

## 'O-M-A-H-Y-A' spelled a stunning Sting concert

By Joseph Bowman  
Staff Reviewer

Sting was here. Well, actually he was in Omaha Saturday night at the Civic Auditorium. He came with a big gray and black geometrical stage set, a massive array of hanging speakers and lights, a spectacular nine-piece band, and his ego. In fact, it was surprising he had room for all that other stuff, considering that he only had five semitrucks to haul it around.

### Concert Review

But as long as Sting continues to entertain this well, he'll be able to get away with being the arrogant snob he is. The performance was as sharp and polished as you would expect it to be. The caliber of the show was at least equal to his ego, and that is no small thing. Of course, it would be almost impossible for Sting to sound bad, especially when he has some of the best young musicians in the country touring with him.

Branford Marsalis, the world-famous saxophone and clarinet player, was a shining vision in white — of sound angelic in purity. The sweet notes slipped out of his horn and into the ears of the swaying crowd, soothing their urges to throw down the chairs and dance all over the building.

The spotlight was passed to each musician in turn during the evening. And each of the band members was great in his or her own right, dazzling the crowd with shimmering displays of virtuosity. But they didn't have the same flavor of unity that the "Dream of the Blue Turtles" band had. This group is obviously Sting and members from his last band, touring with some studio musicians.

Sting opened up with "Lazarus Heart" and surged into a blazing performance of most of the songs from his new double album, "... Nothing Like the Sun."

His finest moments were during the ballads. "Sister Moon" was a haunting piece that pierced the coldest hearts. The timeless dream of romantics was given a lingering glance during the lovely instrumental interlude when Sting ascended the dark hill on stage. He met the gorgeous Janice Pendarvis, his backup singer, to share a short dance that everyone secretly took part in.

Sting's cover of Jimi Hendrix' "Little Wing" was absolutely stunning. It was a powerful, throbbing heart-breaker, lifting everyone above the mediocrity of everyday life for a few moments. "The Secret Marriage," one of the last songs in the set, turned out to be one of the most pleasant performances of the evening.

Sting sounded surprisingly pretty, even with his rough voice. He showed a sincerely sensitive face that was obscured most of the night.

Sting never stopped playing the trickster for more than a few moments all night. He mimicked Marsalis playing clarinet, and he stopped between songs to poke fun at the audience.

"O-M-A-H-Y-A — what's that spell?" he said.

"Omaha!" the confused mob cheered.

"No it doesn't," he answered, then asked, "What state is this the capitol of, Iowa?"

At the beginning of the first half of his performance, he stopped to comment on television evangelism. "It is both fascinating and disgusting," he said. He told the audience about Jimmy Swaggart's reaction to the song "Murder by Numbers." Swaggart allegedly said, "This here song was written by the devil. Beelzebub! Lucifer! Satan, the Horned One himself!" Sting's reaction was "Well, I wrote the f—ing song (laughter)." Some people boomed when he laughed at Swaggart, and that was almost as funny as Sting's story.

Keep in mind that Sting has a reputation for a sense of humor that he must live up to. The funniest moment was when he took off his jacket to reveal his rippling nipples. Just then, the thousands of young twitchy teeny-bopper girls that had been anticipating all night did what they do best... screamed. Things like, "Oh my god, I'm gonna die!" "We love you!" "I want to have your baby!" and "I want to dye you green and make guacamole out of you!"

As expected, Sting played "Message in a Bottle" along with a few others, for the last of two encores. Everyone in the audience sang along with him, as if each of them was sending out an S.O.S. Then the whole band came out together, to join hands, bow and officially say good night.



Courtesy of Warner Bros. Records

### The Dynatonnes

## Rockin' R & B Dynatonnes invade Zoo

By Ken Havlat  
Staff Reporter

San Francisco's Dynatonnes, having just delivered a fresh LP for Warner Bros., will start a three-night stand tonight at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St. The band also will

### Band Preview

be at the Howard Street Tavern in Omaha Thursday.

The album, titled "Shameless," is perhaps slicker than it should be.

Produced by Huey Lewis' own honcho and former Stax Records man Jim Gaines, "Shameless" is a party record. Its express purpose is to get people moving, manager Rico Tee said in a telephone interview.

"Most people go on tour to support the album," Tee said. "We need the record to support the tour." The Dynatonnes have been coming through Lincoln since the days some of the members of the band backed up Charlie Musselwhite.

