



Tom Petty

Photo by Mark Billingsley

Tom Petty lives up to hype in sold out Omaha concert

By Pat Higgins

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers fulfilled their promise of good solid rock and roll last Saturday night at the Omaha Civic Auditorium before an enthusiastic full house.

Petty, nattily decked out in a stylish Hawaiian shirt, was in fine form, as were his underpublicized Heartbreakers. They did material from all four of their wildly successful LPs, ranging from a superb version of "I Need to Know" to the current favorites from this year's *Hard Promises*.

concert review

Petty appeared to be having an excellent time while rocking out. He also had enough class not to pander to the lowest common denominator instincts of the audience, unlike so many other bands.

Rivals Springsteen

Only Bruce Springsteen rivals Tom Petty as the king of mainstream rock today. The concert Saturday had the air of a major event, somewhat on the same level of excitement as a Springsteen performance. The Omaha FM station hyped the show endlessly before and after and in a very slick move played non-stop Petty directly after the show was over.

Petty appears to be universally respected by all segments of the record-buying public. T-shirt clad people, endorsed everything from New Wave to jazz. A huge number of Petty shirts were hawked at the concert too.

Petty writes great songs that may even be better than Springsteen himself and he is just as dramatic without being overblown about it. Plus, Petty doesn't sing about his car very often.

Petty has traditionally been compared to the Byrds on records, but the Rolling Stones may be more of an apt comparison for the live show. The road crew backstage was wearing Phil Jones and the Heartbreakers shirts (Jones is one hot guitar

player from the Keith Richard school).

Petty is able to adopt a wide variety of emotional stances, ranging from vulnerability to passion, which helps make him a charismatic performer. Like any other genuine artist, Petty makes music that you can feel on an emotional level.

Naughty Sweeties

The opening act was the Naughty Sweeties from L.A., which sounds pretty awful on paper, but they were surprisingly good. The high energy lead singer made a few jaunts into the crowd, and they even pulled an encore, which is rather unusual for a crowd waiting for Tom Petty. They introduced one song as "James Brown meets Ernest Hemingway."

The Naughty Sweeties (they should lose the name), discussed the Petty tour.

"We opened up for Tom in Michigan once and he seemed to enjoy us so he invited us to go on the road with him," said drummer Rollo Smith.

Best night

"Tonight was probably our best night so far with Tom," said Smith. "Sometimes there is a lack of inspiration when you are an opening act."

The Naughty Sweeties have an LP out on Rhino Records and are due out with an album on Electra.

"Everybody in L.A. is either into punk or powerpop. Our roots are in old rhythm and blues," said Smith, "the press always puts L.A. down, but the energy level is very high if you go to the right places."

Smith had the usual motivation for becoming a rocker. "I got into it for the girls," he said.

Petty has to be regarded as an admirable fellow for his one-man campaign to keep record companies from raising prices. Also worthy of note was the inclusion of the ultimate garage band classics "Louie, Louie" and "Shout" that showed Petty's roots off to full advantage. Three encores are also an indication that Petty gives 110 percent out there and the number of girls screaming en masse for their hero had to be a record of some sort. Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers should put out a live album.

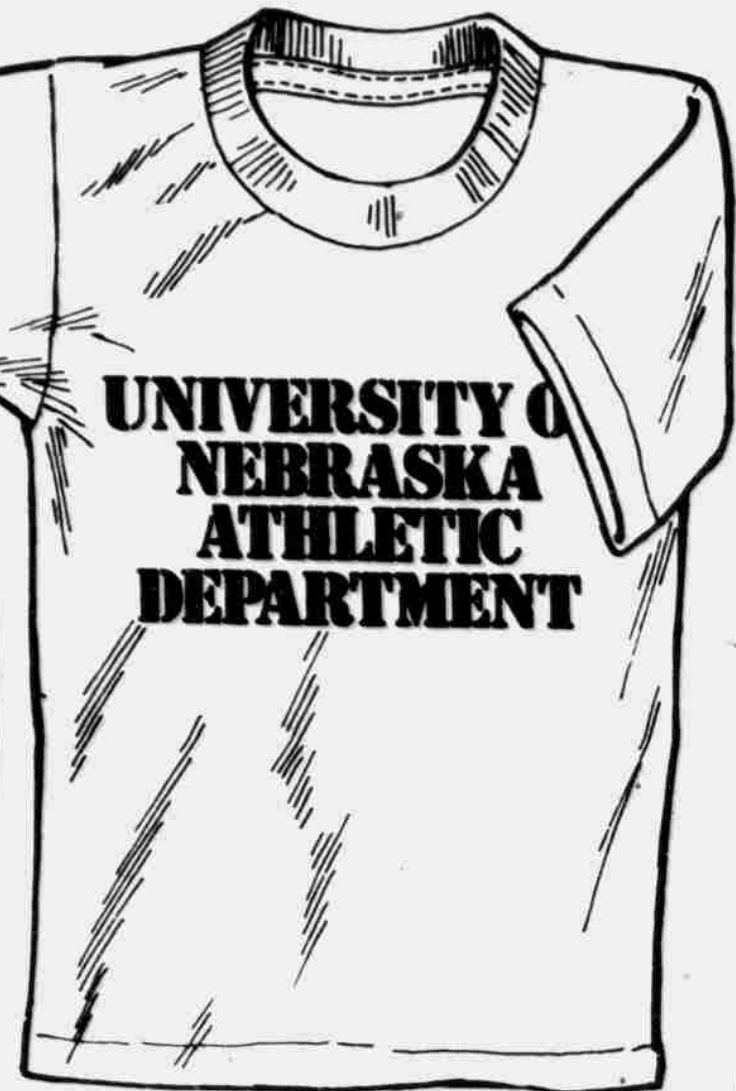
WE'RE JUST PERFECT FOR YOU

Cheer your favorite team (who could that be?) in a shirt from RG's Shirtworks. And our great styles at our low prices will give you more to cheer about. Only one color!

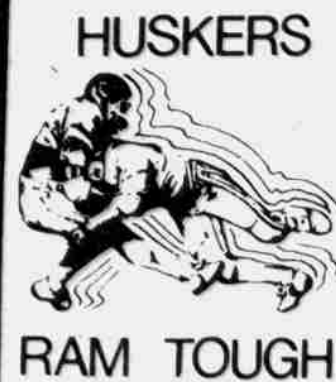
Luv Ya Red!



GO BIG RED



Better DEAD THAN SOONER RED



RAM TOUGH



...and on the 8th Day God Created the Huskers

Buy a Big Red shirt: the design's included 5.49 to 7.99

Go with a winner--RG has the Big Red shirt styles and designs you want in one of the widest selections available. Choose from baseball and football jerseys, U.C.L.A. style jerseys, and solid red and red ring neck T-shirts. Available designs include: "Better Dead Than Sooner Red," Harry Husker, "Luv Ya Red," and "University of Nebraska Athletic Department," plus much more! Best of all, you buy the shirt and we give you the design included with your purchase. Red and white lettering too!

Richman Gordman

45th and Vine Street • Shop seven days a week 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.