

Arts & Entertainment

Welsh band rebels from mainstream

By Scott Harrah
Staff Reporter

"Curiosity killed the cat," the old cliché says. That warning evidently doesn't intimidate Gene Loves Jezebel, an experimental Welsh band that is scheduled to play at UNL Tuesday night.

Curiosity about Nebraska and the Midwest is the main reason the band wants to perform here, vocalist/guitarist Jay Aston said in a phone interview from his Detroit hotel room.

Jay Aston and his identical twin brother, Mike, left the industrial town of Porthcawl, Wales, three years ago for London, where they first formed the band.

Aston said they left Porthcawl because the working-class Wales life-style was too harsh and aggressive.

"It gave us a desire to express something," he said. "And we saw beauty beneath all that ugliness."

The result of that expression was their European debut LP "Promises," an Angst-ridden chronicle of the highly-heated emotional state they were in at the time, Aston said.

The culture shock they experienced after relocating to London, as well as disgust with the current music mainstream, were part of their frustrated feelings present in "Promises," Aston said.

"We didn't really enjoy the music around at the time," he said, "and it ('Promises') was a reaction against it."

"Immigrant," their second release, and their American debut on Relativity

Records, was recorded with a more optimistic approach, Aston said.

"We're very happy now with the people around us," he said. "Everyone — the people we play with, and the people who come to see us. We're growing more now and learning all the time."

Aston said that the band is very colorful, sincere and intense, which is why Gene Loves Jezebel is being put on the map in the States.

"People relate to the music," he said. "We're a very strong group, so it's easy to feel something when we play."

Gene Loves Jezebel's style is something music critics on both sides of the Atlantic have had trouble classifying. Some have said that their eerie sound is a lot like The Cure, and others have labeled their resonant guitar riffs as similar to those of U2.

A handful of critics have even suggested that Jay's vibrant voice is a dead ringer for Robert Plant's.

But Aston remains calm and unscathed by those comparisons, he said.

"I don't worry about it," he said. "People that make those comparisons often change their minds. We know what we're doing."

Their flamboyant stage presence has also been a victim of labels and comparisons. Journalists have called them everything from post-punkers and theatrical gargoyles to Boy George clones, according to numerous reviews and press releases.

Aston also shrugs off those labels with nonchalance, he said. Aston said that the only attitude or concept present in their appearance is "the celebration of just being there, being alive. It makes sense — you just have to see

it." Aston's twin brother Mike had more objections to the labels on their look when he was interviewed by British journalist Helen Fitzgerald two years ago.

"Our characters are naturally colorful, but not overtly sexual," Mike said. "The ugly, chauvinistic attitudes towards sex are just what we're against!"

Commercial success is not a top priority for Gene Loves Jezebel, Jay said.

"I never really think about it," he said. "Our music is an expression — we never really think about how many records we'll sell."

Sometimes working with family members in a band causes conflicts and polarization, but the Aston brothers work together harmoniously, Jay said.

"Playing with Mike is brilliant," he said. "We're very honest with each other, and there are no ego problems involved."

The band is currently on an American tour. They made their live debut on these shores at New York's trend-setting nightclub, Danceteria. They've also done shows in Detroit and Chicago.

Although they've had the chance to see a lot of America, Jay feels that they haven't witnessed enough of the U.S. music scene to make a judgment about it. However, he said that Gene Loves Jezebel admires such American music legends as The Talking Heads, James Brown and Canadian Neil Young. They are more inspired by "the feelings those musicians' records give us" than



Courtesy of Important Records

Gene Loves Jezebel

the sound or styles they use, he said. And what feelings can Lincolntonites expect to experience Tuesday night in the Union? "Something very special," he said. "And most of all, fun." Gene Loves Jezebel performs tonight at 8 p.m. in the Centennial Ballroom of the Nebraska Union. Local group, For Against, will open. Tickets are \$5 for students and \$6 for non-students and are available at the Union's north desk and Pickles and Dirt Cheap record stores.

Beatles' impersonators to play at Royal Grove

1964, a group known for its uncanny impersonation of the Beatles, will be in concert tonight at the Royal Grove, 340 West Cornhusker Hwy.

