

## Q continues to thrive as dance club

BY BILLY SMUCK

*Editor's Note: This is another in a continuing series of stories on the dance club scene in Lincoln and its corresponding competition in Omaha.*

If a patron were to ask co-owner Alan Thompson if his Lincoln establishment, the Q, was a gay dance club, he'd say yes.

But the Q, 226 S. 9th St., has been open to anyone of age for the past five and a half years, bringing a taste of the big city into Lincoln.

"What we've tried to do is bring a big city club to a smaller town," Thompson said. "We're all from big cities ourselves and thought Lincoln deserved to have a good place to party."

Nicknamed for the term "Q-Continuum" off the TV series, "Star Trek: The Next Generation," the Q, open 8 p.m.-1 a.m. Tuesday-Sunday, plays techno and house music for dancers willing to pay the \$3 cover charge, which increases to \$5 for special events.

Moderately priced drinks are available from two bars - one large long bar near the entrance and another in a smaller, separate lounge area where



Jerome Montalto/DN  
The Q, 226 S. 9th St., Lincoln's largest gay and lesbian nightclub.

only hard liquor shots and beer are available.

In the back is the dance floor, which comfortably holds about 60, as well as a stage sometimes used for drag shows and additional dancing. Thompson is a disc jockey in a booth off to the side of the stage, and plays a wide variety of music "in the dance realm," he said. The sound system, Thompson said, is considered the best in town.

Still, misconceptions exist about the club because of its connection to the gay commu-

nity. Thompson said the stereotypes of some gay clubs - people having sex and men in leather - caused apprehension among those unfamiliar with the Q's environment.

Thompson said that after people enter the club, they're surprised at how normal it really is.

"Their concept of what a gay bar is changed," he said. "They no longer visualize something that is different than what it actually is."

Greater tolerance of gays has changed perceptions, as well.

"It's much different than it was 10 years ago," Thompson said. "People are less concerned with the sexual preference of others."

Or if one sex poses as another. The drag shows, which play at least every Sunday, and sometimes twice in a weekend, are among the biggest features at the Q.

One of the biggest attractions is the monthly appearance by the Dream Girls, who last appeared Saturday night.

The two-hour show started at 9:30 p.m. and had two segments featuring eight to 10 performers in two numbers each. The overflowing crowd was the

biggest yet for the club, said bartender Jeremy Jaimison.

The crowd was probably a 60-40 split between gay and straight as opposed to the usual 80-20 split when there aren't shows, Thompson said.

Former University of Nebraska-Lincoln cheerleader and Dream Girl Shannon Young was the crowd favorite performing to songs by Whitney Houston and Tina Turner.

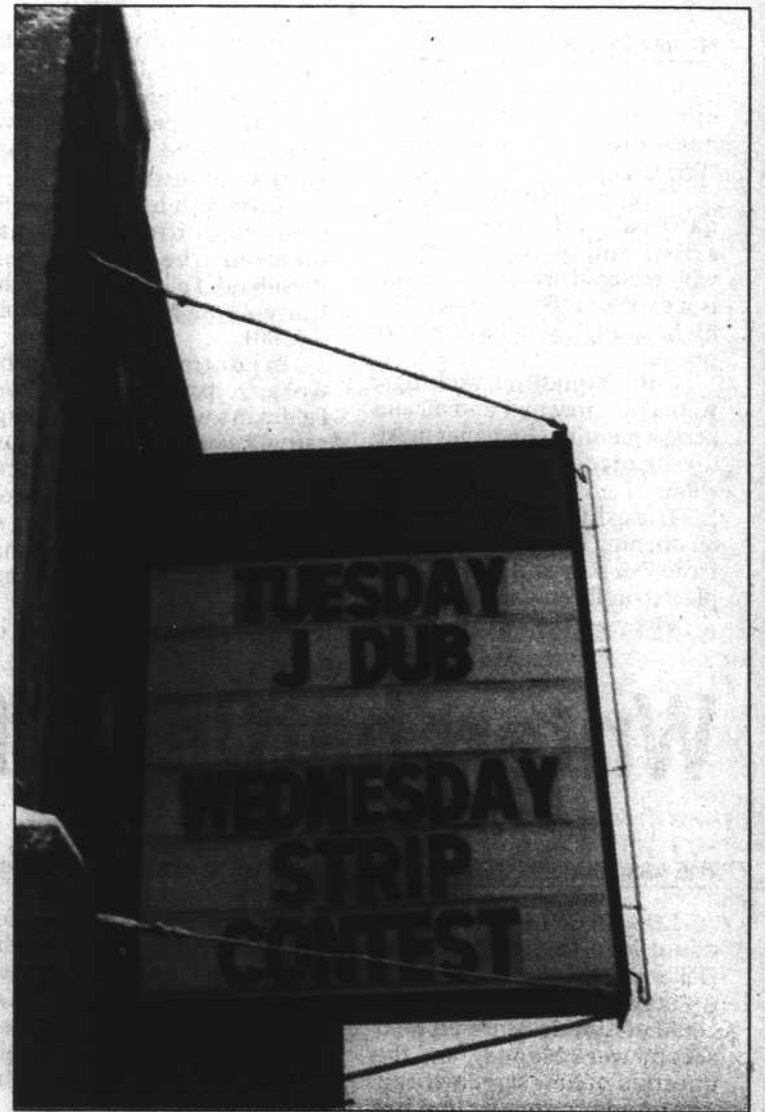
Young, who has been with the Dream Girls since they originated two years ago, makes the eight-hour drive from Tulsa, Okla., to perform.

