

Arts & Entertainment



Chip Davis of Mannheim Steamroller

Courtesy American Gramophone

'Fresh Aire' gets boosted by new-age movement

By Charles Lieurance
Senior Editor

In 1976, Omahan Chip Davis received the Country Music Writer of the Year award for composing the music for C.W. McCall's hit song "Convoy" and writing the musical score for the film of the same name.

In 1985, Mannheim Steamroller founder Chip Davis received a Grammy Award nomination for the Fresh Aire Christmas album, portions of which will highlight four nights of Mannheim Steamroller performances at Omaha's Orpheum Theatre on Dec. 22, 23, 26 and 27.

If this sounds like a "which of these things is not like the other" quiz on Sesame Street, it's probably because Davis' 15-year recording career has run a versatile and eclectic musical gamut.

Davis also founded of the prestig-

ious independent recording label American Gramophone, and composed TV music for the 1984 Olympics and radio music for an NBC Radio Network Bicentennial special in 1976.

Although long regarded as one of the founding fathers of new age's grassroots conquest of a lucrative musical market, Davis said he's ambivalent about applying the label "new age" to Mannheim Steamroller's music.

"Being called one of the founders of new age is neat in some ways, but I'm not sure if it really applies to

Concert Preview

Mannheim Steamroller's Fresh Aire releases," Davis said. "New age has the rap of being spacey and wandering

in form, and Mannheim Steamroller's music is very classically structured." But with the advent of successful new-age record stores and popular new-age racks in conventional record stores, Mannheim Steamroller has profited from the trend.

"New age has had tremendous impact on our record sales," Davis said. "We didn't really fit into a category before — our compact discs might be in the classical rack at the record store, our cassettes under rock and our LPs under easy listening — which, as you know, is sales death."

Davis said the success of new-age and fusion stations like The Breeze in Minneapolis and The Wave in Los Angeles has also played an integral part in giving the Omaha-based group a solid base of fans around the nation and making the first Mannheim Steamroller Christmas album come up just slightly short

of platinum in year-end sales.

Record reviewers have classified the Mannheim Steamroller sound as everything from "bubblegum Bach" to "new classical genius," but Davis said his own view of the music is much simpler.

"It's just meant to be enjoyed by those who enjoy it. It's very unassuming," he said. "The structures are classical, but even in classical structures there are a variety of forms, styles and rhythms. I consider classical music sort of an architectural model for the music, but from a rhythm standpoint, I also see elements of Toto and Supertramp in the compositions."

Abroad, Mannheim Steamroller releases are marketed the way they were first marketed in the United States — as expensive high-fidelity demonstration albums. Davis said a distribution deal is in the works for European distribution of the Fresh Aire albums.

Mannheim Steamroller's Orpheum Theatre Christmas shows have become an Omaha tradition, and Davis said he is glad hometown support of the music is still strong.

"I look forward to these Christmas shows all year," Davis said. "They usually sell out for every show."

"The Orpheum is kind of home base," he said.

The Orpheum show will include a high-tech visual display as well as crystal-clear sound, Davis said. The concert is billed as an "Electronic Fantasy" and will include selections from the six Fresh Aire LPs as well as popular Christmas selections.

Performances will be at 8 p.m. on Dec. 22 and 23. Shows on Dec. 26 will be at 2 and 8 p.m. and on Dec. 27 at 2 and 7 p.m. Tickets cost \$17.50, \$15.50 and \$13.50, and can be purchased at Younkers TicketCenters, TIX and the Civic Auditorium Box Office.

Shorts

Saxman Snidero plays tomorrow

Jazz saxophonist Jim Snidero will perform with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Jazz Ensemble I during the band's performance at 8 p.m. Wednesday in Kimball Hall.

Snidero studied at North Texas State University, where he performed with the university's top jazz ensemble, the One O'Clock Band, and toured the United States and Europe with the group. He is now touring the United States and around the world with his own jazz group.

Snidero is also known as an

experienced jazz educator and has taught numerous workshops for high school and college programs.

With Snidero as soloist, the jazz ensemble will play two pieces by jazz composer Toshiko Akiyoshi, "Road Time Shuffle" and "Warning, Success Can Be Hazardous to Your Health."

The concert is free to the public.

and Traci Tornquist, voice; and Steve Bobst, recorder.

The concert is free to the public.

Vocal, chamber shows presented

The University Women's Chorale and the Varsity Men's Glee Club will perform at 8 p.m. Sunday in Kimball Recital Hall.

The concert is one of three featuring music performed or written by students in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Music.

A concert featuring works by student composers will be today at 8 p.m. in Westbrook Music Building.

The Student Chamber Ensemble will present a concert at 8

p.m. Thursday in Westbrook. The chamber music program will be directed by Professor Arnold Schatz.

The Women's Chorale is directed by Professor Carolee Curtright, and the Glee Club is directed by Professor Raymond Miller.

The Glee Club's selections will include contemporary, folk and show music, including selections from "Paint Your Wagon."

The Women's Chorale will be joined by the Lincoln Southeast High School girls ensemble, Chansonniere, under the direction of Julie McIntyre, to perform Benjamin Britten's "Ceremony of Carols."

Each concert is open to the public and free.

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99 cent call drinks 99 cent imports
99 cent blended drinks
99 cent ice cream drinks
NO COVER!



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3 scoops of vanilla ice cream in a waffle cone dish with a banana topped with Strawberry, chocolate, pineapple, whipped cream, nuts and a cherry.

Tues., Wed. 2, Thurs. 3
City Campus
2:30-3:30 & 7:30-9:30

East Campus
2:30-4:30

CLIP THIS COUPON

Early music show Saturday

Collegium Musicum, the early music ensemble of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Music, will perform at 8 p.m. Saturday in St. Mark's-On-The-Campus Episcopal Church.

The concert will include performances using early English instruments such as recorders, under the direction of Sandy Rhein, and viols, under the direction of Priscilla Parson, will be used in the concert. The music includes two lute pieces by Dowland and five pieces of Henry Purcell's "Abdelazar" for recorders.

The vocal concert, directed by Pamela Starr, will perform "Adieu Sweet Amaryllis" and other songs from the Golden Age of Elizabeth I and James I.

Featured soloists will include Clifford Bettis, lute; Steve York

UNL Singers to celebrate anniversaries with concert

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Singers, under the direction of James Hejduk, will present a concert at 3 p.m. Sunday in Kimball Recital Hall.

Hejduk is a visiting professor of music at UNL this semester.

The group's program will feature music by Josquin des Prez, Henry Purcell and, in celebration

of the 350th anniversary of Dietrich Buxtehude and the 400th anniversary of Samuel Scheidt, the ensemble will perform Buxtehude's Christmas cantata, "Befiehl dem Engel" with string accompaniment, and Scheidt's "In Dulci Jubilo" for double choir and trumpets.

The concert is free to the public.

Even though construction is under way in front of the East Campus store, parking can be found to the east of the Dairy Store.