

arts/entertainment

Nash combines past and present in his concert

By Casey McCabe

Graham Nash strolled quietly onto the Omaha Music Hall stage Saturday night without drama or fanfare. A musician known for his simple style and more often recognized as one-third of the supergroup Crosby, Stills and Nash, his position as a solo artist necessitated that he stretch out his rapport with the crowd.

concert review

Still, the sight of Nash alone on stage brought loud cheers and applause from the audience, a sign of loyalty to the musician, and very likely support for Nash's anti-nuclear cause.

Unlike many artists from the Woodstock nation, Graham Nash still has a strong involvement with political activism, and that mood was evident through the evening.

Opening the show was a slow-paced but pleasant set by a singer-composer and L.A. friend of Nash's, Leah Kunkel. The ever-casual Nash introduced her and provided some harmonics on her last number, erasing the typical build-up of anticipation for the main act to hit the stage.

For his own set, Nash stressed simplicity as he alternated between piano, guitar and harmonica, with the only backup coming from unobtrusive electric keyboards and Joel Bernstein's acoustic Martin three-quarters guitar. The first strains of "Military Madness" brought instant recognition and cheers from the crowd.

As a sign that times and causes have changed since the tune first appeared on *Songs for Beginners*, Nash inserted the line "nuclear madness" in the final chorus. The audience was, for the most part, old enough to remember well the peaceful activism of Crosby, Stills and Nash a decade ago, and they welcomed Nash's timely improvisation with enthusiasm.

While Nash's tour is running with the release of a new album, *Earth and Sky*, he dwelled little on the LP and chose instead to highlight the past with his most familiar works. The songs receiving the most immediate recognition and applause included "Southbound Train," "Just a Song Before I Go," "Cathedral" (his best offerings on

CSN), "Our House" (the classic statement of hippie mellowness from *Deja Vu*), "Right Between the Eyes," "Chicago," and an excellent version of the Crosby/Nash whale tribute "Wind On the Water."

New songs included "Magical Child" a typically light Nash piece, this one for his two-year-old son, and "Barrel of Pain" in which he both attacks and laments the dumping of radioactive waste into the ocean off San Francisco.

At times during the show, Nash's voice seemed somewhat frail, and his energy seemed to wane periodically as he stood on the near empty stage. But as he knocked out his stable of classic tunes, he began to feed off the energy of the audience to bring his show to a high energy climax.

After retrieving a "No Nukes" frisbee that was hurled on stage, Nash smiled at the coincidence and launched into an encore with John Hall's "Power," the thematic statement from the recent *No Nukes* concert album, of which Nash was a major coordinator. He stayed on stage for "Teach Your Children," undoubtedly one of his finest works, and found a willing crowd to sing along with the chorus. Another enthusiastic encore brought Nash back for a fitting ending with "Simple Man."

The nearly empty third balcony at the Music Hall showed that Nash's status as a solo artist may remain somewhat nebulous to the masses. For the dedicated fans though, he still represents a spirit of musical involvement that is rare in the industry today.

For all his musical simplicity, Nash keeps a strong message in much of his work, and he showed he doesn't need his famous cohorts to get the point across.

Poetry publishers unadvisable—Kuzma

By Trisha Wilkinson

The World of Poetry and the National Poetry Press are two companies that give aspiring poets a chance to be published. However, for serious, aspiring poets, UNL English Prof. Gregory Kuzma does not advise submitting poetry to companies such as these.

"My impression of them is they're not worthwhile. Their primary function is money making," Kuzma said.

Although Kuzma said he had never heard of World of Poetry or the National Poetry Press, he said he knew of this type of company. The companies may receive up to \$20,000 in entry fees, Kuzma said, and give away \$500-\$1,000 in prizes. He also said the booklets of winning poetry are poorly published.

Kuzma stressed that contests like the one the World of Poetry sponsors have nothing to do with poetry. The company probably has other money-making interests, such as health food, Kuzma said.

