

Updated Speedwagon impresses Omaha crowd



REO Speedwagon whips out a few chords for the crowd Sunday night at the Omaha Civic Auditorium.

Review by Mike George
Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

Although Bruce Springsteen played to a packed house in Lincoln, more than 9,000 fans saw the third stop on REO Speedwagon's 1984 tour. Zebra and Survivor opened, but the show belonged to REO.

After the crowd sat anxiously through the two warmup bands, REO Speedwagon finally hit the stage. Confetti explosions started the show and immediately the electric atmosphere took over the Civic Auditorium. Even those who did not have much interest in REO had to be interested in their performance.

The band played all of their classics from previous albums and gave a good sample of their new album, *Wheels are Turning*. The band sounded good for most of the show. At times, it seemed that the band was too much for the sound system.

The biggest problem in the show was the sound system. Going into the concert hall, I expected loud music, but the music was even louder than what I expected. Sometimes I had trouble understanding the lyrics, and the music was muffled by the sound system.

The show was obviously geared toward the younger audiences. One look at the crowd proved that. The band worked hard to impress the crowd and succeeded. They did not have to search for a reaction by the fans — it was always there.

The light show was timely and effective. At times, it seemed to key on the lead singer, which may have distracted attention from the rest of the band.

Of course, the main attraction was the music. It has been two years since REO last played in Omaha, and their updated music was excellent. Their old music was best, with songs like "Keep Pushing," "Tough Guys" and "Riding the Storm Out."

The Boss ...

Continued from Page 8

"When I was 13, 14, I got interested in three things. One of them was playing pool ... one other was ... well, you know. One day my mother took me out to Sears and Roebuck and for \$69.95 she bought me a pool table I put in my bedroom. I got to where I would bring my girlfriends over, and I'd say, Dad, we're going up to my room to play some pool.

"Well, there was one problem. My bedroom was directly over the kitchen, where my dad would sit and read. And if he didn't hear the pool balls going, or the guitar playing, he'd have this oomstick that he'd poke on the ceiling with ... but I figured it out. I just pulled the pool table a little closer to the bed, and every once in a while I'd reach up and shoot a couple of balls around ...

The first half drew to a close

with Springsteen lobbing his harmonica into the crowd after "The Promised Land" and an appeal for donations to the area food banks before a stirring rendition of "My Hometown."

Someone did get to dance with the man from Freehold, N.J., during "Dancing in the Dark," the second song of the second half. Jill Hoffman, who stood in line for four days for tickets and got on the Springsteen express with *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, was the lucky recipient of the extended dance and an extended kiss.

"I've seen the video, but I never thought he'd really do it," she said.

She said Springsteen told her she had "nice dimples."

The regular set ended with "Racing in the Street," after another long story about Adam and Eve and the "Pink Cadillac"

they rode out of the Garden of Eden, which Springsteen claimed was just off the New Jersey turnpike.

For his first encore, Springsteen turned in a soulful playing of "Jungleland." For the second, after thanking the crowd for its support of him and the food banks, he finally played "Born to Run" and finished with the 20-minute "Devil with the Blue Dress On" medley. The house lights were turned up for the songs as Springsteen requested so he could see the wave going, the crowd thrusting their fists in the air with him and the youngsters trying to figure out how the twists worked.

The concert ended after three hours and fifty minutes, with Springsteen stumbling mockingly to the mike and shouting "no mas, no mas." Well, almost. Even after that, Clemmons donned his Santa cap for "Santa Claus is

Coming to Town."

Springsteen left a reported \$10,000 check with the area food banks. He also left a lot of new believers saying this was the best concert they had ever seen, and a

lot of old believers saying it was just typical Bruce. He doesn't know how to give anything but the best.

Yep. The man just came out and played.



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