



Staff photo by David Creamer

Wally Palmer of The Romantics

The Romantics? 'In Heat' epitomizes 'power pop' sound

By Stew Magnuson

Once upon a time, there was a group called The Knack. They played energetic music which was popular for a few months. They played a certain brand of music the critics called "power pop." The Knack has long since faded into obscurity. But the music they pioneered, that certain genre called power pop, is still a pervasive force in music today.

play groups like The Romantics and The Bongos as they wish. The Go-Go's were the first group from the power pop genre to be let out of the underground, and many others followed.

The Bongos, who have received even less air play than the Romantics, can be considered another addition to the power pop style of music. The Bongos were in Lincoln recently to promote their latest EP *Numbers With Wings*. In a Daily Nebraskan interview, Rob Norris, bassist for The Bongos, described their music as "80s pop."

Numbers With Wings offers many chances for The Bongos to score their first hit record. Of the five songs on the album, "Numbers With Wings," "Barbarella" or "Skydiving" all have the potential to get The Bongos air play.

Like The Romantics, there is no discernable reason why The Bongos should not be heard on the radio more often. Eventually, I think they will. Richard Barone, songwriter and lead vocalist for the group, writes songs which are very catchy and melodic.

For a critic, the shallowness of The Romantic's lyrics are a big problem. For someone who likes to dance, the lyrics are no problem. No one ever needed lyrics to dance to and that is primarily The Romantics' calling in life.

In that respect, *In Heat* succeeds. It's been two years since their last album, the disastrous *Strictly Personal*, which was a departure from the sound of the first two albums. For those who didn't care for *Strictly Personal*, be assured that the group has returned to the cleaner dance sound that made the first two albums so incredibly good.

Three years ago The Romantics played a "catch a rising star" concert in Omaha. Earlier this month, they played in Lincoln in what also was billed as a "catch a rising star" concert. But this time that title may be more true.

Records

Although the term "power pop" had faded into nothingness until resurrected right here in this very column, the practitioners of power pop are still around. In fact, one group which is criticized as being a Knack clone is The Romantics. The Romantics latest album, *In Heat*, epitomizes power pop. If power pop were to be defined as fun dance music, then *In Heat* would be a perfect example of what is to be discussed in this review.

It may surprise some people, who have only heard the latest material from The Romantics, that they have been playing since the late '70s. So why haven't you heard The Romantics on the radio before? They ran into the same problems The Knack did years ago. They were stuck in the middle of a musical taste battle. The regular listeners of late '70s and early '80s rock stations called them punk, and the punks called them mainstream. Sometimes, both sides of the fence got together and called them disco, which at that time was as bad as being called a communist in the McCarthy era.

But the times have changed and the powers that be (various rock radio programmers living in New York) have given their nod to the radio stations to

Holiday season things to do — fa-la-la-la-la...

"The Nutcracker" will be presented by Theatre Arts for Youth at the Lincoln Community Playhouse Oliver T. Joy Mainstage, 2500 S. 56th St. The holiday ballet is supported by the Nebraska Arts Council. It will run Dec. 9 through 11 and Dec. 15 through 18 at 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 10, 11, 17 and 18 at 2:30 p.m.

The ballet, which is being presented for the fourth consecutive year, is being choreographed by Eda Krasova. Originally, from Czechoslovakia, Krasova has studied with the Bolshoi Ballet School in Moscow.

Tickets to "The Nutcracker" are \$5 for adults and \$2.50 for children. Reservations may be obtained by calling the Lincoln Community Playhouse Box Office at 489-9608 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Another Yuletide favorite, Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" will begin its run at the Howell Theatre tomorrow. An article on the play in Tuesday's Daily Nebraskan erroneously listed the title as "A Christmas Story." Reservations may be obtained by calling 472-2073 between noon and 5 p.m.

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