

Music Commentary

## CMJ turns indie rockers into slaves

BY NEAL OBERMEYER

Inside, everyone wants the underdog to win. Excluding bullies, of course (except masochistic bullies, who would, in their self-defeating way, also tend to root for the underdog).

In the music industry, you have your major-label giants, the ones who buy each other out, lose track of who owns whom and cause PJ Harvey CDs to come in Def Jam packages.

And then you have the independent labels, the little guys, who live in this idealistic world where they are free to produce their sincere creative artistic vision free of the meddling input of those major-label fiends who just want a quick buck.

The tiny little problem is it's not so ideal, and the tiny little indie rockers wouldn't mind making a buck or two either (it stops at \$2, though).

Indie rockers don't have the major labels working promotion, so they bring in third-party groups like Fanatic, Team Clermont, S.P.E.C.T.R.E., the Syndicate and many, many more.

Of course, if you're paying people to promote your stuff, you'd like some way of monitoring their progress.

Enter CMJ, the College Media Journal. They were nice enough to start soliciting reports from college radio stations (traditional independent-music outlets) and compiling a weekly chart of what was getting played most.

And before you know it, the independents became slaves to a master.

CMJ (directly or indirectly) dictates how things are done in the indie world. For example, major-label releases come at you like mad in the month and a half leading up to Christmas because it's a perfect time to sell lots of CDs, Bingo!

Not in the indie world. Late November and December are dead. Nobody releases anything worthwhile then, and there's one simple reason behind it.

CMJ doesn't take reports or compile charts for the month of Christmas break. Why release and promote an album if there will be no CMJ Top 200 to dictate its success?

Instead, the middle of January is a musical floodgate that gets blown open with new indie releases. The Causey Way, Low, Frank Black, Stephen Malkmus — they're all prominent releases that were done months ago but were held off for the early weeks of CMJ 2001.

The irony here is that, in their quest for chart positions, which would presumably correlate with higher sales, independent record labels are following scheduling patterns that are actually counter-productive in terms of human buying patterns.

This doesn't even touch on the tactics used to gain chart positions.

Classic example — this summer, Interscope released "Quality Control" by the Jurassic 5. Their quest was to reach No. 1 in the CMJ 200, and they

Please see RADIO on 6

## Club 1427 ignites audience



LEFT: Zak Church, a.k.a. DJ Zak C, spins regularly at 1427, which is home to 2 resident disc jockeys (G-Spot and Gabriel Starr) and 10 guest DJs. Information on who will be playing and other information pertaining to the club can be found at club1427.com.

BELOW: Club patron Luke Zoucha moves and grooves with glow sticks in hand — one of the few items that can be found on the dance floor of 1427. Located at 1427 O St. and open Wednesday through Saturday 9 p.m. to 1 a.m., 1427 is visited by ravers and clubbers alike.

Jerome Montalto/DN

■ The unique night spot caters to an international crowd with its mix of techno music and local art.

BY CASEY JOHNSON

*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.*

The place looks like a scene from the movie "The Cell" — a mixture of brick walls, scarlet curtains and artwork you just can't put your finger on.

It's dark, but kind of a cozy dark, and the decorum is a cross between futuristic and a 19<sup>th</sup>-Century doctor's office. The Texas Chainsaw Massacre plays on the big screen television as people dance to songs that seemingly never end.

Club 1427, 1427 O St., is the cigar bar turned legitimate dance club before the dance club scene ever raged. It has indeed set the standard high in Lincoln.

Bartender and disc jockey John McMillan said the reason people came to 1427 was because it was unique to Lincoln.

"It's the only true dance club in town," he said. "We have the best DJs in town, hands down."

McMillan said the large foreign population at the club gave it a different feel.

"On any given night," McMillan said, "you are going to see people from Bosnia to Germany to Albania to Greece and everywhere else."

Lincoln resident George Kazas comes to 1427 two or three times a week because "nobody serves a drink like they do here."

"It's like family in here," Kazas said. "They know you by name, and they know your drink. It's nice."

Unlike the atmosphere, the music isn't as familiar as the typical top-40 lineup.

Jake Balcom, manager of 1427, said that it was not a big deal for bars to have DJs anymore and that his club set itself apart from the others with its music.

"Almost all of the other places play songs that you can sing to," he said. "All the songs that the DJs play here come mostly from Europe, London, Chicago and New York. The music is all straight house trance, progressive trance and progressive house."

"All the other places play songs that are precariously close to pop."

Stephany Kinsey, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln senior English major, said that what went into techno was more of a real performance.

"The people that are spinning are spinning for the audience, and they are not doing it because it's cool but because the audience feeds off of it," she said.

Amy Schultz of Lincoln said she liked the local art that hangs on the walls because they did it for free.

"It's a great way to see new art, and they feature anything and everything, even if it's crap," she said.

Shultz also said 1427 had an element of class other dance clubs did not possess, which was something Karl Richstitter, a UNL senior secondary education major, agreed with.

"Every one dances and has a good time, and I have never seen a fight break out here," he said. "It just has a flare that no other place has."



Jerome Montalto/DN

## Theatrix starts on drama

■ The all-student group takes stage in Ingmar Bergman's 'Scenes From A Marriage,' featuring a cast of two.

BY SARAH SUMNER

The UNL student directed and acted program Theatrix is taking on three very different plays this semester, supplying comedy, serious drama and musicals to their viewers.

