers a familiar story line.

Friday and Saturday, Lincoln performance quartet Howlooseanation will give a presentation of a special cut of "Der Golem" - which uses elaborate, abstract sets and stark lighting effects - with accompanying improvisational and avant-garde music and dancers.

"Der Golem" recounts a famous Jewish folk tale of the 16th century. The Golem, an artificial man of clay, is brought to life by a rabbi to protect the Jews from exile.

As so often happens with creatures artificially brought to life, chaos ensues, and the Golem grows out of control and must be destroyed.

Fred Mausolf, an original member of Howlooseanation, said the quartet strives

to produce avant-garde projects that incorporate nontraditional elements.

In 1997, the group composed abstract music for NETV's documentary on the Torn Notebook sculpture on campus. Howlooseanation also recreated Weldon Kees' jazz music at the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery during a tribute to the Nebraska native.

"Der Golem 1999" works in an unusual bent by featuring dancers throughout the more than hour-long production.

"They'll be in about 90 percent of the show," Mausolf said. "You will see the movie, and you will see them at the same time."

Four dancers will be under blacklights and painted in fluorescent paint, both to contrast to the black-and-white film and so they will be visible in the dark.

They will be enacting their own plot, parallel to the movie's, as they dance alongside the screen showing the film.

"The dancers symbolize body parts at first," Mausolf said. "The music will be channeled to help them animate, and the body parts will come together."

UNL graduate student Rachel Perry will play the figure who brings life to the others, and the three other dancers, Jodi Philips, Kerri Wagner and Kimberly Schroeder, together play the monster character.

"It's a variation on the theme," Perry

Concert Preview

The Facts

Who: "Der Golem 1999"
Where: Wagon Train Project, 504 S. Seventh St.
When: 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday
Cost: \$8, \$5 for students
The Skinny: Classic German Expressionism matched with glow-in-the-dark paint

said. "It doesn't directly follow the story of the movie, but it has the same elements."

The dance will be completely improvisational, Perry said, but it has to be a specific length.

"We want to make sure of that - so we're not still dancing when the film is over," she said.

Once the body is formed, their "creator" will control the three dancers and make them slaves until, ultimately, they rebel.

Howlooseanation members, including Mausolf, Craig Imig, Mark Baldrige and Ed Rumbaugh, will play antique and homemade instruments. A theremin, syn-

Please see **MONSTER** on 10



ART COURTESY OF HOWLOOSEANATION
PERFORMANCE QUARTET Howlooseanation bills its production of "Der Golem" as a multimedia combination of music, film and dance.