

Group explores women's musical history

Musica Femina to play at UNL

MUSICA FEMINA

Who- Musica Femina
What- Guitar flute duo
When- Tuesday, Sept. 15 at 8 p.m.
Where- UNL Culture Center, 333 N. 14th St.
Related Events- Informal discussion with the artists 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Women's Center, Nebraska Union, Room 340; and seminar, "Women in Music History," 2:30 p.m.-4 p.m. at Westbrook Music Building, Room 119.

By Stacey McKenzie
Senior Reporter

The women of Musica Femina will use their guitar and flute to unearth parts of a history buried in silence.

That history is about the lives of women musicians and composers.

The duo from Portland plans to evoke memories of these women with candle-lit portraits, historical information, and most importantly, music, said Kristan Aspen, the duo's flutist.

The performance starts at 8 p.m. Tuesday at the UNL Culture Center, 333 N. 14th St.

Aspen said she and guitarist Janna MacAuslan felt they had to answer questions that welled up from the foundation of their education.

Questions like: "How come I've never played a piece by a woman?"

"How can I find these women's works?"

"How can I present these works to audiences?"

Since Aspen and MacAuslan got together in 1980, they have worked to find some of the answers.

Aspen has a degree in sociology from Oberlin College in Ohio. She

has played the flute since she was in the fifth grade.

But it wasn't until Aspen graduated from college in 1970 that she wondered where music by women composers could be found.

MacAuslan studied guitar at the University of Texas in El Paso and received her master's degree at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Ore.

Aspen said MacAuslan realized that she had never played a guitar piece by a woman composer.

She began her search. What she found was more than 200 classical guitar works composed in the 19th century by Madame Sidney Pratten.

Now, Musica Femina has a large selection to play from, Aspen said, including works by Italian composer Isabella Leonarda and French composer Elizabeth de la Guerre.

But finding these composers took some research, Aspen said, partly because music has been one of the slowest art forms to honor the works of women.

"Music has tended to be a very conservative discipline," she said.

Aspen described Musica Femina's sound as beautiful and relaxing.

"Sometimes, in the middle of our programs, people just like to close their eyes," she said.

The performance will appeal to different audiences: feminists, classical music lovers, guitar and flute societies and historians.

Also, Aspen said, "I feel our program empowers women and makes them realize that we're important in this world."

"I just think that women are fabulous. I love women. I think that women deserve a lot more."

Tuesday's performance is sponsored by the UNL Culture Center, University Foundations Program, UNL's music department, and the College of Arts and Sciences.



Musica Femina, made up of Kristan Aspen, flutist, and Janna MacAuslan, classical guitarist, will perform at 8 p.m. Sept. 15 at the UNL Culture Center.

Courtesy of Musica Femina

Ballads abound on follow-up LP

Reviews



Rude Boys
"Rude House"
Atlantic Records

The Rude Boys are back with the follow-up to their 1991 debut LP, "Rude Awakening."

"Rude House" has been created with the help of Gerald Levert (of LeVert fame), who is the same man credited with discovering Rude Boys in Cleveland.

"Rude House" opens with the Rude Boys talking about going back to the house — the Rude House. They describe the Rude House as ragged on the outside but plush and extravagant on the inside.

"Rude Street" is a track that talks about the group's beginning and their road to success.

"Tell Me What You Like" is an up-tempo, funky song that contains explicit lyrics.

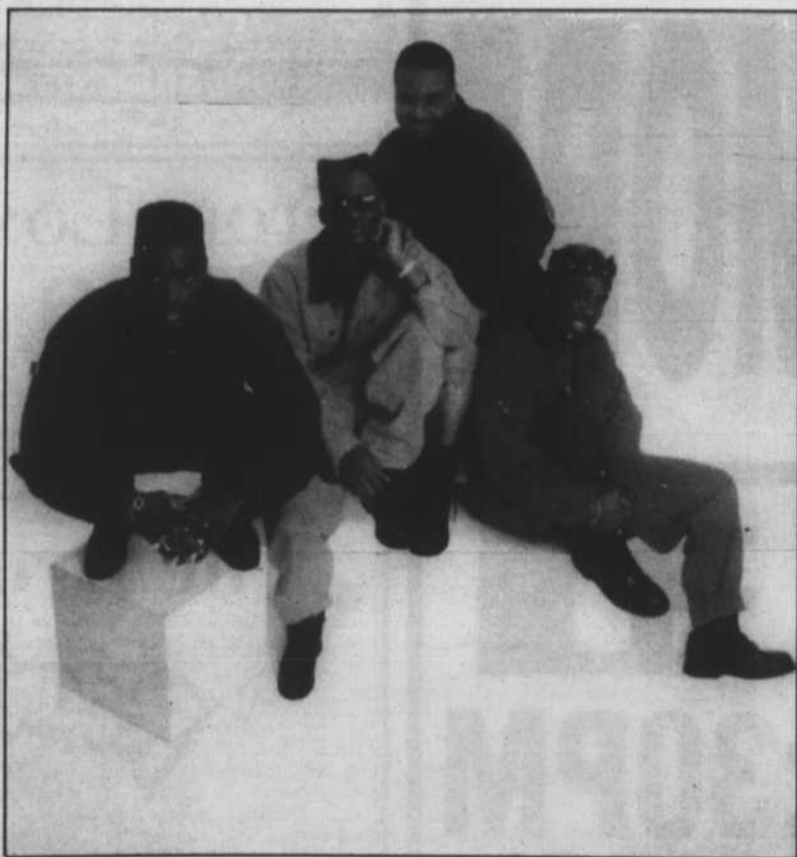
"My Kind Of Girl," gets the listener going into a groove with synthesized sound and the harmonizing melodies of the Rude Boys.

