

Arts & Entertainment

Femmes best 'up close and personal'

By Charles Lieurance
Staff Reporter

When UPC's wall of sweater boys went up to keep the surging mass of people four feet from the Centennial Room's stage Sunday night, I thought of my mother warning me to stay four feet away from the television set — something about frying my retinas, I think.

Concert Review

I suppose the MTV generation has to put up with this kind of thing all the time: "Stay a safe distance from the band or you'll be able to tell they're just holograms and stand-up cardboard dolls."



Ritchie

But man, this is the Violent Femmes! "Start from the back and back up, it's not that hard. Use your head!" A UPC representative yelled. Of course. That's prime, taking a volatile situation and making it worse. Nobody came to

use their heads. The eternal conflict between popularity and intimacy rages on. My thoughts: This isn't a video — move on up!

I asked one of the sweater boys why they wanted the crowd so far back. He said he was afraid people would leap onto the stage. The way the front row was packed up against the stage, if they had tried to leap they would have left their lower regions behind them.

It was a great crowd. They screamed, they sang along, they chanted, they loved every minute of everything. The way everybody knew the words reinforced that the Violent Femmes play at least some kind of folk music no matter how much they deny it.

All in one line at the front of the stage, The Femmes are the epitome of intimacy, absolutely in touch, looking over the quivering wall or UPC muscle. Gordon Gano, diminutive champion of sustained adolescence, songwriter and guitarist takes the stage in a prophet's robe. Drummer Victor De Lorenzo massages a trash can lid with his brushes and Brian Ritchie's acoustic bass starts in, the solid full-marrowed skeleton of the band. The song is "Country Death Song" off their second album, "Hallowed Ground."

The Femmes are great, their songs are great and just because some "mechanic" producer neutered "Hallowed Ground" is no reason to fault the songwriting or playing. Glad to know it wasn't Gordon Gano's flagging inspiration.

Gano, Ritchie and De Lorenzo pretty much covered the Femmes' recorded repertoire. They performed their tales of pubescent angst and anomie ("Kiss Off," "Blister in the Sun"), songs of political rage ("Hallowed Ground," "Confessions"), the traditional gospel Gano seemed so fond of on "Hallowed



Gano

David Creamer/Daily Nebraskan

Ground" and some teasing doses of the new LP.

You can toss the Boss, as far as I'm concerned. If you want American music spin the Femmes. They cover the bases from doo-wop to Bo Diddley, rural blues to Los Angeles' donation to the American musical vocabulary: hardcore punk. Gano's thin adenoidal croon torched ballads like "I Know it's True But I'm Sorry to Say" and in a photoflash began raging about borrowing Dad's car, masturbation, sweaty palms, not getting kissed enough and nuclear suicide like

a deranged Beaver Cleaver suddenly awakened from his innocent black-and-white sleep and wanting to trash the suburbs.

What could be more American than that?

The biggest accolades of the night go to Ritchie, whose acoustic bass does the job ordinarily reserved for a lead guitar without sacrificing his share of the rhythm. Hyperbole aside, Ritchie is one of the finest and most daring bass players I've ever seen. In his checkered goose hunting hat, he jumped around

on stage in a mad jig, played the conch, compensated masterfully for broken strings and made the traditional country music bass line sound as complex and full of possibilities as a Bach fugue.

By the encore the wall of sweater boys were crumbling and, of course, since they had expected people to be leaping up onto the stage, people were skittering underneath like rats. The UPC-ers didn't seem to mind all that much, they were smiling and singing along just like everybody else, jammed against the stage.

Don't ask Chuck and Di about Benny Hill

For the next few days, from Nov. 8 through 12 you could be faced with the awesome question of what to do if the Prince and Princess of Wales stop at your place?

The question may have never occurred to you since their official itinerary has them flying into Washington, D.C., then ending the visit in Palm Springs, Cal. Between these two places the royal couple will probably have a chance to speak to a chosen few Americans who are lucky enough to have made it on the invitation list.

Mike Grant

So far, the guest list is limited to people like Ronald and Nancy Reagan, millionaire Paul Mellon, and Clint Eastwood, of course. So the thought of meeting Britain's favorite couple probably hasn't crossed your mind . . . yet.

But what if Charles and Di are flying across mid-America and Charles turns to his wife and says something like "You know we really haven't met a good cross-section of American culture yet. At least I don't think D.C. and Palm

Springs provide a very well-rounded picture of our former colony. Pilot, please land at the next airport, Lincoln, Nebraska. How quaint, let's do it!"

He says all this in an English accent, of course.

