

Petition drive spurs concert success at Pershing

By Suzanne Sayed

The excitement is stunning. Despite the noise level, heartbeats are nearly audible, and anticipation hangs in the air like a vapor. With each movement, there is a continual fear of causing a human avalanche.

The moment is here.

The music blares, building to a climax, and the crowd erupts into a loud roar of approval. For most who have chosen to attend the rock concert, the evening will be well spent.

However, the use of drugs and alcohol during concerts plays an important role in determining whether promoters and auditoriums provide the eager concert-goers with enough music to satisfy their wants.

Doug Kuhnel, Pershing Auditorium manager, said last week's concerts, ZZ Top and Jefferson Starship, were the first in five months. Harry Chapin performed last October, he said.

No bookings

"It got to the point where nobody would book concerts into the building," he said. He explained that the concert promoters, who pay police security to cover the events, could not afford to pay the number of policemen required to keep the crowd under control.

He stressed that the success of a concert depends completely on audience response. Noting the overall success of last week's concerts, he said, "If people can

come and enjoy themselves without breaking the law, we'd love to book more concerts."

"Concerts bring larger turnouts than most any event," he said. "About 6,000 people attended each of the concerts last week."

He said REO Speedwagon has been booked for April 9 and that he expects further bookings if the success continues.

Petition Drive

Part of the success and enthusiasm surrounding the recent concerts may be attributed to KFMQ Radio Station, which sponsored a petition drive Feb. 16-17 to bring in more concerts.

According to Bruce Wheeler, program manager at the station, many listeners called KFMQ asking why there were no concerts being held.

"This prompted the petition drive for more rock-type entertainment," Wheeler said. "We received some 9,000 calls from people who wanted their names on the petition."

Wheeler said the hope was to encourage promoters to bring big groups to Lincoln. He added that Lincoln, with 22,000 college students and a median age of 25 years, is an ideal stop for big rock bands.

Wheeler said he felt the crowd conducted itself well at the recent concerts.

He recognized the four major concert sellouts from January to March in 1977 as triggering pressure. "After those concerts (ZZ Top, Kiss, Boston, and the Electric Light Orchestra) there was lots of public pressure to crack down on concert goers," he said.

Several arrests

"There were several arrests then," he added, noting a big improvement over the years.

Capt. Paul Jacobsen of the Lincoln Police Department agreed that the recent crowds have been fairly orderly.

"There were no arrests at Jefferson Starship," he said, "and only two at ZZ Top." He said the arrests were made for narcotics and disturbance.

"It is impossible to stop everyone," Jacobsen said. "The main objective is to maintain control in the crowd." He said that 10 security officers were hired for each of the recent events and several plain-clothed guards were present.

He noted that the doors are opened one hour early. "This diminishes some of the initial pushing and shoving," Jacobsen said.

"The important thing is that no one gets hurt," he said, noting the recent incident in Cincinnati, where 11 people were killed at a Who concert.

Linguistic theorist to lecture today

Noam Chomsky, a professor of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a political activist, will lecture twice today on the UNL campus.

Chomsky will speak at 3:15 p.m. in Sheldon Art Gallery on current issues in linguistics and at 7:30 p.m. in the Nebraska Union Centennial Room on the U.S. role in global politics. Admission is free, but voluntary contributions to the speakers program will be accepted tonight.

According to Bruce Erlich, associate professor of English, Chomsky may be the most influential modern theorist in linguistics. Chomsky's theory on the structure of language challenges the theory of behaviorism developed by B.F. Skinner. Chomsky believes humans have an innate ability to learn language, Erlich said.

Chomsky also has written several books on American foreign policy since 1945.

Chomsky's appearances are sponsored by the Montgomery Lecture Series, the English Department and the University Program Council Talks and Topics Committee.

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daily nebraskan

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The Daily Nebraskan is published by the UNL Publications Board Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters, except during vacations.

Address: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 14th and R Streets, Lincoln, Neb. 68588. Telephone: 472-2588.

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