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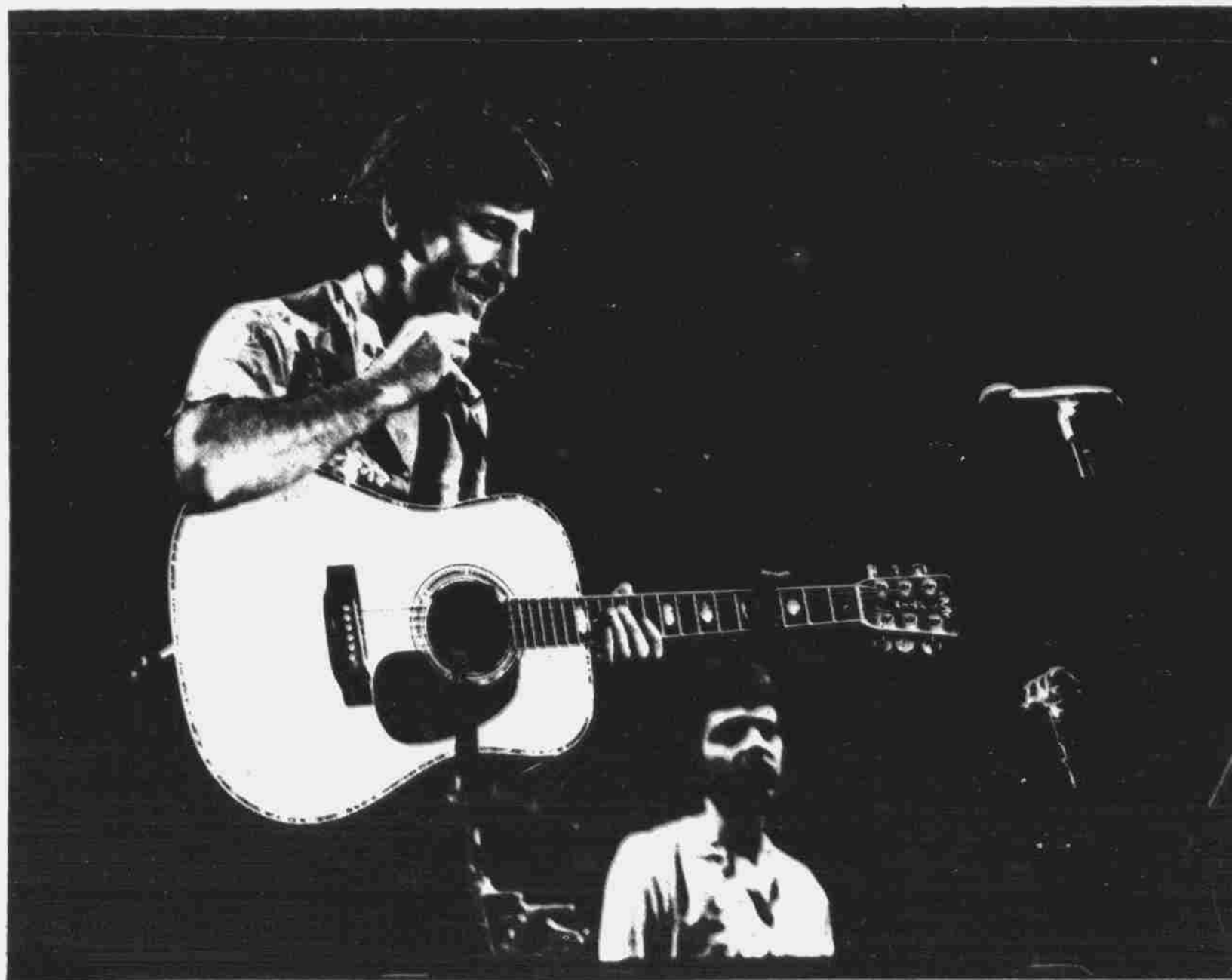


Photo by R.K. Hahn

Graham Nash pauses to accept applause from an appreciative Omaha audience during his Saturday night concert at the Music Hall.

'California Bloodstock's' collage hard to classify

By Scott Kleager

To classify is to arrange, to arrange is to dissect and put in order that which is not orderly. *California Bloodstock* by Terry McDonell is a new novel extremely hard to classify. There are so many things involved in it. After reading, one must ask three questions.

book review

Is it fantasy? Animal People, spawned from a trapper and a buffalo, roam in the valleys of the Sierras. A mystical Walla Walla Indian medicine man moves in and out of the story like Gandalf in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, passing out peyote buttons and words of advice. The father of the Animal People, Buckdown, talks to Buffalo, who talks back.

It's hard to tell if the author wants us to believe the Buffalo talked or whether we

are to accept it as part of the genre. If the latter is the case, then *California Bloodstock* is definitely fantasy. Finally McDonell, in a brief bit of catchy narrative, writes: "Who can truly know if the buffalo was who he said he was or, for that matter, if he spoke at all? Buckdown may have hallucinated the whole thing. . ."

One also can ask: is the novel a fictionalized genealogical-historical account of the beginnings of California?

Yes, genealogists will find this book interesting. It reads like Mari Sandoz did the character research for it and it was stuck for years in the stacks of the California State Archives. Sutter is here, the original owner of Sutter's Fort, and so is the founder of San Francisco and the mayor of Los Angeles in 1830. There are a host of characters that will ring a bell in a reader's head for some unknown reason, as if their names somehow should mean something historically.

The author weaves a tale of the not-so-famous and the famous in such a way that it seems as though the characters really may have existed at one time. They all know each other, they all have much to do with the events leading up to the discovery

of gold in California. This makes an impression of reality in the reader's mind. Reading *California Bloodstock* is like finding one obituary in a newspaper from the early 20th century which connects all the branches of the family tree.

Is it possible that this novel is really a western? After all, it does take place in the "wild west," its heroes and crooks are from that period and everybody either rides horses or walks. One of the main characters is direct from the movie "The Wild Bunch,"—a person who never blinks an eye doing nasty things to women, men and assorted animals, and of course, who gets it in the end.

What the novel is is a combination of all three; a fantasy-genealogical-historical-western that reads like a multiple choice test. McDonell goes too far with creating something different and the end-product is more a collage than a story. He tries to do too much.

But the novel, though admittedly overstated, is surprising and should receive words of praise. So often the "Best-Seller List" is boring; this novel is not.

Stylistically, *California Bloodstock* is exciting in a creative sense, well-worked,

but off-the-wall too many times.

For instance, T.D. Jr., a main character who hopes throughout that Taya (the female protagonist) will fall in love with him thinks to himself; "But he didn't want her to leave. It was a game they had begun to play. Call it 'go away closer.'"

A second example is the page where a Mexican-Catholic priest calls some rowdy Americans "a new plague of infidels."

Like the setting and the plot, the author plainly overworks his descriptive narrative. The result is he becomes, at times, hard to understand.

Finally, what one has performing a frontal lobotomy on the book is yet another factor in an analysis of a stuffed book. The title, *California Bloodstock*, creates a feeling that California began just as crazy as it is today.

After reading and inspecting the front of the book again, one gets the distinct impression that it somehow portrays the first saga of a continuing story, that somehow the blood of the crazy characters flows in the veins of modern-day Californians.

So *California Bloodstock* may be a reflection of, or an explanation of, the strange and mystical place where everyone wants to go even today: California.