

Arts & Entertainment

Review Board



Brian Mary/Daily Nebraskan

The Communards, "The Communards" (MCA Records)

Whine, whine, whine. Drone, drone, drone. That's what these two fallout victims for Bronski Beat do on their debut effort. "The Age of Consent," Bronski Beat's smash debut album, was an eerie collection of political rhetoric and techno-pop pablum that was a dance staple in clubs from Los Angeles to London. Jimmy Somerville's piercing, caterwauling vocals illuminated the songs with shades of Alison Moyet, Sylvester and Judy Garland and melodramatic lyrics that sounded like corny Tennessee Williams soliloquies.

Somerville left the band last year and decided to pursue other musical territories, which are explored with both maudlin incoherence and sappy passion here.

The best track is the hit single "Don't Leave Me This Way," a white soul remake of Thelma Houston's late '70s disco weeper. With an '80s sensibility and modern technical gloss, Somerville and partner Richard Coles create harominc, lively spirit as background vocalists croon like gospel singers in a funky church choir. But when the LP segues into several tales of the gay blues that are drowned out by

Somerville's overly sentimental, annoying falsetto.

The most irritating aspect of this album is the band's overly pretentious approach. Somerville and Coles would like us to think that they are gay revolutionaries, fighting for human rights and the death of homophobic ignorance. "The name 'Communards' was originally used to describe a group of romantic revolutionaries whose desperate insurrection in Paris, 1871, was extinguished by a week of bloody, block-by-block street fighting," the album's press kit claims.

How deep, guys. Songs like "La Dolarosa," "You are My World" and "Lover Man (Oh, Where Can You Be?)" used melodic synthesizer and piano rhythms to create the hokey menageries of pain Somerville sings about with all the plausibility of a soap-opera star doing Shakespeare.

All of this drama sounds tight, infectious and distantly engaging — like most of Culture Club's white sould fables — but the duo's contrived political aura fails to lend much veracity to their musical energy. Their gimmickry somehow ruins the lighthearted, bright sound of their music, making it difficult for one to identify with their polit-

ics. —Scott Harrah

The Pretenders, "Get Close" (Sire)

Ah, how well I remember the idealism of my youth. Back when things were important. Wealth and evil, rock 'n' roll was everything, and the world was divided into two kinds of people — those who thought Chrissie Hynde was beautiful, and those senseless clods who didn't. My goal in life then was to have Chrissie teach me the Cuban Slide, just like in the song. I still don't know how to do it, but it doesn't seem to matter now. I'm older now and not the same as I was years ago.

Unfortunately, the same is true of the Pretenders. "Get Close," their latest LP, is a mixed bag, moments of greatness thrown in with agonizing moments of mediocrity.

The Pretenders, of course, have been basically just Chrissie Hynde and Martin Chambers and the best hired hands available since 1982, but this was still pretty darn good.

"Learning to Crawl," (1983) was a step down from the original band's legendary work, but still a fine album, and impressive considering two of the four band members had killed themselves with drugs just months before, leaving Hynde and Chambers to pick up the pieces.

The band now consists of Hynde, T.M. Stevens on bass, Blair Cunningham on drums and "Learning to Crawl" holdover Robbie McIntosh on guitar. Original drummer Martin Chambers makes on track.

The best moments on this album are most of the slower songs and Jimi Hendrix's "Room Full Of Mirrors." Besides being the best song on the album, "Mirrors" is the only one with Chambers, McIntosh and bassist Malcolm Foster — the band left over from "Learning to Crawl." "Hymn To Her," "When I Change My Life," "My Baby" and "I Remember You" all sound as excellent as anything Chrissie's ever done. All are slow ballads. Anyone who's heard the Pretenders first two albums can tell you that they had about two slow ballads each and blistered your feet the rest of the time.

Which brings us to the disappointment. It never picks up. Nothing like "Precious," "Up The Neck," "Day After Day" or even "Talk Of The Town." Too bad, too, because that was what the Pretenders were best at, and nobody was better at it than they were.

Chrissie Hynde is still a brilliant writer, however, and she still has that voice. Years from now, people will sit around in basements, talking about Chrissie Hynde's voice in the same nostalgic, reverent tones they used to for Billie Holliday. Until then, perhaps it's best to count our blessings and be thankful for any chance to hear Chrissie sing.

—Geoff McMurtry



Courtesy of MCA Records

The Communards: Romantic revolutionaries or disco dudes droning for dollars?

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National Arts Week time to celebrate art

By Chris McCubbin
Senior Reporter

This week has been set aside across the country as a time to celebrate all aspects of the visual and performing arts — National Arts Week. Lincolnites will have more than 20 opportunities to join in the celebration.

Gov. Kerrey also has declared this week Nebraska Arts Week. According to Peg Sheldrick of the Lincoln Arts Council, National Arts Week and Nebraska Arts Week were held together for the first time last year. Last year marked the 20th anniversary of both the National Endowment for the Arts and the Nebraska Arts Council, Sheldrick said.