"I've met my family away from home," said Young, whose nickname is Chocolat. "That's why I come back; I love my friends so much."

Thompson said that although drag shows are a part of the club's business, that is all they are.

"The drag scene is big in Lincoln, and it is a part of our business," Thompson said, "but we really are a dance club."

Part of what helps draw drag show business is its 19-and-older designation. Anyone older than 19 also can go to the Q on



Jerome Montalto/DN  
The Q holds various theme activities during the week. Tuesday night, which is college night, draws a large crowd of university students.

Please see Q on 6



## 'Happiness,' where are you?

Solondz's 1998 tale of dysfunction is darcy comic version of the hit 'American Beauty'

BY SAMUEL MCKEWIN

Flipping through Entertainment Weekly's annual year-in-preview issue, you find the typical plugs for the loud-crash, big-budget movie fare that will push visual candy over intelligent thought.

I see the big "Pearl Harbor" spread on pages 48 and 49 regarding Michael Bay's war epic and see Ben Affleck, pristinely grungy, back lit by flames and Bay-typical red/pink and think, "Oh, God, what has he done?" It ought to have Terence Malick and Steven Spielberg turning over in their tanning booths.

But six pages back, in a smaller spread surrounded by Seth Green's "Rat Race" and Ivan Reitman's new drama/comedy "Evolution," is a couple of paragraphs about Todd Solondz's new, as-yet-untitled film, an epic on the late-teen and college-age sex life, complete with operatic presentation, separate stories and interlude.

While everyone else is pointing their lasers at the Pearl or Tim Burton's "Planet of the Apes" remake (an admittedly cool endeavor), my enthusiasm runs highest for

### Film Commentary

Solondz's next picture. If you don't know who Solondz is, well, you don't know much about "Happiness" quite the way I do.

A 1998 release, "Happiness" escaped the eye of the mainstream public, for good reason. It is an adults-only type film, and at that, only for the type of adult that can stand away from an artistic pursuit, eschew its depravity and regard it for its purpose. That is not a particularly easy task to take on. "Happiness" is funny, but pitch black. It makes another contemporary urban satire, "American Beauty," look pale by comparison.

And now you're mad because there's a phrase, said about several films since "American Beauty" came out last year, that you've heard over and over again. Darker than. Funnier than. More precise than. "Happiness" is these things, and it is better film, too, though not as enjoyable and certainly not as far reaching.

"American Beauty" made its hay

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through a type of stereotypical liberalism that most of us adhere to once in a movie theater. Even conservatives dive into it, yearning for the snappy, direct close that would otherwise anger them in a political mindset. "Beauty," among other things, is a libertarian take on a liberal utopia that we'd rather have in place of our slave-like devotion to the "stuff" Kevin Spacey keeps bemoaning.

In "Happiness," that stuff is love, a quenching of a longing, lonely thirst, and the liberalist critique on America is supplanted by throwing an honest, caring mirror on the subtly deranged aspect of our

humanity, which Solondz, who also wrote the film, asserts exists right among us.

The setup is rather soft and enjoyable. Joy Jordan (Jane Adams) tries nicely to break up with a sad-sack boyfriend (Jon Lovitz), which gets turned on its head, especially after he buys her an ashtray as a gift. It (almost) makes her want to start smoking.

Then we are introduced to Joy's sisters, Helen (Lara Flynn Boyle) and Trish (Cynthia Stevenson), who are both far more financially comfortable and claim to be romantically happy, as Trish is married to psycholo-

Please see HAPPINESS on 6

## Symphony celebrates Copland

BY CHRIS JACOBS

American composer Aaron Copland's music brought together a diverse crowd and elevated the status of music.

Tonight the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra will celebrate him in a performance at Kimball Recital Hall titled "A Century of Copland." Tickets for the 7:30 p.m. performance are priced at \$32, \$26 and \$20 each with half-price tickets available for students.

"I find Copland to be one of America's musical treasures," said Edward Polochick, LSO's music director/conductor. "He integrated themes from popular culture and the folk world into a sophisticated and classical sound."

"His music ranges from jazz to the classical concerto," Polochick said. "It's very audience pleasing." The orchestra will perform the composer's "Suite" from his opera "The Tender Land" and his "Concerto for Clarinet and Strings with Harp and Piano."

Polochick said the audience can expect magnificent soloing from LSO principal clarinetist, Carmelo Galante.

Galante will be the featured soloist on the Concerto, a work that was written by Copland especially for the late Benny Goodman, a phenomenal composer in his own right.

Galante has held the position of Principal Clarinetist with the Omaha Symphony since 1988, and with the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra since 1989. His appearance in the upcoming Copland concert will mark his third performance as soloist with the Lincoln Symphony.

Following the Copland works and intermission, the full orchestra will return to the stage to perform Anton Dvorak's "Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Opus 88."

Polochick said he chose the Dvorak piece because its style was similar to that of Copland's.

"Although Dvorak composed in Czechoslovakia almost 100 years earlier than Copland, they both approached music in the same way," Polochick said. "They had classical training and studied music both formally and structurally. They both incorporated the tunes of their respective eras."

Copland, for many, is synonymous with American music, and seemingly everyone, from the most educated concert-goers to the youngsters of America who stay glued to the television set, has heard his music in some form or another, whether it is his regal and stately "Fanfare for the Common Man," his opera "The Tender Land" or that portion of his ballet "Rodeo" that has become synonymous with the "Beef, it's what's for dinner!" slogan.

"There shouldn't be a soul in the audience who won't be pleased with the performance," Polochick said.