

# arts/entertainment

## Charlie Burton and the Cutouts to debut Friday

By Pat Higgins

Serious rock 'n' roll aficionados will be pleased to learn that Charlie Burton and the Cutouts will be making their public debut this Friday in Malcolm, at the Branched Oak Inn.

A previous incarnation of the band was known as Charlie Burton and Rock Therapy and they enjoyed a reputation as the killer band in the greater Nebraska area.

In addition to their exciting live performances, they issued a series of independently-produced and released singles which garnered considerable favorable notice from national publications including *Creem*, *Village Voice*, *Trouser Press* and the *New York Rocker*, a rather impressive track record for a band operating out of Lincoln.

Rock Therapy also had the pleasure of being the opening act for Sire recording artists, the Ramones, and the ever-popular collegiate faves, the Talking Heads, where they rivaled the headliners in audience response.

However, they have been in a state of suspended animation since their final performance as Rock Therapy on New Year's Eve. Friday's show is planned as a tune-up for a Halloween bash at the Drumstick, which they guarantee to be totally insane.

### 'Still rock 'n' roll

"It's the same but different," says plain-spoken drummer Dave (Rebel) Robel, "We're still a rock 'n' roll band but you can't pin a label on us or limit us to any one mode of music. The key difference between the Cutouts and Rock Therapy is that in the old band we did about a

50-50 mix of originals and cover tunes. In the Cutouts we're doing virtually all originals.

"Charlie has been coming up with some really great new songs. He is a great rock 'n' roll song writer and I think 'Rock and Roll Behavior' (a Rock Therapy single release) is a classic of our time."

Burton himself is a rather complex individual. Onstage, he is known for his primal, uninhibited rock 'n' roll in the grand tradition of the savage young Elvis Presley. Off-stage, he is self-effacing and articulate.

"Our goal is to get through to as many people as possible," said Burton. "I'd like to think that we have the talent, but more than anything we want to maintain our self-respect. For instance, I love rockabilly and we did a lot of it in the old band but there is absolutely no way that I would be part of any oldies revival. We're contemporary performers. I would like to aspire to success beyond the local level, otherwise, I would feel foolish."

The Cutouts' only new member is lead guitar player Phil Shoemaker.

"This band has been a tonic for me," Shoemaker said. "The band I was in before was a glitter rock group. The Charlie Burton experience has changed my life."

Steady bass player G. "Otto" Spalti added, "Phil is the most fun guy I've ever worked with. He has a lot of responsibility as the only new member and he really has handled it well. Personally, the biggest change for me is doing back vocals, which I love."

### Many influences

There is a variety of musical influences that shape the Cutouts' sound. Shoemaker's musical taste is slightly at variance from the other band members.

"I love Eddie Van Halen," he claims. Robel can remember seeing Elvis on Ed Sullivan, which, he said, had an earth-shattering effect.

"I was inspired a lot by the MC5 and the 60s garage band, and great drummers like Charlie Watts, Keith Moon,

and Animal, of the Muppet show. I also really like the Ramones and Elvis Costello, but there are so many people jumping on the New Wave bandwagon that it is becoming ridiculous. A spike hairdo does not make you a rocker."

Burton is an avid record collector with a huge inventory of vinyl of all genres that broadened his taste.

"Right now I like Iggy, Sam and Dave and (country artist) Ral Donner but it changes all the time," said Burton. "I like a lot of New Wave and in a sense we're New Wave in that we guarantee not to play any Top 40 material."

The Cutouts have only been playing together for a short time.

Burton contends, "We're in a gestation period right now, waiting to be born. We're not looking for a long-term record contract tomorrow, although we wouldn't turn one down either."

"We do plan on recording again as soon as possible. We're just going to try to keep improving. We want to be fun and entertaining, but when we're ready, we'll push it to the limit."



Charlie Burton and the Cutouts debut Friday in Malcolm at the Branched Oak Inn.

