

Arts & Entertainment

Cellophane Ceiling is 'heavy,' man!

By Charles Lieurance
Senior Reporter

Despite the fact that Cellophane Ceiling's lead singer/guitarist John Wolf dedicated their song "Don't Play God" to Rulo lunatic Michael Ryan, I could have sworn it was a cover of some lost '60s classic.

I spent numerous nights at home dishing through Lenny Kaye's "Nuggets" LPs, leafing through rock encyclopedias put out by everyone from Rolling Stone to Tiger Beat, and hummed the song to knowledgeable friends.

I got nowhere.

Concert Review

There is something so classic about it. It's epic format resembles antiques like Ten Years After's "I'd Love to Change the World." Its change from acoustic guitar ballad to electric thud'n'roll hints at influences as varied as Jefferson Airplane and Iron Butterfly.

The word is heavy. It's not used much anymore, but that's the word.

Wolf admits an affection for the heavier side of rock.

"I was really into Gun Club, Iggy and Aerosmith for years," he said. "Don't Play God" was something I had floating around in my head for a long time but the song really came out when the ordeal with Ryan surfaced. It's really just about people who have too much power or influence over others. Some people think it's about Reagan."

Whatever "Don't Play God" is about, it is a perfect rock'n'roll song. You can enjoy it with your mind, body and feet, drunk or sober.



Dave Bentz/Daily Nebraskan

Cellophane Ceiling (above) will play Wednesday night at the Drumstick, 547 N. 48th.

It is also the highlight of this Omaha band's new LP, "The Beauty of it All," the kind of album you really don't expect out of a Nebraska band. It's a national achievement, not a local one. 500 albums were originally printed and now the band is in the middle of their second printing. College radio play on the album cuts "Happiness" and "Don't Play God" has been "reassuring."

The trio of Wolf, Chris Sterba (on bass), and Steve Coleman (drums), are now in the process of shopping for a bigger label, or at least someone who'll license the album for bigger distribution, according to Wolf.

"We're alternating between huntin' and waitin' around," he said.

With an album out, Cellophane Ceiling's live shows have become more aggressive than ever. So

aggressive in fact that Wolf had to retire his trademark cherry red vintage guitar.

"It was just getting too abused onstage," he said. "I've brought it back out of retirement again now though. It'll be with me Wednesday night at the Drumstick."

Cellophane Ceiling has been trying to put together the tightest, most energetic 90-minute live set possible and Wolf says that will be evident at the Drumstick show.

For those who are as yet unfamiliar with the power the Ceiling can generate, here's a primer: combine early Gun Club (Wolf's vocals resemble Jeffrey Lee Pierce's), a sharp,

often jagged guitar sound that begs to be compared with power tools and then change tempos every two or three minutes. Because Cellophane Ceiling have mastered the art

'Basically we want to kick as much ass as possible in as short a time as possible,'

—Wolf

of tension (assault, retreat, build, assault again), their volume and aggression never have the same effect as novacaine. There's always

a place to rest and a reason to wake up again.

"Basically we want to kick as much ass as possible in as short a time as possible," Wolf said.

As for the ceaseless battle between the national and the local that goes on with most Nebraska bands, Wolf sees the recent signing of Lincoln band For Against as a very positive sign for the music cornbelt.

A lot of labels and radio stations and managers are kind of hesitant about bands from Nebraska but now I think For Against has opened things up. We've gotten some positive bites from record companies since then, even though there's nothing carved in stone yet."

Cellophane Ceiling expects to perform one of their best shows ever Wednesday.

"We've been playing a lot of shows out of Nebraska and that helps our local shows," said Wolf. "Once you've been out in front of complete strangers, you can come back to the local scene and feel fresh."

Oh, did I say Cellophane Ceiling wrote "Don't Play God"? I think Wolf said it. If nothing else that song is worth all the money you have in your pocket (I'm assuming you're a college student, of course).

New Brass Guns, one of Lincoln's finest, will open the show on Wednesday and the cover is \$3.

You don't have to be God to get in, just 21.



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GATEWAY SHOPPING MALL

Lightfoot comes to Music Hall Friday, May 8

Gordon Lightfoot will perform May 8 at 8 p.m. in Omaha's Music Hall. 1986 brought the release of Lightfoot's 18th career album, "East of Midnight," a collection of 10 new Lightfoot originals. Lightfoot says of his newest work, "There's an uplifting message in these songs and they've got a lot of drive." Lightfoot blends the simplicity and sincerity of folk and country styles with the intensity and drive of pop and rock. Hits like "Early Morning Rain," "If You Could Read My Mind," "Care-free Highway" and "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald" have won Lightfoot numerous nominations and awards — three platinum and five gold albums. Tickets for an evening with Gordon Lightfoot are available at the Civic Auditorium Box Office, Brandeis and all TIX outlets. Tickets can be charged by phone by calling 342-7107.