

Rock advocates discover nightly oasis

Meeting planned for advocates of state income tax

by Larry Eckholt
Nebraskan Staff Writer
More over, Johnny Carson. Someone else is entertaining Lincoln's insomniacs.

The diversified sounds of "progressive rock," transmitted by KFMQ-FM radio in Lincoln, has bred a loyal cult of pop music lovers. Like Carson's television marathon, KFMQ's show draws a night owl audience and is hosted by a University graduate. Thereafter the similarities end.

THERE ARE few commercials. There is little conversation. But there is a lot of music — today's music.

"Today's music is something more than the pop music that is played on AM stations," said Will Fowler, host of the KFMQ show and its originator.

"It is more than the top ten hits, the current movie theme song, or the popular ballads," Fowler continued. "But no one really knows what it is. Right now, pop music could be termed a series of trends."

Tune in one night, and you'll become aware of the trends.

HEAR THE hard rock sounds of such groups as The Cream, Canned Heat, The California Pop Art Experiment, The Steve Miller Band, and Arthur Brown.

Or Aretha Franklin, Ravi Shankar, The Chambers Brothers, Judy Collins, The Gary Burton Quartet, Stephenwolf, Jose Feliciano, et al. For changes of pace, Arlo Guthrie, The Moody Blues, Credence Clearwater Revival, the late Otis Redding.

And, for a real second-guessing, you might hear some "pure" country-western.

"WE PLAY 'honest music,'" Fowler explained. "We are looking for pure sounds, not the plastic sounds often heard on radio top 40 shows."

He defined 'plastic sounds' as anything "watered down to appeal to the masses."

"I consider Glen Campbell and The Ohio Express as good examples of the plastic sound," he continued. "The sound is easy-listening — no one has to get involved with the music or the lyrics."

Fowler, however, recognizes the problems faced by many disc jockies whose shows appeal to young people and are carried on AM radio station:

A HEAVY scheduling of **Tennis clinic**

A tennis clinic and exhibition match to raise funds for starving Biafrans will be held Sunday at 4 p.m. at Woods Park (33rd and O Streets).

The clinic originally set for last Thursday was postponed by the rains.

Rudolph Nah Roberts, coach and captain of the Liberian Davis Cup team, will conduct the event and play an exhibition match against Bill North, 1967 Nebraska state tennis champion.



commercials, which limit the length of playing intervals; a large, heterogeneous audience and other assorted methods of interrupting a show, such as news, weather, sports, editorials, bulletins, political messages, daily prayers, blaring identifications.

"At least we don't have to identify ourselves with someone screaming uuuu — Five . . . ninety . . . three . . . on youuuur dial."

Fowler's on-the-air approach is much different. He introduces each song matter-of-factly. He doesn't chit-chat between songs, although he does throw in an occasional comment.

One night, for instance, he even became didactic.

"I'M GOING to teach you how to tell if other disc jockies are cheating you on 'Hey, Jude,'" he said. Then he played the Beatles' lengthy hit, en totale, pointing to the exact time when the s...

fades away. "And unless you hear that last 'a wella' you know that it's not being played in its entirety," he added.

"I try to sound like a human being on-the-air," Fowler explained, "and an individualistic one at that."

The show is original for Lincoln, but it is part of a larger, older trend across the country. San Francisco is considered to be the progenitor of the rocks shows, with its abundance of local musical groups as an influence.

FOWLER'S FIRST impulse that progressive rock could thrive in Lincoln came after an appearance of the Gary Burton Quartet at the Union last spring.

"I thought if that many people showed that much enthusiasm at a concert, there must be a turned-on ere in Lincoln," he recalled.

Then, on a program

sponsored by KFMQ but moderated by the youth group of the local Unitarian Church, a hour was devoted to the new rock sound. It drew a favorable response from the listening audience, Fowler said.

"I went to my boss and he favored the idea of starting a regular program," he said.

FROM A weekly summer program, to a week-end, three nights a week format, to a six nights, 24 hours-a-week barrage, the KFMQ progressive rock show has mushroomed into one of the more popular radio shows produced in Lincoln, drawing a University-orientated audience, Fowler said.

On week nights and Sundays the show runs from 10:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.; Friday and Saturday nights it continues until 4:00 a.m.

"At first I thought I was doing a public service," Fowler said. "People called

to thank me personally for beginning the show. The phone was ringing for weeks."

His public continues to contact him. When Fowler asks for telephone requests during a show he can fill a three-hour show within 20 minutes. People lend him records to use. Others stop him on the street to suggest new songs and groups.

"ALL I ask from my audience is to be as open-minded about listening to this music as I am in choosing it," Fowler suggested. "Then I am sure that the show will not become just a passing fad."

But the cult is not passing. It, too, is experimenting. Groups gather to have a rock party; an FM radio is the honored guest. Others invent ingenious lighting effects to heighten the sensual experience while listening to the music.

Some just listen and study.

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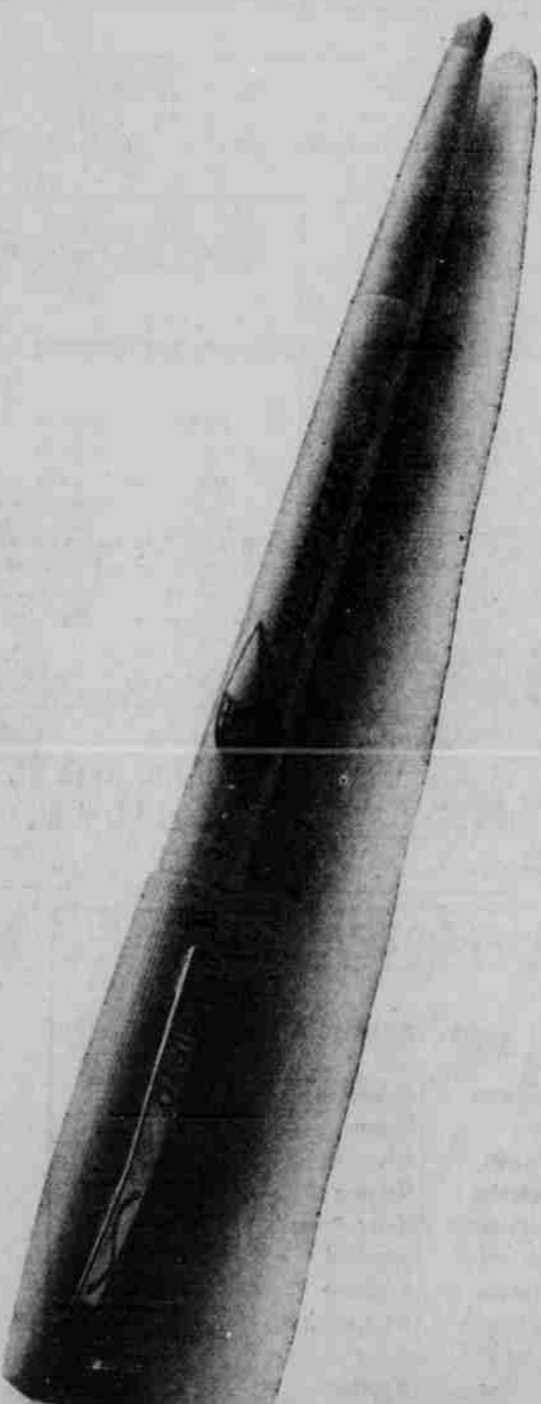
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