

Arts & Entertainment

Femmes originals; surpass influences



Violent Femmes

Courtesy George Lange

By Charles Lieurance
Staff Reporter

Yes, of course Gordon Gano, lead singer of the Violent Femmes sounds a lot like Jonathan Richman (of Modern Lovers fame). There's a whole crop of bands that sound like the Modern Lovers, who actually were trying to sound like Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground, who were, where Reed was concerned at least, trying to sound like Bob Dylan and Moby Grape.

far as I know, the Femmes pioneered acoustic hardcore. Found playing in front of theaters in Madison, Wis., for nickels and dimes, the Femmes are disarmingly natural. They work their acoustic instrumentation into such a grand, passionate frenzy that they nearly redefine rock 'n' roll.

Jonathan Richman, when he left the Modern Lovers, said he wanted to be able to play music on an old \$5 guitar, a Tupperware bowl, anything. Gano and the Femmes may not be the theoreticians for this, but they are certainly the most successful and danceable practitioners.

Concert Preview

Of course, Gano sounds a little insincere on the latest Violent Femmes album, "Hallowed Ground," with this "Jesus Walking on the Water," country death-song stuff. There is that Oedipal thing Gano seems to have too, and God knows neurotic songs are not exactly rare. Well, that's what most of the critics said, and who's to argue with them?

Then why are the Violent Femmes "so great?" They play some of the most original rock 'n' roll to come down the pike since the Velvet Underground. As

Although they are only two albums and one EP old, the Femmes already have spawned a multitude of sound-alikes such as the Dead Milkmen and Lloyd Cole and the Commotions.

When they play in the Nebraska Union Centennial Ballroom, let's do ourselves a favor and forget influences, critics, mimicry and poses. Songs like "Add It Up," "Ugly" and "Blister in the Sun" don't really sound like anything but the Violent Femmes.

The Violent Femmes' sold-out show starts at 8 p.m. Sunday.

The Dead Kennedys exceed limits

By Charles Lieurance
Staff Reporter

"It's time to taste what you most fear/Right Guard will not help you/Brace yourself, my dear..."

Coming into the Omaha Music Hall, you notice the marquee reads "The D.K.s" instead of "The Dead Kennedys". Next door is a Kenny Rogers concert. What is it you fear most?

A sign over the T-shirt sales table reads: "The Dead Kennedys make \$6 off these T-shirts, the Hall makes \$1.50 (25%), so you pay \$7.50. We know it sucks."

About eight years ago the Clash condemned "turning rebellion into money." "Jane Fonda on the screen today/convinced the liberals it's okay/ so let's get dressed and dance the night away/While they... Kill the Poor..."

Klaus Flouride, The Dead Kennedys' bass player writes "Klaus' Light Bulb Tube" on a piece of masking tape and attaches it across the fluorescent lightbulb above the dressing room mirrors. The Kennedys road manager tries to figure out who will sleep with who in the motel and how much they'll pay the various groupies who are carrying out a variety of functions on stage. Mostly

they'll keep giving them beer. Klaus, with supernatural aim, brings down the mouth of a Heineken bottle on the edge of the counter. The lid flies off; the bottle left intact.

Lead singer Jello Biafra is sitting quietly in the corner swilling orange juice and popping health pills.

"So it's Halloween/and you feel like dancin'/and you feel like shinin'/ and you feel like lettin' loose/what ya gonna be?/Well you better know/and you better plan..."

As you walk down the aisle of the Music Hall, a red light shines on the pit and, of course, it looks like the end of civilization. Local band Power of the Spoken Word is on stage. Their lead singer is lying on the stage growling at the mob. The mob slams bodies on top of bodies, slipping under and over with a primitive kind of grace. It's still pretty tame, but the red light is making things tense.

At three o'clock that afternoon the San Luis Obispo Police Department allegedly called the Omaha Police. There had been some trouble in town when the Kennedys played there. The Kennedys, it seems, are capable of inciting riots. The Omaha mayor's office, Biafra said, was a little hesitant about hosting The Dead Kennedys right

next door to Kenny Rogers.

The owner of Rainbow Sound has been crawling the walls all night about the sound exceeding the limits of the equipment and the limits of the law. He wants his money now. The Kennedys make up some story about union rules not allowing them to pay the sound company until the receipts are in at the end of the night. The owner of the Rainbow says he doesn't discuss money during the show. He tells the band that's "very amateur" and threatens to pull out the system. The Kennedys' road manager mumbles under her breath that if they pull the PA, the crowd would be "on them" in seconds.

Concert Review

The owner of Rainbow Sound says the speaker system being used was just fine with X. Klaus nods and repeats, "fine with X." Jello pulls on his green plastic proctologists glove. The owner of Rainbow sound leaves, looking behind him a few times as he walks down the hall.

"Anarchy rules!" The mob roars. "No. Anarchy rises above rules!" Jello mocks.

He wears a thrift store cowboy shirt and orange and yellow plaid checked

pants.

"Oh, you want a revolution?" Of course they do.

"Well, what kind of a revolution?" Jello lowers the microphone to an anxious head wedged in between a hundred more.

"A proletariat revolution!" Yeah. Everybody seems to agree with that.

"What kind of a proletariat revolution?" I guess it's not so much the

question as the voice. Jello, a demented Mister Rogers, cocks his head and sneers. I guess maybe it isn't the slogans. Maybe it's this:

"Call the Army/stocked with kids from the slums/if you can't afford a stick attorney/we might make you a spy/forget your demonstrations/kids sit on their ass when ya get d-rafted..."



Biafra

Andrea Hoy/Daily Nebraskan



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A Dead Kennedys fan pulls a bouncer into the audience.

The Bluegrass Crusade returns to Lincoln roots

By Chris McCubbin
Staff Reporter

Foot stompers take note! Lincoln has been starved for months now for real, live, red-hot bluegrass pickin'. Now the famine is finally over. Tonight the Bluegrass Crusade returns.

The Bluegrass Crusade is a four-piece local band: Steve Hanson, banjo; Pete Blakeslee, guitar; Jim Pipher, bass and Dave Fowler, fiddle. The band also performs (with the addition of a drummer) under the name The New High Flyers, which does classic rock 'n' roll and western swing numbers in contrast to the Crusade's classic bluegrass.

The Bluegrass Crusade will play tonight at McGuffey's, 1042 P St. at 9. There is no cover. Tonight's show is the Crusades' first appearance in

its hometown in several months and Hanson said band members expect it to be their last for several more.

The Bluegrass Crusade has been together since 1973. Bluegrass has declined in local popularity, although a strong core of fans remains, Hanson said.

The Crusade specializes in bluegrass rarities but they also do standards like "Fox On The Run," "Rocky Top," and "Rollin' In My Sweet Baby's Arms."

A tape of the Bluegrass Crusade's music also is available. It will be sold off the stage tonight and soon will be in local record stores.

The Bluegrass Crusade is considered to be one of the best bands of its kind in the Midwest. So try something new, kick off your weekend tonight by having a swingin' time with the Bluegrass Crusade.