

Mr. Big entering big-time music world

Member says band stopping in Lincoln to thank DJ, fans

concert PREVIEW

By Shannon Uehling
Staff Reporter

Mr. Big is growing into its name, but that doesn't mean drummer Pat Torpey has a big attitude.

The band received gold album awards Sunday for its second release, "Lean Into It," and while Torpey said he was excited about the album's success, he had a modest outlook.

"I don't take the success for granted," Torpey said. "I've almost not had time to actually sit back and go 'Wow, (the LP's) actually doing pretty well.'"

Mr. Big is Eric Martin, lead vocals; Billy Sheehan, bass guitar; Paul Gilbert, guitar; and Torpey, drums.

Torpey compared his outlook on the band's success with that of a person who throws a successful party.

"You're just making sure everyone's having a good time. You don't really have time to enjoy it, until maybe the next day when you go, 'Wow, that was a pretty good party,'" he said.

Much of the band's success can be attributed to Lincoln disc jockey Jon Terry for putting "To Be With You" on KFMQ's play list and helping convince Atlantic Records to re-release the song as a single.

"He basically kick-started our whole little thing here," Torpey said. "It's just mushroomed into the success."

Mr. Big is performing in the Centennial Ballroom at 8 p.m. today, in part, to honor Terry.

"We're going to be meeting him, and I'm really looking forward to it because I really want to shake his hand and say, 'Hey, my God, thanks a lot, bud,'" Torpey said.

Torpey also said the band members were looking forward to coming to Lincoln because they were aware that the people of Lincoln supported them early on.



Courtesy of Atlantic

Paul Gilbert, Pat Torpey, Eric Martin and Billy Sheehan of Mr. Big will bring their pop sound to the Centennial Ballroom in the Nebraska Union tonight at 8 p.m.

"It was definitely on our little itinerary," he said. "It says 'Lincoln, Nebraska; this is where a lot of it started.'"

Torpey has been with Mr. Big during its almost four-year existence, but he also has worked with such greats as Robert Plant and Ted Nugent.

Playing with Plant on the "Now and Zen" tour was the "big feather" in Torpey's hat, he said.

Torpey got his chance when Plant's regular drummer broke his wrist.

He said he spent many hours learning Plant's solo material before he auditioned.

"I got on a plane and hopped to Chicago, the whole time completely destroying and wearing out batteries in my Walkman," Torpey said.

After being chosen for the tour, Torpey only had three days to rehearse before performing in front of crowds of 15,000 people.

"It was a little nerve-racking," he said. "But I swore I would die trying."

Torpey said the "Lean Into It" tour was going well and selling out regularly.

This leg of the tour is winding down, he said, but following the March 28 date in San Francisco, the band will tour in Europe for a month.

When the band gets back in mid-May, it will guest-perform with Rush for six or seven weeks, Torpey said.

"There's no rest for the wicked," he said. With the success of the single "To Be With You" and the gold status of "Lean Into It," one might think Torpey would have a big ego.

While he said he was pleased by the band's success, he also seemed to have both feet on the ground.

"I think we're all kind of numbed by it," Torpey said. "But we're certainly walking around with big smiles on our faces."

Sweet, Pigs to let loose in Lincoln this week



By John Payne
Senior Reporter

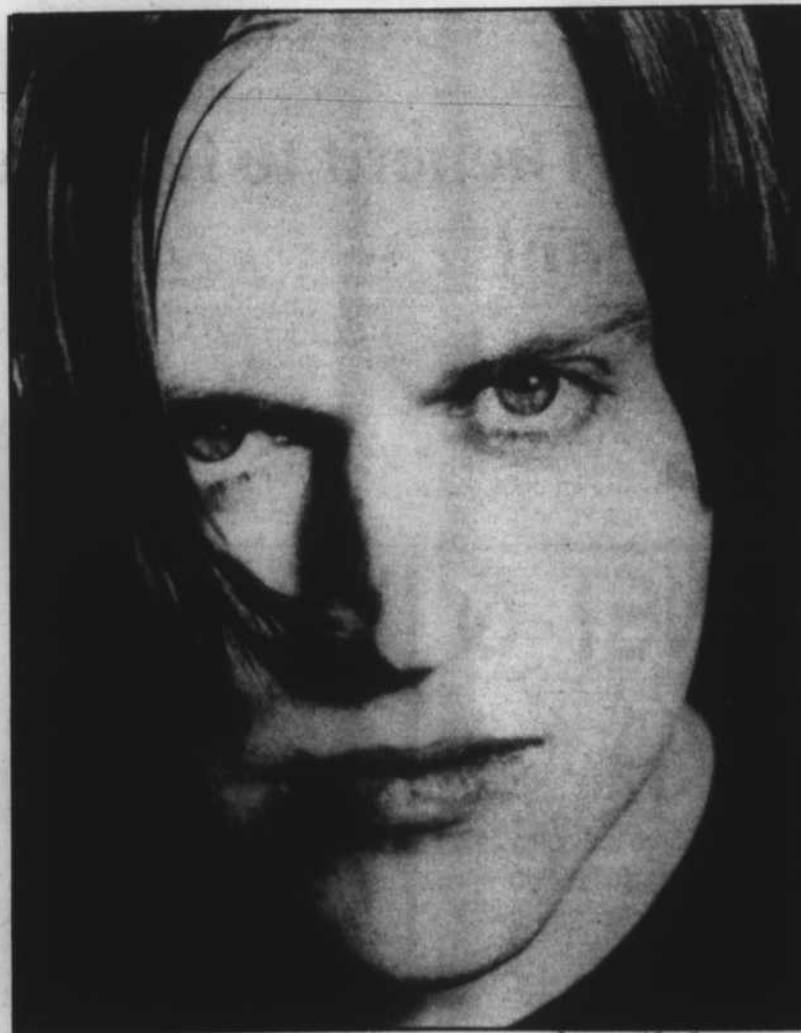
Lincoln native Matthew Sweet, whose third album, "Girlfriend," has sold over 100,000 copies, will perform tonight at Oscar's, 800 O St.

