

# Arts & Entertainment

## Crap Detectors hit fans with raw sound

By Tish Mockler and Donna Sisson

The Crap Detectors are as much a concept as a band; a concept born by Jim Jacobi about seven years ago.

Jacobi, who provides vocals and plays guitar, has always been the heart and soul of the band. Other members are: Craig Kingery, vocals, bass; Gene Lessman, drums, and Rex Keeler, vocals, guitar.

Over the years, the band has consisted of a myriad of musicians. "The band is comprised of the ideas of individuals. All our backgrounds are different which makes the band interesting. We work together well," Jacobi said.

"The band changes all the time, it doesn't really hurt anything — it's still the Crap Detectors," he said.

The release of their third LP, *Diseases on Display*, marks the 50th song Jacobi put to vinyl. The album release party is tonight at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St. The Crap Detectors will also perform live.

The Crap Detectors display a definite attitude that weaves through their lyrics, their music and even appears in their name.

In the book, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, Ernest Hemingway is quoted as saying, "You need a built-in shock proof crap detector." The book dealt with the idea that children in schools should be allowed and encouraged to question their teachers.

It was from this that Jacobi formed his band's name. The title is very appropriate to the band, given their raw, un-iced music and poignant, realistic lyrics.

This looking and exposing is a theme that is predominant in their songs and is consistent in all their albums.

The first album, *Victims of the Media*, was about the idea of corporations, magazines or radio stations controlling the masses and making them become a part of a certain scene or a certain fad and dictating their fashion or what they buy, Jacobi said.

The second album, *Superficial World*, took a look at what the mass media produces: a superficial and artificial society.

*Diseases on Display* further exposes the effects of mass media on society. "It's sort of like everyone is showing their diseases, like watching *Real People*, which is like watching every neurotic in the world showing off... and we have these TV shows talking about stars and everything in the world is more or less based on looking at everyone else's lives — it's a really weird narcissism," he said.

"I'm not trying to change anything and I'm not saying it's bad, I'm just taking a look at it," he said.

"Throughout all the song, I never make statements like, 'You should be this way.' I never say what I'm looking at is wrong, I think what's important is you've got to ask questions and I think one of the big questions is, 'What is so good about conformity?' In fact, are we entering Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, where the cool people do their soma, their drugs? ... Have we reached a 1984 level where totalitarianism is total control through mass media?" Jacobi asked.

The title song, "Diseases on Display," calls to question mindless acceptance encouraged by advertis-



Jim Jacobi of the Crap Detectors.

Rick Petty/Crap Detectors

ing:

*Mr. Aesthetic is so pathetic  
College disease is being athletic  
Radio is playing mindless songs  
Masses are dancing they think they belong  
To a world called disease*

*Where people beat up whoever they please.*

Although he is presenting an ugly side of America, his picturesque rhymes, and humorous imagery make the concept digestible.

"Most everything that does happen is pretty laughable. You can't just cry about it all the time. You can't worry about it either. So I try to make things as funny as possible and try to put in a lot of twists in the phrasing and try to make it a bit more clever and less 'everything sucks' type of attitude," Jacobi said.

"I'd say it's kind of tongue in cheek. It's serious in the sense that I mean it, but I have a sense of humor, too. And I let that come out in about 50 percent of the songs I do. The problem is people don't understand that I'm trying to be funny," Jacobi said. He likened it to black humor and Kurt Vonnegut's writing style. "It's funny but you want to cry at the same time," he said.

Jacobi's lyrics are tossed roughly into a background of driving drum beats and raw guitar chords. During their live performances, the vocals are sometimes lost, but on the album, they are clear and distinguishable.

"I write to enhance the verbal, even though sometimes it's pretty hard to understand what I'm doing because I can rattle off pretty fast. That's what makes it fun," Jacobi said.

Critics have described the Crap Detectors music in various ways, such as manic rock or rock and roll with punk overtones. But while they do fit these descriptions, they are ever changing. They use basic rock and roll as a pattern and then twist it in the same way Jacobi twists his lyrics.

"I like rawer music as opposed to really ultra-slick music... It's hard to pinpoint things. If I did, then I'd stick myself into a niche and I'd be stuck there forever, which won't work," Jacobi said.

Their music is not something one can easily put a finger on. "Which is good," Jacobi said. "It's the mark of something that is unique rather than the same... I'm trying to be individualistic while everyone else wants to be something and make a million dollars."

In addition to his music, Jacobi is a painter and he writes poetry. "I look at a lot of different things as art forms. I'm having a problem in the present trying to discern — I'm getting older and being an artist is not a way to survive. It's really frowned on around here as any kind of really solid form of existence — it's not really one of your norms. But you've got to understand, being a Nazi in Germany at one time was being normal and sending Jews to be executed was being normal, so what's a norm?" Jacobi said.

"We're sort of a non-band in a way. We don't really play that often," Jacobi said. This is one of the curious aspects of the band. For a band that has seven records, they play with amazing infrequency, which seems like a cutthroat practice promotionally and financially.

"It's hard to convey the idea that I do it because I like it and because I believe in it," Jacobi said.



Kimball Recital Hall

Evan Handler, Zakes Mokae and Ray Aranha in a scene from Athol Fugard's *Master Harold...and the Boys*, which is showing tonight at the Kimball Recital Hall.

## NOTSPOTS

### Television

•Those wacky Dean Martin roasts are back. Tonight, Dean and his cronies roast *Dynasty*'s Joan Collins. For plenty of jokes about cleavage, and little use of good taste, tune in at 9 p.m. on Channel 3.

### Radio

•Eugene Ormandy conducts tonight's edition of *The Philadelphia Orchestra*, 8 p.m. on KUCV, 90.9 FM. Gidon Kremer will be featured as the violinist. Pieces to be performed include Strauss' "Don Juan" and Saint-Saens' "Symphony No. 3."

### At the Sheldon

•Peter Greenway's *The Draughtsman's Contract* will be showing in the Film Theatre through Saturday. Showtimes are at 7 and 9 p.m., with a special matinee Saturday at 3 p.m. A review of the film appears on page 9.

### At the Kimball

•*Master Harold... and the Boys* will be presented at 8 p.m. in the Recital Hall. Zakes Mokae, Ray Aranha and Evan Handler star in the play, which

was written and directed by Athol Fugard. The play concerns the relationship between a 17-year-old white youth and two black men who are employed by his family in South Africa in 1950. In addition to numerous other awards, the play was nominated for a Tony Award in 1982. Tickets are \$4 and \$6 for students, \$10 and \$12 for the general public.

### Around Town

•The Crap Detectors will host a record release party tonight at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St. There's a \$1.50 cover charge.

•Danny O'Kane and the Model Citizens Club will be at the Drumstick, 547 N. 48th St., through Saturday. Tonight's cover is only \$2; it goes up to \$3 for the weekend performances.

•Hit'n'Run had been scheduled to play the Royal Grove, 340 W. Cornhusker Highway — that is, until the group broke up Saturday. Local rockers MX quickly filled the void. That group will be at the Grove through Saturday. There's no cover charge.