John McNamara of the Nebraska Arts Council said that National/Nebraska Arts Week is going to become an annual event.

The week kicked off yesterday with "After Hours With The Arts," a series of more than 30 events in 13 Nebraska cities. Lincoln's "After Hours With The Arts" events included a reception and exhibit by the Lincoln Artists Guild in the NBC building and a special performance of the UNL Theater Department's production of "Chekhov in Yalta."

Sheldrick said that the LAC did not directly assist in scheduling the events of Arts Week, rather they informed local artistic organizations and establishments about the events and let them schedule their own activities.

Arts Week should be thought of as more than a week of special events, Sheldrick said.

"It's not just one week a year — you have access to it all year long," she said.

McNamara said Arts Week is a time for people to "sit back and reflect a little more closely on the way the arts affect their daily life."

Arts Week will end in Lincoln with "Arts in the Aisles" next Sunday at the downtown and Gateway Miller & Paine stores.

During "Arts in the Aisles" the store will be filled with clowns, painters, performers, musicians and "just about anybody who does anything halfway interesting," Sheldrick said.

Five percent of the stores' sales that day go to LAC, she said.

"Arts in the Aisles" is the LAC's only fund-raising activity. Miller & Paine has sponsored the event for four years, but this is the first year it has been held at the Gateway, as well as the Downtown store, Sheldrick said.

Sheldrick said a positive aspect of "Arts in the Aisles" is its avail-

ability to the public.

"It doesn't take much effort to just walk through the store," she said.

The following is a list of scheduled events for Nebraska Arts Week:

Monday:
8 p.m. Moran Quintet, UNL Wick Alumni Center.

Tuesday:
Noon. Gallery Gourmet Lunch-N-Arts Series. University Place Art Center, 4822 Cleveland. For tickets call 466-8692.

8 p.m. "Ceremonies in Dark Old Men," Negro Ensemble Company, Kimball Recital Hall. For tickets call 472-3375.

Wednesday:
Noon. Gallery Gourmet/Lunch-N-Arts Series. University Place Art Center, 4822 Cleveland. For tickets call 466-8692.

Thursday:
7 and 9 p.m. "Fench Can Can," Sheldon Film Theatre. Tickets at the door.

7:30 p.m. Reading by poet Ted Kooser, John H. Ames Series, Bennett Martin Public Library, 14th and N streets.

8 p.m. Larry Lusk, piano, Kimball Recital Hall.

8 p.m. Gallery Theatre "One Act Plays," Lincoln Community Playhouse, 2500 S. 56th St. For tickets call 489-9608.

8 p.m. "The Marriage of Bette & Boo," MacDonald Theatre, Nebraska Wesleyan University. For tickets call 465-2384.

Friday:
8 p.m. "Cabaret du Piaf," UNL Department of Theatre & Dance, Mabel Lee Dance Studio. For tickets call 472-2073.

8 p.m. Gallery Theatre "One Act Plays," Lincoln Community Playhouse. For tickets call 489-9608.

8 p.m. "The Marriage of Bette & Boo," MacDonald Theatre. For tickets call 465-2384.

Saturday:
8 p.m. "French Can Can," Sheldon Film Theatre, additional screenings at 7 and 9 p.m.

8 p.m. UNL University Singers, Kimball Recital Hall.

8 p.m. "Cabaret du Piaf," UNL Department of Theatre & Dance, Mabel Lee Dance Studio, 472-2073.

8 p.m. Gallery Theatre "One Act Plays," Lincoln Community Playhouse. For tickets call 489-9608.

Sunday:
12 to 5 p.m. "Arts in the Aisles," in-store exhibition of artwork and performers at Downtown and Gateway Miller & Paine stores, with five percent of sales to be donated to Lincoln Arts Council.

State of the Arts

Compiled by Stew Magnuson
Staff Reporter

At The Wick Alumni Center:

The Moran Woodwind Quintet will perform a concert in the great hall of the Wick Alumni Center at 8 p.m. tonight. The quintet is composed of UNL School of Music faculty members who will perform works specifically written for woodwind quintets. The works include: Jean Francaix's Quintet in E, Theodore Blummer's Quintet in B flat, Opus 52 and Adolphe Deslandres' Quintet for E. The concert is free.

Lincoln Community Playhouse:

The Lincoln Community Playhouse will perform three one-act plays this week at the A. Enerson Gallery Theatre, 2500 S. 56th St. The plays are "First-born" by Amy Hinds, "Graceland" by Ellen Byron and "Eulogy" by James Richardson. The three plays explore

how one event can affect a person's life. Show times are at 8 p.m. Thursday through next Sunday. Ticket prices are \$4.50 for adults and \$3 for students.

Music:
At the Zoo, Lincoln blues outfit, The Tablecrackers play tonight. Cover is \$1.50. At Chesterfield's, the 18-piece jazz group Mother's Big Band plays from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. No cover. At The Drumstick, Right Here plays at 9 p.m. At the Royal Grove, High Stakes plays tonight and throughout the week.

If you know of an event you would like us to announce, send press information to:

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