



Rock on

Big Red bands jive in harmony

By Dionne Searcey
Senior Editor

Even though the 30 bands that performed in the Big Red Rock-O-Rama this weekend were competing for prizes, the event proved to be a great way for local bands to show their support for one another, the University Programs Council concert and disco committee president said.

"It's good everyone here gets together," said Dave Rabe. "It makes it more of a family than a competition with each other."

The competition was coordinated by UPC and KFMQ radio station as a benefit for United Way.

Frontier Trust, a band from Omaha, won first prize — eight hours of recording time at Startracker Recording Studio in Lincoln.

The Yardapes, a local band, won the \$200 second prize.

Omaha band Beef Curtains won third place with a prize of \$100. The award for "best original song" went to the local band Middle Monkey for its song, "I Drink." The band won a guitar from Moon Music.

Rabe said he was uneasy at first about whether the show should be a competition.

"I had problems morally justifying it as a contest," he said. "But yet every time someone goes out to play they're being judged. If they just play in their own basement, they're judged against themselves."

Mary Rea, of The Decades from Omaha, said she thought the bands showed a lot of camaraderie.

"Even though it's a competition, I don't feel a sense of cut-throat competition," Rea said.

Katie Boner, lead singer of Jumpin' Kate and the Rollover Sisters, said she thought making the show a contest was a "distraction."

"How can you compare one band to another?" Boner asked.

But, she said, the contest forced bands to work harder.

"It does make people go that extra mile to play well," she said.

Jon Terry, program director at KFMQ, said that because the show was a contest, more bands tried out to perform. About 60 bands paid the \$10 fee to apply, he said.

"If you just had it for fun, you would've had half as many bands," he said.

The show also gave bands another chance to perform before a big crowd, Terry said. About 300 people showed up each night of the three-day concert.

Mike Saklar, guitarist for the Omaha band Ritual Device, said he was pleased to have the opportunity to play at the show.

"A lot of bands like us have a hard time getting gigs," Saklar said.

Boner said the show offered her band a chance to get another gig. She said bands can play in only two or three bars in Lincoln.

And the show brought the bands in touch with each other, she said.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for local bands to get together to showcase their talent."

Shawn Bosler, guitarist for Germbot of Kansas City, said he was glad to play in Lincoln. Bosler said he liked the Lincoln music scene because it's full of "warm and friendly people."

Crowd members seemed to be pleased with the chance to get to hear live alternative rock, Rabe said. It's not often that younger fans and fans who live far away get to hear original local bands.

Angie Olivas, a freshman at Lefler Junior High School, said she was pleased that minors could attend the show.

"It's an opportunity for teenagers to have something to do," Olivas said.

Jessica Nearman, a freshman at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, said she traveled to Lincoln to check out the local music scene.

"We're not exposed to alternative rock in Kearney. That's why we came here," Nearman said.

Wendy Berry, a representative with Atlantic Records, was at the show all three nights to check out the talent pool.

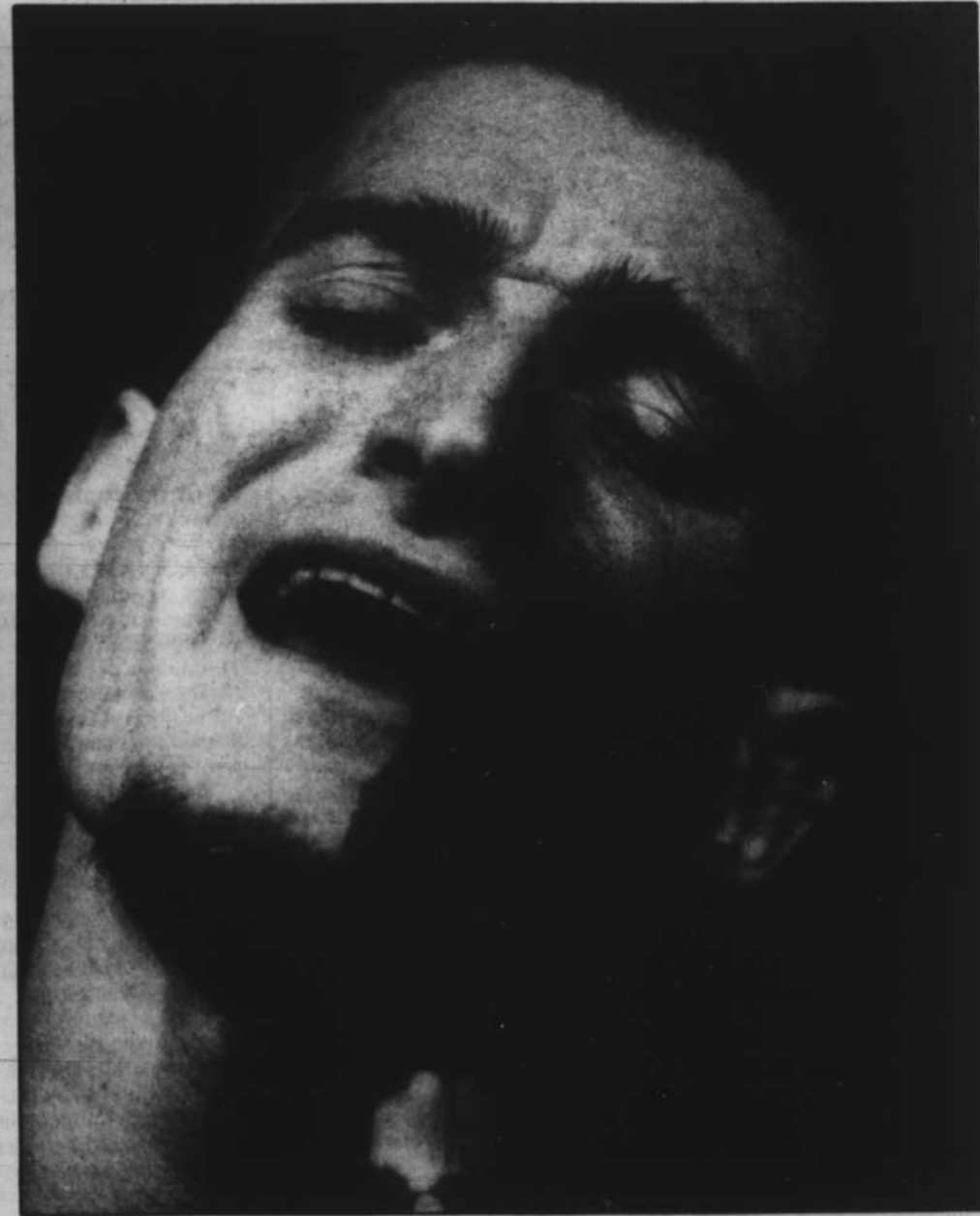
She said Friday that she particularly liked the bands Sideshow, Mercy Rule and Slide.

Rabe said because a scout was at the show, bands were given a unique opportunity to possibly be signed on a record label.

"How many chances does a band from Lincoln get a chance to play for Atlantic Records?" Rabe asked.

Boner said she was pleased that a representative from Atlantic Records came to the show.

"That's incentive enough for me to do my best," she said.



Top left: Frank Maxwell of Fifth of May strums his guitar frantically Thursday night at the rock fest.
Center: Almost Blue plays for a crowd in motion Friday night.
Top left: Howard Wehrbein jams while playing Saturday night with Steele Dreams.
Bottom left: Timothy Moss is a thrashing machine as he screams out vocals Saturday night for Ritual Device.
Bottom right: Greg Markel sings with fervor Saturday night for Mona Lisa Overdrive.

Photos by Jeff Haller