



Planet Butter has changed their sound and direction by adding a horn section to the band.

Courtesy photo

## Planet Butter approaches music with unique style, improvisation

BY CASEY JOHNSON

Planet Butter, the unique seven-piece funk/jazz band, will have a release party for their first full-length effort titled "Less Crash More Burn" on Friday at Knickerbockers Bar & Grill, 901 O St.

The ensemble, composed of Brian Marrow, bass and vocals; Matt Richardson, guitar; Kirsten Frosheiser, lead vocals; Scott Zimmerman, drums and vocals; Todd French, bass trombone; Mike Cain, tenor sax and Jim Dodson, trumpet and fuge horn, is made up of almost all current or former UNL students.

The band was originally known as Jungle Butter until about a year ago when a horn section was added, giving the band a new sound and direction.

One of the main aspects of that new direction is that with such a large group of people, the influences are many.

Cain, a senior music education major, said that making a CD with such a large group of people with diverse backgrounds was challenging and fun and that the diversity really showed on the album.

"If you listen to the 12 songs on the CD, it varies from pop to funk to blues to Latin," he said.

That diversity is something that

appeals to many different audiences, but at the same time, Planet Butter is looking to find a sound that the group can hang its hat on, Cain said.

"We are starting to get our own sound that is becoming more consistent," he said.

Marrow, who writes all of the music for the band, said the sound derived from a group of artists.

"We're not necessarily shooting to be eclectic, but it just happens," he said.

Although making an album was a big step for the group, Cain maintained that the group's main strength lies in its live performance with improvisation having a big influence on stage.

Cain said that one of the biggest challenges to making the album was trying to capture the mojo of their live performance and put it on the CD.

"It's very creative and very spontaneous onstage, and that is a little more exciting for the audience," Cain said.

Most often when the audience is excited about music it comes from the excitement of the musicians, he said.

French, a sophomore music performance major, said he liked being in Planet Butter because he was involved in creating original music, something that he rarely gets to do in his major because he is constantly performing others'

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Todd French  
bass and trombone player

work.

French also said that he liked being with the group because it was something different.

"You don't see too many bands out there with horns anymore," he said. "In the '70s, you heard a lot of these bands, but now, especially in the Lincoln and Omaha area, you don't see too many horn bands anymore."

Dodson, a UNL graduate, said that he was looking forward to the release of the album, as it would give people a new perspective on Lincoln's music scene.

"It's really exciting," he said. "It's a sound that a lot of other bands don't have; it's very unique, and I think that the song writing is especially strong."

## Planet Butter tries to catch live performance on CD

BY CASEY JOHNSON

The eternal struggle for a live-performance-oriented band to record an album without it actually being live is a testament to the idea of improvisation.

This is the case with Planet Butter's debut album, "More Crash Less Burn," in which most of the music is lost on the medium.

This is unfortunate because the music on this album is worthwhile and well-written.

The musicians are all but flawless on the tracks, but that in itself is evident in the canned sound of the album. One finds oneself wishing for the sometimes sloppy improvisation that would surely happen if the song were being played live.

This problem is easy to forget though with effort. Tracks such as "Pretty Lady" and "Misery" are catchy with melodies of lead vocalist Kirsten Frosheiser wrapped with layers of interesting harmonica and razor-sharp guitar licks.

Although the vocals seem contrived and played-out sometimes, songs such as "Sugar Moma" and "Two Pennies" reveal the soulful and vintage sound of Frosheiser's ample voice.

In keeping with tradition, most of the lyrics on the album are light and trivial as per the mediums of jazz/funk with

more of a concentration on style vs. substance.

With a seven-piece group, Planet Butter has definitely taken advantage of its numbers in creating a full yet never overwhelming sound on "More Crash Less Burn."

Songs like "Can't Get Any Butter" show us the potential of a band that has to incorporate solos and fills into the bigger picture of a track.

The album lacks the edge of a contemporary funk/pop band, though, as it is too polished for the mainstream listener of rock 'n' roll.

The sound is more suited to connoisseurs of jazz and a contemporary adult crowd like one would see at Jazz in June or in a performance at a high-school gymnasium.

The recording of the album itself is very good; one need not crank the volume up to hear it, and the delicate parts, like the sound of the snare drum or texture of the bass, are not compromised as they usually are on a locally produced CD.

Overall, "More Crash Less Burn" accomplishes what it was designed to do which is garner interest in a band that is good enough to wow its live audiences. It is a preview into a world of music that is the exact opposite of a two-bit garage band.

## 'Mexican' has actors running circles, moviegoers checking watches

BY SARAH SUMNER

Love and violence prove to be a couple's key to relationship stability.

Most couples would not be able to last a night in the shoes of Jerry (Brad Pitt) and Sam (Julia Roberts), but with gangsters, guns and conflicting situations, it sure would be one of the more exciting nights of their lives.

Jerry and Sam are on the verge of marriage and on the verge of breaking up.

They go to marriage counseling because they each feel the other is too selfish, but they care intimately for each other. They have a conflicting, confusing relationship, but the movie isn't really about their relationship; it is about the times apart from each other and the object that is causing a lot of trouble down in Mexico.

Some have called it a cursed gun, and Jerry's sole purpose is to get it, bring it back and give it to a lead gangster. The problem is that many people want the precious gun, and they are willing to frame Jerry, kidnap Sam and kill whomever to get the prize.

Obstacle after obstacle get in Jerry's way. He and Sam break up and go their separate ways. She moves to Las Vegas and he visits Mexico. His cohort is killed, his car is stolen, he is turned on by confidants and the gun is gone. He spends the remainder of the movie finding the gun, losing the gun, losing the girl, finding the girl and the

gun, losing them once more and ... well, I'll let you figure out what happens after that.

"The Mexican" is high energy with humorous scenes and decent acting from big-time actors, but the plot is stretched. Though the suspense is commanding, when the same idea is over-played in different scenes, it gets tiring. The romantic legend of the gun is told through black and white footage, which makes a unique turn in the story and actually makes it richer.

There are many different loops, twists and loose ends that have to be tied at the end, but it is rushed and does not come off as tight as it would have been if the director would have left a few last goose chases out.

Pitt fits well into his character of non-committal, clumsy, unfocused Jerry. He has a mind to do something but does not function well. Most of the movie you will see Pitt falling, freaking out or goofing off. The character is slightly off his rocker, but he is the comic relief.

The romance and heart is in the character of Sam. She loves with intensity and almost has a conniption fit when she is upset. Roberts' upbeat and overly animated personality shows through and is a bit too much. If she would tone down her hand gestures and calm down a little, the character could have been more lovable.

The characters are interesting, but they are not well-developed, which leaves two of Hollywood's favorite actors in a position of not giving their best. "The Mexican" is a good date movie, funny and interesting, but you may find yourself looking at your watch wondering if this is



Courtesy photo

Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts play a couple entangled in a web of love and violence in "The Mexican."

going to be the last time Jerry runs back to the pueblo to get the gun.

Starring Brad Pitt, Julia Roberts and James

Gandolini. Directed by Gore Verbinski. Rated R for violence and language. Showing at Edgewood and the Plaza 4.