

DIVERSIONS



Photo courtesy of PolyGram Records

By Geoff McMurtry
Diversions

There once was a band that played at the Drumstick a lot. Just a couple of years ago. They played out there so often, in fact, that a lot of people thought they must be from around here. They didn't really have one name, they had three. Steve, Bob and Rich they were called. Off stage, they still are. But when Bob decided to play guitar and concentrate on singing, they added a drummer. It was decided then that the name "Steve, Bob, Rich and Pat" was starting a nasty trend toward overly long marquee titles. And thus, Steve Phillips, Bob Walkenhorst, Rich Ruth and Pat Tomek became the Rainmakers.

But people began to wonder, "How come Steve, Bob and Rich haven't been out at the Drumstick lately?" Little did they know, Steve, Bob, Rich and Pat had made a record. Then one day a song came over the radio. People were startled to hear a song like this on the radio. It had no synthesizers. It wasn't by Lionel Richie or Phil Collins. It wasn't even a soundtrack from a movie at all. It sounded almost like rock 'n' roll used to sound. The singer's voice sounded manic, almost psychotic. When the whole band joined in and yelled "Let my people go-go," well, it just sounded like a hell of a lot of fun. (And the "go-go" part made everyone

forget Wham! completely.)

"Let My People Go-Go" was about Moses. And Chuck Berry. And Jesus. And the Coasters. In fact, the song was kind of like taking the Old Testament and old time rock 'n' roll and throwing them all together into a big, sweaty pile.

And the word soon got out. "Those Rainmaker guys, their names are the same as Steve's, Bob's and Rich's used to be." And people said to one another, "I bet it's the same guys!" Then they looked at each other and said, "I wonder when they'll be back in Lincoln."

But things were just beginning for those Rainmaker guys, uh... the Rainmakers. They had another song. This one was about welfare and poor people. It was called "Government Cheese." It said the government was only helping the poor so they'd be easy to please, and less likely to criticize, and not out of any kind of concern. It called food programs "passing out drugs to the American people." And then it said, "I ain't gonna eat Government Cheese." Some said it naively echoed the Reagan administration at its most ludicrous. Others said it unfairly criticized the Reagan administration for trying to help.

A lot of people who were offended by "Let My People Go-Go" liked "Government Cheese," and a lot of people who liked "Government Cheese" were offended by "Let My People

Go-Go." People looked at each other and said, "Hey, just who are these guys? Who the hell do they think they are?" But they just thought they were Steve, Bob, Rich and Pat. Other people just snapped their fingers in time and said, "It's got a good beat and you can dance to it."

There were other songs on the record to talk about, too. "Rockin' at the T-Dance" asked about American pride in workmanship. It mentioned Apollo I.

"Take a trip with me in 1967 with Grissom, White, and Chaffee on a rocket ride to heaven . . .

It was American made only the best for our boys."

It sounded awfully darn patriotic, until you remembered that Apollo I exploded on the launch pad. The song also mentioned the Hyatt Regency falling on carefree, happy dancers and pointed out that nobody seemed to care how or why these things could happen.

"... they let the monkey go And blame the monkey wrench."

And it had a good beat and you could dance to it. Anxiously, people kept asking each other, "When are these guys coming to Lincoln?"

Finally the two sides stopped arguing and looked over at everyone else. "Why are you so anxious to know when they are coming back to Lincoln?" they asked.

"Because we like the record. It sounds great. And because we remember them being a good live band when they used to play here a lot, before they were famous," they all said in unison.

"But don't you think they might be wrong about some of the things they say?" the arguers replied.

"Maybe they are, maybe they aren't," chorused the response, "but at least they have the guts to take a stand on something a little less obvious than apartheid. Anybody can say they're against that. Besides, they sound great. Isn't that what a rock 'n' roll band is supposed to do?"

"Well, yes, we suppose you're right. They do have guts. And they do sound great."

"So when the hell are they coming to Lincoln?" the crowd screamed.

"Tomorrow night, Friday, the 23rd. They'll be at the Nebraska Union in the Centennial Room. That's the big one upstairs."

"Good thing drop/add is over with. How much are tickets?"

"Four bucks for students, six bucks for non-students, because it's being put on by the Campus Activities and Programs office. Tickets are at Dirt Cheap, Pickles, and both unions."

"Great. What time does it start?"

"8:00. At night."