The album is a synthesis of sorts between Huey Lewis and the Fabulous Thunderbirds. The lead single, "Take the Heat," is getting a fair amount of play on commercial

radio. A trio of really nice songs on the LP are "Old Habits Die Hard," "Can't Give You Up" and "Shake Sherrie," with great vocals by C.C. Miller, although on the whole the album plays it too safe.

Tee said the Dynatonnes consider themselves more of a rockin' R&B band than a blues act. While Gaines is primarily a blues producer, his ear lends well to those who throw a little rock on the side, as evidenced by who he brought along for the album — Steve Cropper (of Booker T and the MG's fame) and Kim Wilson of the Fabulous Thunderbirds.

Tee said the Dynatonnes wanted to incorporate "the Memphis sound" into their newest album. That also means they have to work harder for the audience.

"We want to show people we can come from the ground up," Tee said. "This has been our basic style for six years now. Perhaps next autumn will bring new adventures. We are going to be touring constantly almost up until then."

The Dynatonnes' strong point has always been their live show. People having a great time while the band is playing in the background, people meeting new people, is a

Dynatonnes trademark.

"We want to see people filling the dance floor, starting friendships and having a good time," Tee said. "That's what it's all about."

Last summer the band played for thousands of people at Lincoln's Flatwater Festival.

"We enjoyed doing that," Tee said. "It allowed us to bring our music out."

The style of music the Dynatonnes play was seemingly inconceivable six or seven years ago, even though it harks back to the '50s and '60s.

"We are not a nostalgia band," Tee said. "We are very much a band of a present. We are hoping, though, that we can ride it for a while."

The band is also not "Shameless" for its association with Miller beer. Tee said the network Miller runs is inconceivable for bands who only plan to be around for a short time, but can be beneficial during the struggling-through-poverty years.

"Miller has been good to us," Tee said.

Cover each of the three nights is \$4. Show time is 9:30 p.m.



Courtesy of Rhino Records

Phranc

## Jewish, lesbian folksinger Phranc gives riveting, dynamic performance

By Geoff McMurtry  
Senior Editor

"Basic All-American Jewish lesbian folksinger" Phranc, who bills herself as such and quoted that line twice in referring to herself during

### Concert Review

Saturday night's performance, was all that and more at her solo acoustic concert in the East Union Great Plains Room.

Emerging in a black turtleneck, faded jeans, and black combat boots looking like a cross between an early Paul Simon and a short, slightly lumpy Matt Dillon, Phranc immediately captured the very partisan crowd, opening with "Bloodbath," a strongly anti-apartheid rage, and kept it with an engaging performance mixed with anger, humor, sarcasm, and honesty. Showing a wide range in a distinctive style, Phranc's powerful, yet endearing stage persona captivated an audience of ready and willing admirers.

Ranging from political tirades nearing stridency to intensely haunting personal recollections and feel-

ings, her subjects covered a fascinating variety of topics, while always coming back to a few central themes of particular importance to the artist.

While talking about "Bloodbath," with its angry condemnation of "the color of my skin," Phranc said, "The fact that I'm the same color as Reagan, Botha, and Thatcher makes my skin crawl."

Another recurring theme throughout the evening was Phranc's lesbian stance. Although never shying away from either her beliefs or her obvious orientation, her winning sense of humor and intelligent, subtle lyrics kept her songs well out of reach of preachiness or reductionism.

One song was about "all those Amazons," a lighthearted listing of appealing female athletes, and a wry twist on typical jock-beer-commercial sentiment.

Lest anyone think Phranc merely a reversed athletic groupie, her sensibilities were clearly spelled out during "I Hate Female Mud Wrestling," and alluded to during songs like "Swim Team," a tribute to the fond memories of companionship and belonging of her sexually formative years, but not all the trappings that

went with it, containing the line "I don't like that bikini, it just isn't me."

Besides being a confident songwriter and a riveting, dynamic, guitarist, Phranc has a strong stage presence that gently commands your attention.

Both her songwriting and guitar styles ring with similarities to early-era Bob Dylan, a vision that became more evident during a chillingly appropriate version of "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll," her only cover song of the evening.

Despite an unfortunate delay caused by Continental Airlines and a Denver snowstorm, Phranc performed an inspirational two sets, and showed herself to be a major figure in the nation's musical conscience, even if she isn't destined to be the next Madonna.

Opening the show was another singer/songwriter acoustic soloist, Katie Bohner, who filled in at the last minute for Continental Airlines, and the Amethyst splinter-group duet of Jaci Augustine and Kathy Tejcka, who performed an entertaining two sets, consisting mostly of 40's torch ballads straight out of Mickey Spillane.