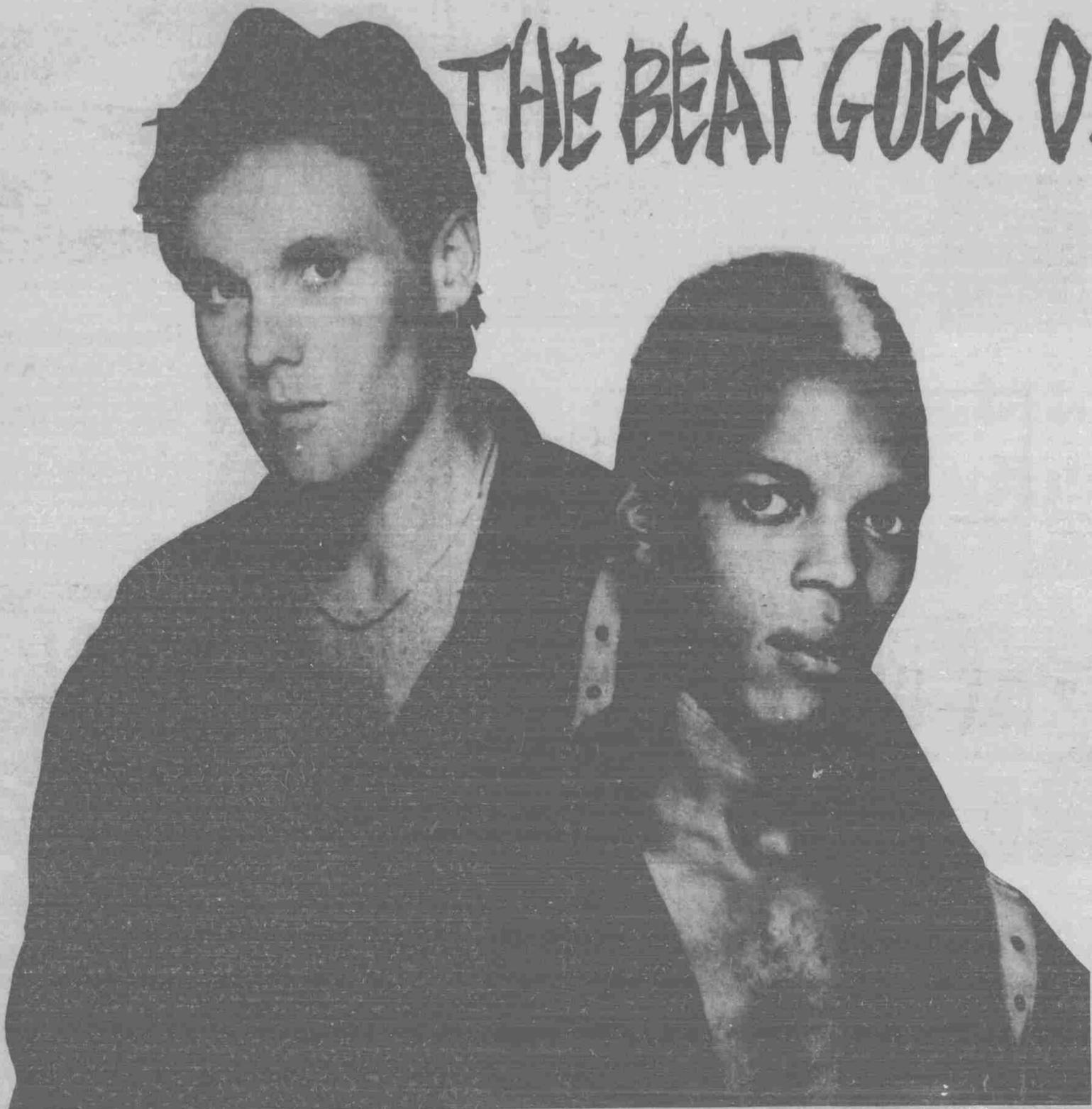


The Mag

The Daily Nebraskan's Entertainment Revue



By Ward W. Triplett III
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They were a little behind their time, and maybe a little ahead of it. They were the next best thing and the greatest thing that never was. But when English Beat called it quits last June after three successful albums and a series of songs that became classics in their English homeland, music fans of every sensitive bend knew something had been lost.

Even if you didn't care for the mix of pop, reggae and rock the Beat seemed to churn out with ease (while everyone else was polishing off the synthesizer or beat machines), you had to admire the way the Beat's songwriters could make a political message like "Stand Down Margaret," so real, yet danceable.

The members of the Beat knew they were close to something, but quietly dissolved themselves when members began to question their motivation. Today, the Beat goes on in the form of General Public.

General Public is in fact the two men to

whom the Beat's success was credited to: Dave Wakeling, the blond lead singer/songwriter, and Ranking Roger, the black "toaster" who got the crowd going. The band will perform at 7 p.m. Tuesday in the Nebraska Union Ballroom. It is the same place the Beat performed to a standing-room only crowd two years ago.

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Today, Roger, who now sports four streaks of blond in his hair, says the show is still fun, the Beat's live trademark.

"Just the musicians are different really," Roger said from his hotel room in Los Angeles, where General Public played four sell-out shows. "We keep the show as fun as possible."

General Public is different from the Beat, however, in that all the group's members are dedicated to it, Roger said.

"There was nothing wrong personally," he said. "People just got too comfortable. When

you get comfortable, you don't work as hard. Dave and I were looking for something else."

Wakeling and Roger left the Beat and secluded themselves to a Welsh studio where they wrote songs by day and recruited band members. Their reputation preceded them, so that part wasn't so difficult.

The current General Public lineup includes drummer Stoker; keyboardist Mickey Billingham, late of Dexy's Midnight Runners; and bassist Horace Panter, who made his reputation as Sir Horace Gentleman with the Beat's initial contemporary rivals, the Specials. Guitarist Kevin White joined for the tour, while Mick Jones, ex-guitarist of the Clash, played on the album and is listed as a special guest.

"He is not on the tour with us. He's back in London forming his own band, called Real Westlike," Roger said.

The band's press release from I.R.S. records said Jones refused to join the tour because he wouldn't dye his hair blond as Wakeling requested. Roger said Jones was just interested in doing his own thing.

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