

Band returns with new violinist

By Joeth Zucco
Senior Editor

It's time to take the skinheads bowling.

Camper van Beethoven, the funny and serious and exotic band from Santa Cruz, Calif., will play in Omaha Tuesday night at the Ranch Bowl.

A few things have changed, yet remained the same, since they last played in the area. They're still touring the country in the same blue van. They're still experimenting with unique sounds and interesting album titles. But they no longer have Jonathan Segal, the violin-keyboard-everything-else player. Now they have Morgan Fichter, a classically trained violinist, who brings a new angle to the band.

concert PREVIEW

Fichter joined the band six months ago when Camper van Beethoven was in the midst of recording "Key Lime Pie" and getting ready to go on tour. She said that David Lowery, the lead singer and guitarist, called her and sent her a tape. She went down to Santa Cruz, Calif., and auditioned with the band for three hours. A week later, Lowery called her back and asked her to join. Fichter quit her waitress job in San Francisco and did just that.

"Never in my life did I expect to be in a band like this," Fichter said.

She wasn't too familiar with the band before she was asked to audition. She said that she had seen them once, but it hadn't been one of their best shows.

"Some musician friends of mine listened to Camper van Beethoven a lot. I knew they had a lot of different kinds of music inte-

grated and a violin," Fichter said.

Fichter studied classical violin at a music conservatory and even went to college, but dropped out because she was unhappy with it. She said that the classical environment is very competitive and is a cold environment for musicians to be in. She said she always had liked listening to other kinds of music but was discouraged to play it by her teachers.

"I like to play music that challenges me a lot," she said. "I usually didn't have to sit down and think up a tune that would fit with guitar. It's really hard, but I'm willing to go for it."

"The classical field didn't fulfill me spiritually. I had more rock 'n' roll in me," she said. "I wanted to incorporate violin playing into a situation that really rocks."

Fichter said that the band has been touring for about three months. They started out with a 10-day primer tour in California so she could get used to playing with the band. She said the band has been headlining for almost a month. Before that they toured with 10,000 Maniacs.

"I had never toured before. It was really scary for me playing in front of 5,000 people," she said. "I've gotten used to it, to looking out and seeing people have a good time."

Fichter said that the response on the tour has been very positive. She said that she didn't know how people would respond to her.

"People would come up and say they had their doubts, but I sounded good and fit in well. People don't realize how they'll respond to a new person in the bands. Some people have a hard time coping with change."

Fichter said that being the minority -- the only woman and the odd instrument -- of the band also is hard. But she said that being in

the band is kind of like being married to someone or involved in an intense relationship.

"There are good parts and parts that need to be worked out," she said. "There are experiences I've never had before: learning the music, playing with the musicians. It's fun and challenging to play with musicians better than you."

Besides getting used to playing in front of thousands of people and being the new kid on the block, Fichter said that touring is a challenge in itself. She said she never has enough time to sit back and think. She's been eating at Denny's and McDonald's more than she'd like. And she misses her friends back in San Francisco.

"It's challenging. You learn to like yourself a lot."

The title of the new album, "Key Lime Pie," came from Lowery, Fichter said, adding that there was no particular reason for it.

"We liked it. Probably a lot of people don't know what key lime pie is. It makes them curious and it sounds funny," she said. "Sometimes we don't do things for logical reasons."

Fichter said she likes the different sound of "Key Lime Pie," as compared to the others. She added that the issues dealt with in the songs are more real. She said that it shows the growth in their musicianship.

"I like Camper van Beethoven as a more serious band than as a wacky band. I personally identify with the songs on this album (better) than others."

Fichter said people have to be open to change. She referred to the Rolling Stones and the Who, who basically sound the same as they did when they first started out.

"Musicians aren't mannequins that play the same music. They change."



Courtesy Virgin Records

Camper van Beethoven

Camper van Beethoven upholds early standards

By Mark Lage
Staff Reporter

Camper van Beethoven
"Key Lime Pie"
Virgin Records

"Key Lime Pie," Camper van Beethoven's second album for Virgin, is a return to standards of quirkish excellence set by the band's earlier independent releases.

album REVIEW

"Our Beloved Revolutionary Sweetheart," the band's Virgin debut from two years ago, is not a bad album, but its clean sound was far too reserved and featured little of the typical Camper sense of humor. "Key Lime Pie" returns to more adventurous, interesting

music, and occasionally is as funny as earlier releases. This is evident in the liner notes, in which the listener is told what kind of shoes each band member wore while recording the album.

This recalls the cover of the band's self-titled third album, where Soviet spies were credited with swimming upstream disguised as trout.

For long-time fans, the bad news is that resident musical oddball Jonathan Segal is gone, the latest casualty of the ever-mutating Camper lineup. The value of the violinist/keyboardist/guitarist is shown by the fact that he is replaced by a handful of people on "Key Lime Pie."

Morgan Fichter joins the official band lineup as violinist, but side musicians are brought in to play things like pedal steel, things

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Junk food 'completes' diet

By Emily Rosenbaum
Senior Reporter

No college student's diet would be complete without the push-button convenience of junk-food dispensers.

The Nebraska Union on City Campus houses one vending area near the Crib on the first floor. Three cold drink machines, offering 16 varieties of soda pop, and two glass-front machines, with the usual candy bar, potato chip and nut selection, make up the vending area.

There's also a microwave beside the machines for making Chester Cheetah popcorn (which costs 75 cents; natural flavor only, and use of the microwave is free).

Each of the pop machines has a built-in dollar changer, that keeps 50 cents and gives the customer a can of pop and 50 cents in return.

The East Union has a cold-drink vending machine in the first floor north lobby area, in addition to the cold drink, cold milk, glass front and ice cream machines located near the Terraces Cafeteria.

"If you want a sit-down dinner, then a vending machine won't appeal to you," said Gene Meerkatz, University Vending System manager. "But, if there's a long line at Burger King, a vending machine might be just what you want."

Meerkatz said Burger King has lured some students away from the vending machines, but sales still have been substantial.

Last year, total sales from vending machines in the Nebraska Union reached \$73,525, according to Daryl

Swanson, Nebraska Union director. The machines are operated by the University Vending System and the union receives a sales commission. Last year's vending commission was \$20,046, he said.

One of the attractions of the vending machines is that they follow the same hours of operation as the union, Swanson said.

"Students need and want pop and snacks at all hours of the day," he said.

The vending machines in the East Union yield low-volume sales, he said, but are kept there as a service to the students.

Meerkatz said the consistent biggest sellers from the university vending machines are the Snickers candy bar and Diet Coke. The Milky Way candy bar comes in first for worldwide sales, he said. Pepsi and Mountain Dew are the second and third best soda sellers, respectively.

The Symphony candy bar from Hershey's is the newest bar "to make a big splash," he said.

While most of the offerings in the union vending machines safely could be described as junk food, an attempt at something healthy has been made. Quaker raisin and cinnamon granola bars (35 cents) and California Naturals (raisins, nuts and cashews for 35 cents) can be found among the Dolly Madison Zingers (cream-filled cakes for 60 cents) and Ruffles cheddar and sour cream chips (35 cents).

"You can walk up to the machine, drop in your money and get a quality product," Meerkatz said.



David Fahleson/Daily Nebraskan

Black and brash

Black Francis, guitarist and vocalist for the Pixies, plays at State Fair Park's Agricultural Hall Friday night to a very enthusiastic crowd. Francis switched to acoustic guitar halfway through the show to add a new range of sound to the songs.