## Concert tour is reunion for Elton John's drummer

By Casey McCabe

Nigel Olsson, drummer for Elton John and pop star in his own right, says it's good to be home.

It's difficult to understand his thick English accent via the telephone of his hotel in Houston, Texas. It's one of many rooms he has been in since Sept. 4, when the Elton John tour started in America. And it's one of many he still has to face because the tour is scheduled into December when the band closes out in Australia.

"Home is with this band," said Olsson. "This tour is going great."

The tour has been a reunion of sorts. In 1975, after the platinum success *Captain Fantastic*, John surprised many by releasing Olsson and bassist Dee Murray from his band. The two longtime members had been with Elton for most of his finest work, and many argue that this was the beginning of a downhill slide for the 1970's most successful pop artist.

Then, after being used sparingly for John's first album of the eighties, *21 at 33*, both Olsson and Murray were asked to join the entourage for John's most extensive tour in years. If there was any existing animosity, it has disappeared because the band has been playing like a tight-knit family enjoying a bit of *deja vu*.

"It's been five years since we've really been together," Olsson says. "We're going back to the basics, and I must say it feels great."

"In those five years, Olsson has taken a stab at finding his own market. His second self-titled solo album, released in 1978, yielded him two encouraging hit singles, a hit cover of Sam Cooke's "A Little Bit of Soap," and his own composition "Dancin' Shoes." In the current show, John hands the spotlight to Olsson to perform two hopeful singles off his new album *Changing Tides*.

Olsson's new status shows up in the tour arrangements. Nigel has his own publicity people and road manager, his own equipment, a different record label, and even his own dedicated fans. In Lincoln, several young girls who clutched the railing behind the stage and spent the full 2½ hours trying to get the diminutive drummer's attention.

### One more time

"It doesn't feel like I'm a different entity in the band," explains Olsson. "Of course it's good for myself promotion-wise to be able to reach this many people, but I always wanted to tour with this band one more time."

"Elton's very happy with the results, and we're planning on doing an album with him in June, but I'm still going to put out another solo album soon, probably in January."

Still, his solo status was nebulous enough that Olsson admitted to being frightened when he took over the microphone from John in the first shows of the tour.

"I wasn't sure about being able to hold Elton John's audience, until I realized these were just people having fun," he said.

As far as the music he likes to make, Olsson's philosophy is to try and please everyone. He says *Changing Tides* is a change for him, more rock 'n' roll and some

rhythm and blues. Still, his niche has been discovered in a category he said is overlooked—Adult Contemporary. Although *Changing Tides* consists entirely of material from other songwriters, Olsson plans to do more writing for his next album.

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## Frontier family benefits from inner comfort in 'Heartland'

By Jennifer Bauman

*Heartland* is based on the actual experiences of widow Elinore Randall and her seven-year-old daughter Jerrine. In 1910, they moved to Wyoming where Elinore began work as a housekeeper for Clyde Stewart, a cattle rancher operating on a homestead claim.

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Wanting eventually to be her own boss, Elinore filed claim on a homestead adjacent to Clyde's land. After a time they discovered they each had something the other needed: Clyde would benefit from the extra land for his cattle and Elinore needed liquid capital and experience about high plains farming to get started. So they pooled their resources and got married.

*Heartland* is told from Elinore's point of view and focuses special attention on roles of frontier women. Like many others who moved west in response to offers of cheap land and available jobs, Elinore knew little about what life really would be like. Vast empty spaces, harsh weather, and crude living accommodations greeted newcomers.

In addition, Elinore found occupations were not open to her because of her sex. And though she did want to farm her own land, she realized that her farming experience in sheltered eastern climates didn't prepare her for solo work in Wyoming.

Like *My Brilliant Career* from Australia, *Heartland* shows the attempts of a turn-of-the-century rural woman to maintain some degree of control over her own life. The protagonist of the Australian film is young and idealistic and chooses to follow a career instead of getting married.

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