The idea is not inconceivable. After all, Prince Charles' mother, Queen Elizabeth, did land at Nebraska's own Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue for refueling once. So it could happen.

So what should you do when Charles and Diana pull up to your place in a limousine caravan?

For introductions Life magazine suggests: "One does not touch their highnesses, unless a handshake is offered, . . . also one does not speak first."

Remember, above all you should not kiss their rings and address either of them as "Your Holiness," that's strictly for clerics who have a high rank in the religious hierarchy, like Nebraska's Rev. Sileven, for instance.

After the introductions are over and you have sat down to tea and crumpets (or beer and corn chips or whatever you may have on hand), you must make conversation. British royalty have a historic mistrust of intellectuals, so

keep the talk down to earth. On the other hand, you must remember that these two people rarely have to deal with everyday mundane things like paying phone bills and waiting in line at preregistration. So keep the talk light.

Here are some do's and don'ts in conversation.

First do's for Prince Charles: "By Jove, I live for polo! We must get together sometime for some chukkers." Or "God save your mother!" or "You are obviously the greatest royalty since Duke Ellington."

Don'ts: "Do you know Benny Hill?" or, "I hear Prince Andrew has been selected as the new James Bond, is that true?" Or "Couldn't you think up any names more original for your sons than William and Henry? How about Clint or Burt?"

Do's for Lady Diana: "I'm crazy about Duran Duran, aren't you?" Or "You have a better sense of clothes style than Joan Collins."

Don'ts: "How come your mother-in-law never smiles." Or "Why don't you ditch this 'Chuckles' guy, and me and you can go out and paint the town red." Or "Do you know Benny Hill?"

After a half hour or so of light banter,

the royal couple will want to pick up some Big Red paraphernalia and some Runzas and then it's off to Palm Springs

where they can reminisce on their fond memories of those witty, polite Nebraskans.



Courtesy Entertainment Artists, Inc.

Tim Bachman, Randy Bachman, Garry Peterson and C.F. Turner of Bachman Turner Overdrive.

B.T.O. comes back with their blue-collar rock

Because of a resurgence in popularity of the blue-collar rock they play, Bachman Turner Overdrive is back after a six-year hiatus.

Their meat-and-potatoes music, hard rocking with working-people lyrics, propelled B.T.O. to fame in the mid-1970s. The Canadian group sold more than 7 million records from 1973-77, and cracked the hit singles chart several times with hits including "Taking Care of Business," "You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet," and "Let It Ride." The album *Not Fragile*, went platinum.

Lead singer/guitarist Randy Bachman left the band in 1978 at the height of its success, and two albums

later the group broke up. Bachman, a former member of the Guess Who penned their hits "American Woman," and "These Eyes," said "A lot of bands took a break in 1978-79 — The Who, The Doobie Brothers, The Stones, The Moody Blues — disco was very strong and very few real rock records were making the charts back then. You either sold out and went disco, or you waited it out, like Z.Z. Top did."

B.T.O. is playing tonight at the Royal Grove, 340 West Cornhusker. Tickets are \$8 in advance and available at Dirt Cheap, Pickles, and the Grove, or \$10 at the door. Opening act is the Doctors.

New music to be performed

A program of new music written by UNL composers Robert Beadell, Randall Snyder, and Harold Levin will be presented free to the public tonight at 8 p.m. in the Kimball Recital Hall.

This concert of vocal and instrumental music will offer a wide variety of 20th century styles, ranging from neo-classic to avant-garde and New-Romanticism.

Beadell's compositions will include the premier performance of two settings for poems by Nebraska poet Ted Kooser: "Just Now" and "The Fan in the Window". These songs are from Beadell's cycle "Evocations."

The second of Beadell's works will

be a dramatic monologue from his opera "Napoleon," first performed here in 1973.

Beadell, who has won annual ASCAP awards for creativity and advancement of American Music since 1967, also has been awarded the Ford Foundation grant for visiting composer at New York City Center and NEA fellowships for jazz composition in both 1972 and 1976.

The three pieces by Randall Snyder will be "Sinfonietta", a short neo-classic composition designed for younger players; the avant-garde "Nova Cygni" written for the combination of string bass and bass guitar; and finally, excerpts from Snyder's "Of Here Being",

which are settings of Wallace Stevens works.

Snyder, the recipient of many awards, will premier his transcription of Franz Schubert's "Deutsche Tanze" with the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra later this month.

"Seven Pieces" by Harold Levin, will close the concert. This composition is a chamber concerto for solo viola and 14 instruments. It will be conducted by Snyder.

Levin is Professor of Viola at UNL School of Music and Conductor/Director of the Lincoln Youth Symphony Orchestra.