Tickets are \$4 at the door. 1964 dresses like the Beatles — from their Beatles mop-top haircuts to their pointed black boots — and try to come as close as possible to sounding like the Beatles.

Mark Benson (portraying John Lennon), Greg George (Ringo Starr), Gary Grimes (Paul McCartney), and Tom Work (George Harrison) use guitars created by Benson (a master craftsman who made three of the five guitars used in the performance, and Vox equipment similar to that of the Beatles, trying to create a sound musically precise to the Fab Four.

In a York Town Crier article, Benson said the group is successful mainly because, "More of what other groups do is a Beatle's story. What we're doing is trying to do a Beatles' concert... We're more concerned with

the actual look and portrayal."

The music performed in the concerts is from the Beatles' touring years, 1963-66, and includes hits such as "And I Love Her," "I Want To Hold Your Hand," "Please Please Me," "Yesterday," "A Hard Day's Night," "Can't Buy Me Love" and "I Feel Fine."

All in all the group plays about an hour and 40 minutes of classic Beatles' hits.

Each member of the group has researched the Beatle he plays, concentrating on costumes, haircuts, speaking and singing voices, stage movements and facial expressions.

Benson, who portrayed John Lennon in two "Beatles" tribute bands before, has also made guitars for The Eagles, The Allman Brothers, Journey and Van Halen.

George, who looks the most like the musician he portrays, was once told by a television announcer that he "looks more like Ringo than Ringo himself."

Sheldon's new security system to help fight costly art vandalism

By Lise Olsen
Senior Reporter

A \$17,000 security system installed at Sheldon Art Gallery two weeks ago should reduce vandalism, Renee Kay, chief of security, said.

Using the system's 12 cameras, gallery guards spotted about 15 visitors touching painting and sculpture last week, Kay said.

The cameras automatically scan gallery rooms. They can also lock in on one room, or follow a suspicious-looking visitor through the gallery, Kay said.

The camera's record after-hours visits to the gallery. Kay reviews the night videos each morning, she said.

The system will help tighten up gallery security, Kay said. Formerly the gallery's three guards could only leave the front desk about three times a day to check interior rooms.

Kay said she has seen two to three visitors a day touch art works with pens, pencils, backpacks or fingers. The frequent contact leaves body oils and marks that reduce the art's value, Kay said.

"They (the visitors) just sort of bump through the gallery," Kay said.

Eventually, works become worn and must be restored. The gallery has spent about \$10,000 in the last two years to restore works according to George Neubert, gallery director.

Gallery employees use white gloves when they move art, Kay said.

Most vandalism inside the gallery is unintentional, Kay said. However, some visitors intend to be destructive.

Earlier this semester one such group went on a vandalism spree. The damage was not discovered until after the visitors had left the museum, Kay said. She said if the system had been in place, the damage might have been prevented.

Neubert said that film of the des-

truction could have been used in court. Theft is not a major concern at the gallery because of its supplemental alarm sensor system, Kay said. The new system was made possible by a \$12,500 grant from the National

Endowment for the Arts. It was first proposed in August 1984, by Kay and other gallery officials. In the future, it might be expanded to cover the Sheldon's proposed underground addition, she said.



Mark Davis/Daily Nebraskan

Renee Kay, chief of security at Sheldon Art Gallery, switches on the new monitor security system.

'Better Off Dead' steals from funnier comedies

By Tom Mockler
Staff Reporter

Given "Better Off Dead's" merits, or lack thereof, the title of this picture is only too suggestive. A cheap play on words is in order, although I will try to resist such a temptation.

Movie Review

Ah, what the heck. "Better Off Dead" really would be, except that it already is.

Actually, this film is rather interesting for how many comic motifs it rips off and tries to integrate into one film.

In the promos it originally seemed to be a relatively simple story about a guy (John Cuzack) who loses his girlfriend to a real jerk who happens to be an ace skier. He tries to get her back by beating him in a downhill race.

That portion of the film is still there, but apparently the producers didn't think that was enough to make for a successful comedy. They were probably right, but unfortunately their solution really wasn't very helpful.

Let's count the various comic strains that keep popping up throughout the film, which were in some way or another ripped off from other, typically more successful comedies.

Please see DEAD on 12