

arts /entertainment

Family and music, in that order, keep Cowan local

By Kent Warneke

Sally Cowan is one of Lincoln's few recording artists.

But Sally Cowan also is the mother of two children and that is where the conflict arises.

"I've got an agent who is pushing recording companies to sign me up on a national label and they all say that I've got to go on tour," Cowan said. "But I can't go on tour because of my kids, for right now my family is ahead of my music," she said. She is currently awaiting the release of her second album.

However, although Cowan won't be able to do an extensive tour, she isn't hindered in performing in Lincoln bars and furthering her musical career which began when she was five.

"My mother had an album of Jane Powell with her picture on the cover and all the time I'd sit and listen to it and look at it and say that someday I'm going to have my picture on an album," Cowan said.

Vocal music major

Cowan has lived in Lincoln since she was 4-years-old and went on to major in vocal music at UNL.

"It wasn't so much that I wanted to go out and make it as a big star," Cowan said. "I just liked music so much that I wanted a formal education in it."

For the last eight years Cowan has been performing in Lincoln at various sites and has started recording her own music.

"To be successful locally you have to have people who know who you are and the only way to do that is to be around constantly," Cowan said.

"Of course it also takes a lot of determination to make it locally or on a national level and you also have to be a good salesman," she said. "And that's sort of a problem for me because I just can't push my albums on people."

Changing from mellow

Yankee Lady, Cowan's first album released on a local level in 1976, was a mixture of very mellow, very folk-type of music, a style which she now has changed.

"I made money on the first album and so I consider it successful, but since that has happened my taste in music has changed and so consequently that will reflect the music on my second album," Cowan said.

Here Comes The Song is the title of Cowan's second album, a product of one and a half years' work, which should be released in two months.

"It's more of a progressive album, full of up-tempo country type of music," Cowan said. "And there's a full band backing me up instead of the limited one I had on my first album."

However, getting her album on a national label is still a major goal for

Cowan as it is for any other aspiring recording artist. But the road is not an easy one, she explains.

Boxes of music

"Every radio station in the country, even the small ones, get boxes full of albums every day that they have to go through and decide which ones they'll use," Cowan said.

"To get yourself known, you need three things," Cowan said. "You need to have an extremely pushy agent, know somebody on the inside and be willing to go on tour."

"I've got the first two things, but at the moment, I just can't go on tour for an extended period of time," Cowan said.

According to Cowan, she would like to tour in the future and would like to start touring on a limited basis if that is possible and work up to a more extended tour when her children are older.

Lincoln a disadvantage

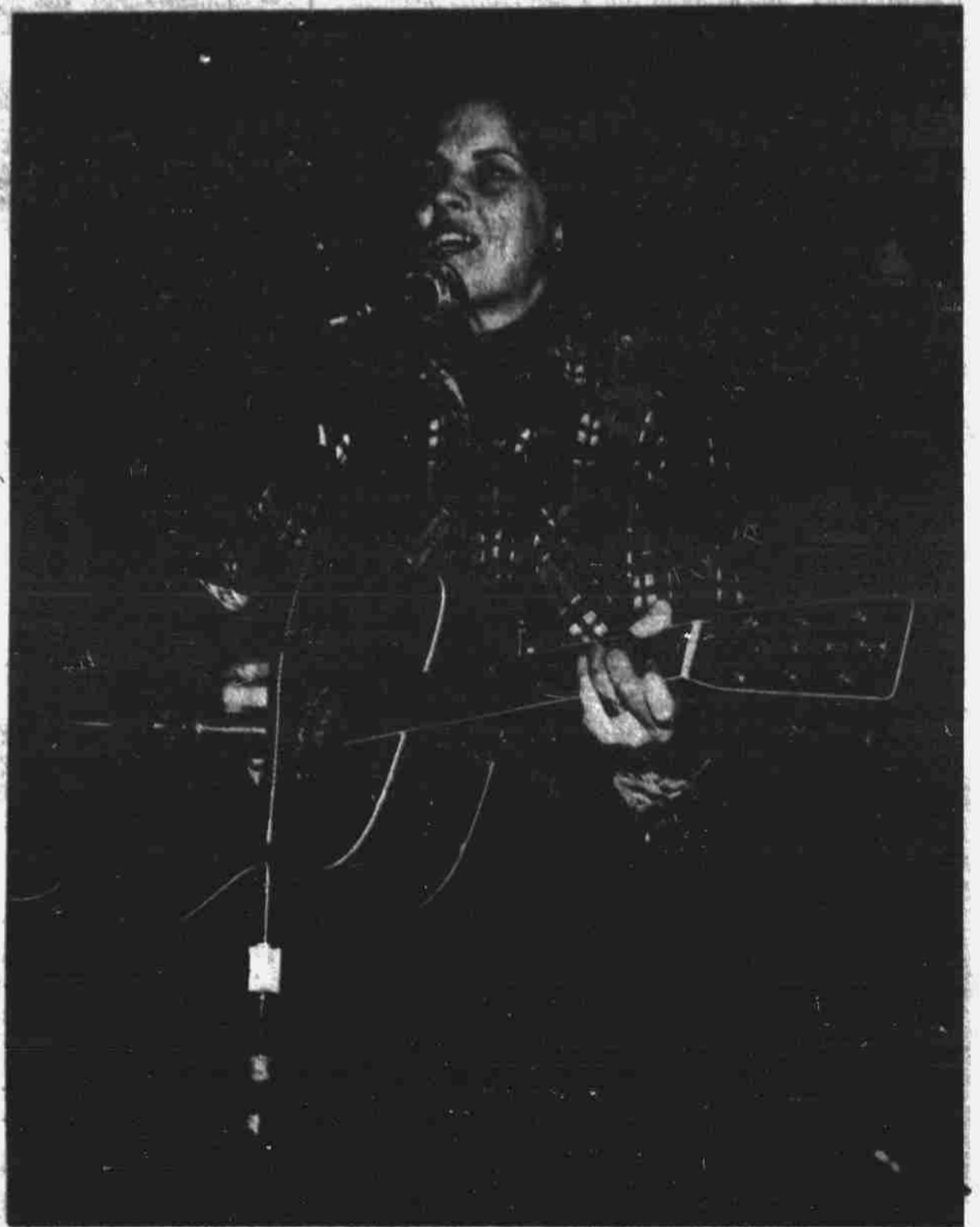
Another factor that may be hurting Cowan's chances for a national label is Lincoln.

