

Arts & Entertainment



Brave Combo

Courtesy of Brave Combo

'Nuclear polka' unleashes at Zoo

By Mike Grant
Staff Reporter

Brave Combo, a "nuclear polka" band that will play at the Zoo Bar tonight, may be on the cutting edge of a new wave of music.

Band Preview

The band from Denton, Texas, has not been alone on the music scene with its formula of high-energy polka, pop, soul and Latin music.

"Conga," a Latin-beat song by the Miami Sound Machine, recently cracked the top 10. The tango has become a dance sensation in New York City, and SCTV's Schmenge Brothers have brought polka, if only satirically, out of the woodwork in their cable TV movie, "The Last Polka."

Brave Combo includes Carl Finch on lead vocals, piano and accordion; Bubba Hernandez on bass; Mitch Marine on percussion, and Jeff Barnes, who handles a variety of horn instruments.

The best definition of Brave Combo comes from Ian Anderson of the rock band Jethro Tull: "They take a huge variety of fatally un-hip dance forms that are rarely acknowledged outside of the various ethnic and Third World communities... and play them with the fire of a punkish, bar-room rock 'n' roll band."

The group has recently returned from a "Polka Wars" concert at the Club Lingerie in Los Angeles, which included other hard-core polka bands like Polkacide and Rotondi. They were also featured in last month's issue of SPIN magazine.

See BRAVE on 10

Glitz and glamour is the fix for this fame junkie

I am what you call a "fame junkie." Every week I wistfully wait for all my glossy, star-studded magazines to arrive in the mail so I can drool over all the photos of the celebrities.



Scott Harrah

Every night my eyes are glued to "Entertainment Tonight" and its perky hostess, Mary Hart. I don't care what David Letterman says about her. I depend on Mary's sorority-girl grin and her behind-the-scenes scoops about all the latest sensations in show-biz.

That's why February and March are my favorite months of the year. No true fame junkie can resist the Golden Globe Awards, the American Music Awards, the Grammys and that haven of glitz, the Oscars.

Awards shows are the ultimate fix for fame junkies. Where else can one

see stars in their socially perceived natural environment?

The Oscars and the like are eye-catching and sometimes entertaining, but they are too artificial. They back up the fan magazine notion that stars do nothing but wear chic clothes and ooze glamour from every pore and wear glittery gowns 24 hours a day.

However, these shows do have some merit. They let us see what luminaries are pretentious fakes and which ones are down-to-earth plebeians under their sequined facades.

This is most evident in the acceptance speeches the winners deliver. Few ever go beyond the standard "... and I also wanna' thank my pet eel and Kiki, the Times Square hooker who taught me how to be a man" speech. Some, however, show some genuine invention. Take Sally Field, for example.

Hollywood will never forget that insightful epigram Field delivered last year when she won the Best Actress Oscar for "Places in the Heart."

"I can't deny the fact that you all really like me," grown-up Gidget cooed.

"You like me!"

What's even more interesting is the reasons why some "artists" get nominated.

I'd like to express my fond admiration for the arbitrator of good taste who nominated Lionel Richie's "Say You, Say Me" for Best Theme Song. They were probably very inspired by the tune's touching, original, far-from-trite lyrics:

"As we go down life's lonesome highways/ The hardest thing to do is find a friend or two."

I'd also like to thank the people who gave "Every Thing She Wants" by Wham! the Best Video of the Year award. Who cares that other musicians actually put some thought and originality into their videos. George Michael, bless his frosted hair and hoop earrings, really had to use his creativity to prance around before a crowd of squealing hormone glands. He deserved it, really, he did!

And I can't forget that pincushion-for-film-critic-putdowns, Pia Zadora. Some contend that Zadora's billionaire hubby wined and dined the foreign

press so she could win a Golden Globe in 1983 for her marvelous debut in "Butterfly," but I think she got it for her acting. It took true brilliance to play a barebreasted, incestuous sexpot. She later used her talents in such classics as "The Lonely Lady," in which she displayed cinematic virtuosity when thugs tried to molest her with a garden hose.

Pia, George and Lionel are all perfect examples of awards academics picking those who have influence, established reputations or popularity, instead of people who really deserve kudos.

Purple seemed to be a jinx for some fine film artists this past year.

Case one: Why did the Academy fail to include a nomination for Steven Spielberg's superb direction of "The Color Purple"? The film received 11 nominations, but I guess the Academy feels Whoopi Goldberg's and Oprah Winfrey's provocative performances couldn't be influenced by a man who used to make corny sagas about candy-crunching space aliens.

Case Two: Woody Allen's excellent "The Purple Rose of Cairo" received only one nomination, for best screenplay. What about Mia Farrow and Jeff Daniels?

Case Three: Why wasn't Cher nominated for her well-done performance in "Mask"? Some say her infamous purple fright wigs, outlandish outfits and past had everything to do with it.

What's even more irrational is the costly ads film studios place in trade papers like Variety to win nominations.

Universal Studios spent \$40,000 on ads for "Out of Africa"; Paramount blew \$100,000 to plug "Witness"; and Cannon Films spent a whopping \$200,000 on "Runaway Train," according to Us magazine.

But who cares who wins and who doesn't? The reason we tune into these shows has little to do with logic. Awards shows are a lot like that other Great American Tube Event, football. Both are beautifully boring extravaganzas where our favorites often lose. Harrah is a UNL junior in English and speech communications.

The Fall is frenzy and distorted chords

By Charles Lieurance
Senior Reporter

So The Fall came, and they left. The Western Empire remains relatively intact.

Concert Review

If you were one of the 250 or so people jammed against the Nebraska Union Centennial Forum stage — reaching across with their throbbing guitars, and caught in the electric rumbustiousness of their music — you still remember today, despite the unalloyed rapture.

The Fall did not play some of their big hits Monday night, like "Bingo" and "I Wanna Be a Star." Instead, they played "I Wanna Be a Star" and "I Wanna Be a Star." E. Smith's wailing, screeching songs that were still fresh to his mind.

After seeing the Fall and before...

he finds a sound he's interested in, he pummels it into the ground, uses and misuses it until it is unusable forever.

Monday night it was the megaphone and the simple guitar riff.

On nearly every song, Brix and Smith shouted, barked and whispered through their megaphones. They took some of the simplest six-note progressions in the world and built them into a veritable frenzy of distortion, slashing guitar chords and wailing lyrics.

Smith, chattering gun and looking his typical unalloyed self, sophisticated and as detached as a Brechtian scenario, strove his way through most of the songs off of the band's latest LP, "This Nation's Saving Grace."

The miracle of Smith and The Fall is that they can turn such deadpan into such overkill. There is no doubt that the band is enjoying its success as they come.



Andrew Hays/Daily Nebraskan