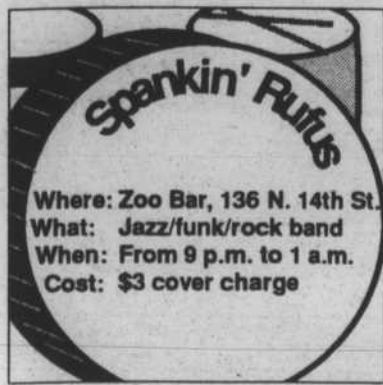


# Spankin' Rufus brings funk to the Zoo



Scott Maurer/DN

By Matthew Grant  
Staff Reporter

A Rastafarian-styled, old school bus will roll into Lincoln for the third time today.

Inside will be Spankin' Rufus, preparing for their performance this evening at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St.

Spankin' Rufus is a band with a dual identity crisis. The six-piece outfit from Columbia, Mo., consists of a college-trained horn section and a rhythm section with graduates of the listen-and-learn approach to playing an instrument.

The result is an upbeat fusion of jazz, funk and rock that Tom O'Connor, Spankin' Rufus' guitarist, was reluctant to define.

Previously the band has described its music as "chock-full of maximum testicle funk." Whatever it is, it's a combination that is gaining the band

recognition on the Midwestern circuit.

Another draw is their stage show, which is gaining a reputation for intensity and nudity.

"From time to time there's a bit of nudity — except in Illinois," O'Connor said.

And what about tonight's show? "You can count on a butt cheek or two," O'Connor promised.

"But that's not the main focus," he quickly added.

After five years together, the band decided to get serious earlier this year. They quit their jobs and pooled their savings to independently release their self-titled compact disc.

They painted their bus and Spankin' Rufus hit the road. The band has been touring extensively ever since — in Omaha, Chicago, New Orleans, Austin, Texas, and everywhere in between.

Their plan for the immediate future is to keep working and playing hard, with hopes of moving on to bigger things.

Every couple of weeks there are indications of progress, O'Connor said. The most recent is a beer company interested in sponsoring the group.

And what about the message behind the music?

"It's kind of like a Bugs Bunny cartoon, meant to be looked at at different levels," O'Connor said.

"When you're a little kid it's fun and entertaining, when you're near adulthood you can look at it and still get something out of it."



Courtesy of Big Thumb Productions

Spankin' Rufus, a mixed-genre band from Columbia, Mo., will perform tonight at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St.



Courtesy of Touchstone Pictures

"Captain Ron" stars the following actors as the Martin Harvey family: Katherine (Mary Kay Place), Martin (Martin Short), Benjamin (Benjamin Salisbury) and Caroline (Meadow Sisto).

## 'Captain Ron' sets sail on the seas of comedy



"Captain Ron"



By Ingrid Youngquist  
Staff Reporter

The grouping of Kurt Russell, Martin Short, a severely decayed wooden yacht and a trip on the Caribbean is best summed up in one word: fun.

The combination appears in the Thom Eberhardt film "Captain Ron." While this film probably wouldn't

rank among the most outstanding comedies of the year, it is truly refreshing.

In the film, stressed-out corporate executive, Martin Harvey (Short), his wife (Mary Kay Place) and children (Meadow Sisto and Benjamin Salisbury) take off for a spontaneous adventure in the Caribbean after Martin inherits his seafaring uncle's boat.

The Harveys arrive in the Caribbean to discover that their newly inherited boat is past its prime. They are discouraged until Captain Ron, a wiggled-out, scruffy-looking, dreadlocked professional seafarer played by Russell, "saves" the day, and the family sets off rather suddenly on the adventure of a lifetime.

As Captain Ron says, "If anything is going to happen, it is going to happen out there (at sea)." And it does.

The film is chock-full of mishaps and missed islands as the family learns

to sail, is sequestered by subversives and chased by sea pirates.

Though the acting is average and the humor is moderate, Russell makes an unexpectedly good pirate. Captain Ron's character is atypical of those played by Russell in recent years.

Much of the humor derived from Captain Ron in the film comes from his habits.

While Russell is supposed to be the lead character in the film, Short's ability as a comic actor shines through.

Place, known for feature films such as "Starting Over" and "The Big Chill," also puts forth a standout performance as Martin's skeptical wife, Katherine, who turns out to be the one who keeps the family from abandoning ship.

Perhaps the most redeeming part of this film is the scenery and the music.

With views of the ocean, palm trees, sunsets and the islands dominating almost every frame the film, it becomes a vacation for the eyes.

The music is also an asset. All of the music in the film has a Latin or calypso feel with much of it being performed by Bob Marley and The Wailers and various Hispanic performers.

"Captain Ron" is probably not the greatest film in town, but it's fun and refreshing. The Harveys are a perfectly normal upper-middle class family that one can relate to easily.

Because most people never run across the chance for a Caribbean adventure, the Harveys' trip is one to watch, laugh at and admire.

If you are looking for an escape from the daily grind of work, school and studies, "Captain Ron" is a nice two-hour break, and you don't even need to know how to sail.

## After 11 months, Charlie Burton returns to Zoo without Hiccups



By Shannon Uehling  
Senior Editor

This weekend marks a homecoming for Charlie Burton, formerly of the Hiccups.

Burton will perform Saturday at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St., with guitarist Evan Johns and his band. The performance marks Burton's first appearance at the Zoo Bar in almost 11 months.

Burton performed in Lincoln last Halloween night. That final performance celebrated the anniversary of his first Zoo gig.

While Burton was with the Hiccups, the band released several albums, including "Don't Fight the Band that Needs You," "Green Cheese" and a live album recorded at Omaha's Lifficket Lounge in 1990, "Puke Point at the Juke Joint."

The singer/songwriter has been working in Austin, Texas, with Johns for the last several months.

Jeb Schoonover, Burton's publicist, said Thursday that in addition to performing songs from Burton's defunct Hiccups, the duo also would be performing some of the 20 new songs Burton had written.

Saturday's performance will begin with a set by Johns and his band, Schoonover said. During the next set, Johns will be joined by Burton.

Burton has been busy writing songs and performing since his departure from Lincoln, Schoonover said.

"There's also a possible album in the future," he said.

The performance will begin at 9 p.m. and last until 1 a.m. There is a \$4 cover charge.