"I like Lincoln very much, but Lincoln is not a city filled with professional agents," Cowan said. "I've been working for eight years and talked to a total of five agents."

"Minneapolis would be an ideal city to live in," Cowan said. "They've had Michael Johnson, Leo Kottke and Emmylou Harris come out of that area—it's a real music-oriented city."

But even if she doesn't get a contract with a national recording company, more important is her music itself.

"I've got a successful following in Lincoln. I love music tremendously and I would miss it terribly if I would have to get it up," Cowan said.



Daily Nebraskan photo
Lincoln singer Sally Cowan entertains a local audience with the mellow tunes that made her first album nationally known.

Sound rumination—a critical glance back

By Casey McCabe

There can come a terrifying moment in a writer's life when he questions the basic need for his existence.

This can occur often when you happen to have the title of a music reviewer. The first question then becomes: "Who is any one person to tell others what is good and what is not?"

album review

The record buying public never ceases to amaze me with its opinions of good and bad. Album sales and album quality do not always go hand in hand, and if I've used the word "slick" derogatorily in this column before, it is because I felt the initial work of an artist was over-manipulated by the crews of producers and engineers who are looking to make a contemporary, salable object. Of course this sometimes works to everyone's advantage.

Negative implications

Lesson one, then, is to be objective. You read in the paper that Kiss is the most popular group in America. While discreetly biting your tongue, you admit that the band must have its good points, otherwise it couldn't possibly be so popular, could it?

The title of "critic" automatically brings up negative implications, so it is often easier to review the type of person who would like or dislike certain music. Other times you have to go with a gut feeling if you want to live with yourself for the next few weeks.

My roommate can't understand how I can possibly like both Tchaikovsky and Led Zeppelin, but somewhere within that range, I hope I've been able to find what

makes music work for the people who enjoy it.

Too analytical?

Another question that invariably pops into your head as you salve over a hot typewriter late into the night is, "Is music that important that people really want to see it so closely analyzed?" Well, with the stereo replacing the television as the hearth of many young peoples' homes, and with the monetary explosion in the music industry, I don't dabble very long worrying about its importance. But do people really like to analyze music?

I continually find more and more people who are beyond being analytical about music. It becomes a way of life for them. A good concert may become the main topic of conversation for weeks at a time, or even a good album, a good single, or a good rumor about Rod Stewart.

Magical moment

How about that magical moment when two people discover that they each secretly love Nancy Sinatra and have all of her albums. It could be the start of a wonderful relationship. Better yet, have you ever seen a conversation between two people who were really into the Grateful Dead? It's almost a religious experience.

Realizing that people thrive on music, even invest great deals of time, energy and money into it, gives me a certain sense of job security and I can turn my attention back to the matters at hand.

I've enjoyed reviewing music, almost as much as I've enjoyed babbling self-indulgently these last few paragraphs. I'll close out this semester with some casual observations.

Notable Albums

The Cars/The Cars—They proved that rock 'n' roll can still be fun, and successfully found the fine line between rock, pop and punk.

Poco/Legend—Another fine album by Poco, but this one was enough to finally give the group the recognition they've long deserved.

Dire Straits/Dire Straits—The fluke album of the year was also one of the best. For those of us who are always looking for classifications, Dire Straits defied classification, and that is just one of the reasons the album was particularly engaging.

Neil Young/Comes A Time—One of the last remaining influences from the 60s who has refused to sell out. Neil's mellowed out, but not at the expense of his music.

Pet Peeves

Lack of concerts in Lincoln—Someone is scaring the top notch tours from Lincoln and up to Omaha. Only the shadow knows. Omaha Civic Auditorium's search and seizure policy—Why would anybody want to confiscate my alligator clip?

"Heart of Glass" by Blondie—If inserting the words "pain in the ass" to this curious combination of ABBA and Donna Summer qualifies this song as progressive New Wave, I'd rather listen to ABBA...or Donna Summer.

KHAT format change—Though the station admittedly loved its old progressive country format, it felt it had to change to Top 40 to stay competitive. The run for the money in radio has left many music lovers out in the cold.

FM radio in general—KFMQ's Block Party Weekends show the trend; the same songs by the same elite performers, repeated to the point of one continuous *deja vu*. Omaha's Z-92 is becoming a recognized alternative.

Album prices—They don't look like they'll get any better. Invest your stock in 3M and TDK.

'Paper Chase' salvage tried

By Deb Emery

With an investment of \$11 and a mailing campaign that has sent out 55 letters so far, a UNL student is trying to save a struggling CBS television series from the ax, despite the network's announcement to cancel the series Tuesday.

Alex Strautman, a junior broadcast major, hopes to spare *Paper Chase* from the fate most shows with poor ratings usually get—being canceled.

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