Serious comes first as Theatrix is opening with Ingmar Bergman's "Scenes From A Marriage." It will be performed in the Studio Theater at the Temple Building from Feb. 1-3.

The Swedish-born Bergman, 88, is best known for his directing talents and playwright abilities, having adapted his six-episode television series into a film in 1973, then a play.

The film won many National Society of Film Critics awards. He is also noted for his films "The Seventh Seal" and "Persona." Just recently, a screenplay of his was adapted in the movie "Faithless," which is playing in major cities.

The play consists of two characters, Johan and Marianne, and the trials of their marriage. They are hiding secrets from each other that are eventually let free as the play progresses, and their marriage deteriorates.

"I've always loved this script," first-time director and senior theater major John Elsener said. "It's really challenging."

Elsener, who has been heavily involved in the Theatrix program and plans to go to graduate school for directing, is using those experiences to aid him in his directing debut.

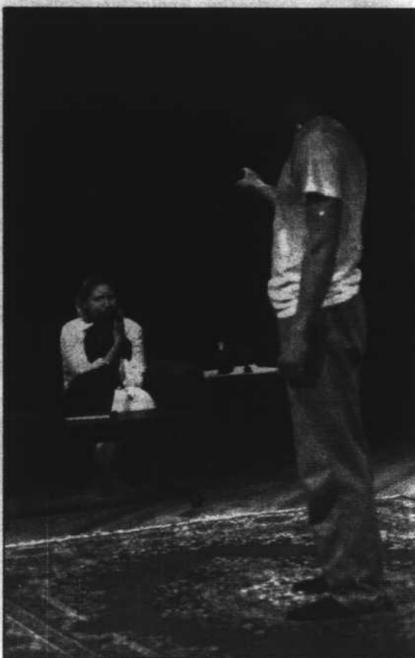
"Since I am an actor, I am really directing it from an actor's standpoint," he said.

The cast of two, Jamie Dorn who plays Marianne, and Layne Manzer, who plays Johan, have been practicing since early January.

Dorn, a junior film studies major, has always been interested in theater and was more attracted to the play after learning it was by Bergman. She is experiencing a difference in her direction from Elsener.

"He is really an actor's director, and he gives us a lot of leeway," she said.

When asked if it was difficult to perform with



Steven Bender/DN

Johan lectures his wife, Marianne, in "Scenes from a Marriage." The student-produced play brings to the stage domestic issues such as abortion, spousal abuse, infidelity and divorce.

only one other actor through the play, she said it was a lot of responsibility to take on.

"There are a lot better opportunities to really connect and interact with the other person," Dorn said.

Through the course of the play and practice, Elsener and the cast were trying to find the "original rhythm" of the script.

"Scenes From A Marriage' is really straightforward, and I think this is going to be a good season," Elsener said.

## Brave Combo tackles Zoo Bar

BY SEAN MCCARTHY

The polka community is a rigid one. Just ask Brave Combo founder Carl Finch.

On the outside, it's still considered a novelty as visions of VFW halls, lederhosen and brats come to mind. But within the community, there lies a scrutinizing, purist mentality that rivals jazz and hip-hop. And for a band that has incorporated dozens of genres of music in their style (salsa, rock and jazz are a few), Brave Combo have been cast as exiles in polkaville.

However, the band forced the purists to take notice last year when they won the Grammy for Best Polka Album with "Polkasonic."

With the increased recognition, Finch said 2000 was Brave Combo's best year yet.

"(The Grammy) raised our profile a million percent in the polka community," he said.

As the band enters its third decade of performing and extending polka's boundaries, it has slowly amassed a loyal legion of fans.

They marched under Woody Woodpecker in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and recorded a lounge-like, sinister cover of Foreigner's "Double Vision." They produced a children's album as well.

Brave Combo will perform some of the songs off that album, "All Wound Up: A Family Music Party," at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14<sup>th</sup> St., tonight. "All Wound Up" was recorded with the help of award-winning children's songwriters, Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer, who approached Brave Combo at a festival in California.

In the studio, Brave Combo had to combine their complex sonic hodgepodge with Fink and Marxer's songwriting approach.

"Collaborating is always tricky," Finch said. "I'm kind of a control freak myself."

Finch said he was looking forward to playing in Lincoln because he felt at home playing the Zoo Bar. In the town of Denton, the band was recognized for their musical achievements in August of 1999 when mayor Jack Miller proclaimed August 15-21 to be Brave Combo Week. There were no parades, Finch laughed.

"That would have been cool, though, from a kitsch perspective," he said.

It is not known whether they will include the



Courtesy Photo

cover of Foreigner's ode to chemical excess, "Double Vision," in their set.

"It was the epitome of what the band stood for — this kind of sleazy, underbelly toxic feel," Finch said.

Brave Combo plans to return to the studio later this year and record the follow-up to last year's album, "The Process." They also plan to release a live album from the band's Halloween gig last year at the Croatian Hall in Cleveland.

The music genres Brave Combo incorporate in their music may change, but the message of peace and unity will continue to be consistent, Finch said. Like reggae, personal philosophy will be as important as the music, he said. To the band, that is more important than attracting a mainstream audience.

"At our age and situation, there's no reason not to put the music first," Finch said.

Brave Combo will perform two shows tonight at the Zoo Bar. The first show starts at 9 p.m., and the second starts at 11 p.m. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door.