"There's No Doubt," has some Stevie Wonder vibes. Add in a rap sampled to KRS-1's "South Bronx," and this track has it going on.

These four songs are the only up-tempo tracks on "Rude House." The obvious strength of the group is in singing ballads. The rest of "Rude House" is rounded out on the smooth tip.

"Messin' Around" and "Always" will remind listeners of the group's first hit, "Written All Over Your Face." These songs have easy sounds that will stick in the listeners' minds.

One of the best tunes on the album



Courtesy of Atlantic Records/bell

The Rude Boys are Joe Little, Edward "Buddy" Banks, Larry Marcus and Melvin Sephus.

is "True Apology," written by Eddie Levert (of O'Jay's fame). A sensual track, this song showcases the Rude Boys' talent and gives the listener an indication of what the Rude Boys do best.

"Rude House" ends with the members — Edward "Buddy" Banks, Joe Little, Larry Marcus and Melvin Sephus — giving thanks to the Lord for their success.

"Rude House" is an outstanding

LP. It is easily better than the Rude Boys' debut, "Rude Awakening."

This LP shows the depth and the potential that this group has. Only four of the 12 songs on "Rude House" are up-tempo.

This alone will keep the listener interested enough to want to come back for more. "Rude House" is well worth the time and the investment.

— Anthony D. Speights

'Bobby' slows down at end, but 5-year wait worthwhile

Reviews



Bobby Brown
"Bobby"
MCA Records

Five years and \$5 million over budget, the finished product is finally here.

You might think this is a movie, but it is Bobby Brown's follow-up to his multiplatinum album "Don't Be Cruel."

"Bobby" signals the return to the forefront for the former New Edition star. With New Jack Swing king Teddy Riley and super producers L.A. Reid and Babyface, they have come up with 14 tracks that offer a little bit for everyone.

The first single off this LP, "Humpin' Around," is an up-tempo, hip-hop, funky tune that will remind the listener of "Don't Be Cruel."

"Two Can Play That Game" is a song that says "If you can do it, I can do it also." This is an up-tempo track that features Brown's silky smooth raps.

The best song on this LP is probably "Get Away." This track is a driving tune that flows to De La Soul's baseline from their single "Me Myself And I."

The first five songs on this LP will make the listener think Bobby Brown has not missed a step from his previous LP. This is where "Bobby" turns the corner.

"Good Enough," is a mid-tempo song that starts the trend of ballads

that signals the beginning of the end of the LP.

"Pretty Little Girl" is a smooth ballad that talks about wining and dining a beautiful woman who is also a complete woman.

"Something In Common," features Whitney Houston, who might be that "Pretty Little Girl" Brown was talking about. This song may at first be unappealing, but after further listening, one can see it is a quality tune about — you guessed it — having something in common.

Even though "Something In Common" will probably go to No. 1 on the pop charts, this is not the best duet on the LP. "I'm Your Friend," featuring Debra Winans, is a wonderful ballad that is a great way to close out this LP.

"Bobby" is carefully crafted and well rounded. Brown is able to silence some of his critics who seem to think he cannot sing songs other than up-tempo, hip-hop tunes. "Bobby" also should appeal to a broader audience than "Don't Be Cruel" did.

One of the few drawbacks is that in the first five tracks of this LP, Brown creates a flowing energy and makes the listener want to listen, but when this LP slows down, it almost stops. There are virtually no up-tempo songs on the last half, except for "That's the Way Love Is."

Overall, "Bobby," with its high-powered producers and numerous ballads, does the job.

Hopefully there will not be another five-year wait between albums.

— Anthony D. Speights