Sweet, a Lincoln Southeast High School graduate, played in various local bands before leaving Lincoln in 1983 to move to then-college rock mecca Athens, Georgia.

In 1986, Sweet released his debut album, "Inside," on Columbia Records. That album, along with his 1989 follow-up, "Earth," was lauded by the music press but mostly was overlooked by everyone else.

Between albums, Sweet played bass on the Golden Palominos' 1987 tour and also has worked with artists such as Lloyd Cole and the B-52s' Kate Pierson.

"Girlfriend," the cover of which is adorned with a photo of '60s movie starlet Tuesday Weld, is Sweet's semi-autobiographical account of marital break-up and the rediscovery of love. The LP is pure pop melodicism,



Courtesy of Zoo Entertainment

Matthew Sweet

punctuated by Sweet's creamy vocals and distorted rock guitars.

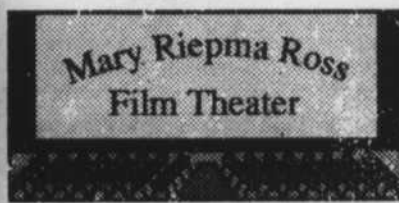
The title track from the LP has been in heavy rotation on college rock stations since the album was released, and the video to "Girlfriend" recently was added to MTV's "Buzz

Bin." The LP is now eighth on Billboard's Top Ten College Album Chart.

Since the release of "Girlfriend," Sweet has performed live on "Late Night with David Letterman" and

See LIVE on 10

Urban drama's focus complex, but intriguing



By Mark Nemeth
Staff Reporter

John Sayles' "City of Hope" is an engrossing film about a city's urban relations, corruption and economic hierarchies.

"City of Hope" overflows with fine performances from the likes of Joe Morton ("The Brother From Another Planet," "Terminator 2" and Broadway's "Hair"), Tony Lo Bianco ("The Honeymoon Killers" and "The French Connection"), Todd Graff ("Five Corners" and "The Abyss"), Frankie Faison ("Do The Right Thing" and "Silence of the Lambs"), Chris Cooper ("Matewan"), Josh Mostel ("Matewan," "Radio Days" and "Hannah and Her Sisters") and David Strathairn, who appears in many of Sayles' movies.

The list of credits in this film is so massive and the cinematic product so Hollywood-like, one wonders if Sayles ("Brother From Another Planet," "Matewan," "Return of the Secaucus Seven") was working with too large of a budget. If there are any failures in "City of Hope," they are caused by the extensive scope of the film's focus.

The film begins with Nick, played by Vincent Spano, quitting his no-show construction job at a site on

which his well-known entrepreneurial slumlord father is building.

The film continues to tell the stories of the interrelated lives of its characters.

It seems every character in this massive city — including teachers, thieves, cops and city officials — either knows the others or is in the same place at the same time, ready for the camera to switch among them. Maybe this proves once again Sayles' masterful writing and directing talents, or maybe it highlights the film's lack of focus.

One of the film's many conflicts is ignited when two young black men attack a white jogger, claiming falsely that the man was trying to fondle them. Their attack on the man was inspired by two white cops harassing them without reason.

"If we're gonna do the time, let's do the crime," says one of the kids.

"City of Hope" is poignantly political and sporadically comical, though a little burdened by character and plot complexity.

Sayles, however, still is one of today's most intriguing and eclectic writer/directors, and "City of Hope" is another in a series of excellent and sometimes brilliant films.

"City of Hope" is playing at the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater Thursday through Sunday and March 26-29. Showtimes are 7 and 9:30 p.m. Thursday through Sunday, with Saturday matinees at 12:30 and 3 p.m., and Sunday matinees at 2 and 4:30 p.m.