

Skew Siskin bangs heads on first tour

Heavy metal band from Germany opens in Omaha

band REVIEW

By Stacie Hake
Staff Reporter

Germany's new heavy metal band did not make the Berlin Wall crumble with its roaring bass, but it probably could have made chips fall.

Skew Siskin, on their first tour, played with Black Sabbath in Omaha Monday night.

Clad in black outfits, the band banged their heads while playing their songs including "I Wanna Know," "Shake Down and Roll" and "If the Walls Could Talk."

Their self-titled, self-produced and self-written debut album is proof of their determination as a thriving new band.

"It's exciting playing in front of those who haven't seen us," guitarist Jimi Voxx said. "Sometimes I'm surprised how many people already know about us."

The band formed four years ago when Voxx and lead vocalist Nina C. Alice were searching for a bass player and drummer.

A friend of Voxx's called and told him about bass player Jogy Rautenberg.

Rautenberg knew drummer Nik Terry from a previous audition, and the band was off for stardom.

For a year, the band members worked day jobs, and in their spare time, they recorded.

"Our band has the original members," Terry said. "A band that is always changing has the wrong expectations; they need to stick together. This is a real band."

It took Skew Siskin two years to come up with its name, and the credit goes to Alice. Skew Siskin means



Erik Unger/DN

Skew Siskin members Jogy Rautenberg and Jim Voxx rock the Omaha Music Hall Monday. The German band opened for Black Sabbath.

"crazy bird" in Old English. The band agreed on this name for its symbolic meanings of freedom and liberty.

"This is a name we'll stick with for years," Rautenberg said.

Voxx said he got his inspirations from the same record collection as Alice — from bands such as The Kinks, The Who and Jimi Hendrix.

Voxx defined Jimi Hendrix's music as "fresh" and compared it to their own.

"I'm not saying that we're like Jimi Hendrix but in the way, song and attitude," Voxx said. "There's so much

at the beginning. You learn different things and introduce new things to the people."

Alice started playing drums at age 11 and gradually worked her way into singing as she got older.

"You get older, you get wiser, you get better," she said. "If you don't get better, something's wrong."

Having a woman for a lead singer gave the band a different approach to heavy metal, and people were more interested in listening, Terry said.

He said the band did not compare Alice to other female singers such as

Lita Ford, and they thought of her as just "one of the guys."

Though the band started off on its first tour with Black Sabbath, Rautenberg said there was still a big step to Number one.

Alice said she hoped that more people would find out about the band.

The band's next stop on tour is Davenport, Iowa.

"It's the excitement that always makes us cover new goals," Voxx said.

"This is just the beginning — it keeps us going."

Black Sabbath delivers taste of old and new to its audience

concert REVIEW

By Stacie Hake
Staff Reporter

The audience received a little of both old and new while thrashing around at the Black Sabbath concert at Omaha's Civic Auditorium Monday night.

This popular band, which has been around since the '70s, continues to steal the hearts and souls of heavy metal lovers.

Playing songs including "Children of the Seas" and "Heaven and Hell," Black Sabbath, with Ronnie James Dio as lead singer, still has the power to make the crowd roar.

Off its new album "Dehumanizer," Black Sabbath impressed the crowd with "Masters of Insanity."

The band even threw a little bit of Wayne and Garth in with "Time Machine."

From the old days when Ozzy Osbourne was the lead singer, Black Sabbath played the all-time favorite "War Pigs."

But Dio also did a good job taking the place of the famous Osbourne when he sang "Iron Man."

Opening for Black Sabbath, Exodus rocked the audience, along with a new band from Germany called Skew Siskin.

With hair swinging rhythmically to the beat, Skew Siskin

See CONCERT on 10



Courtesy of Polygram Records

Brian McKnight's self-titled debut combines soul, ballads and jazz.

Artist escapes family ties in pleasing musical debut

Reviews



"Brian McKnight"
Brian McKnight
Mercury Records

There are many times in the music business when a recording artist will

help out his or her relative to get them started on the road to fame.

Marky Mark, Janet Jackson and Wilson Phillips are just a few examples of artists riding on their relatives' coattails to stardom.

Enters Brian McKnight. McKnight is the brother of Claude McKnight, who performs with the a

See MCKNIGHT on 10

Al B. Sure's third album effort revives former superstar status

Reviews



"Sexy Versus"
Al B. Sure
Warner Brothers Records

In 1988 Al B. Sure burst onto the music scene with "In Effect Mode," which yielded such hits as "Nite And Day," "Rescue Me," "Off On Your Own (Girl)" and "If I'm Not Your Lover."

After his first LP, Sure was the music industry's next superstar, but his second effort, "Private Times and the Whole Nine," was so bad that Sure should have hid out like Salman Rushdie.

Sure had the misfortune of having a debut LP so big that he was unable to answer the bell and give his fans the same excitement he had previously brought them.

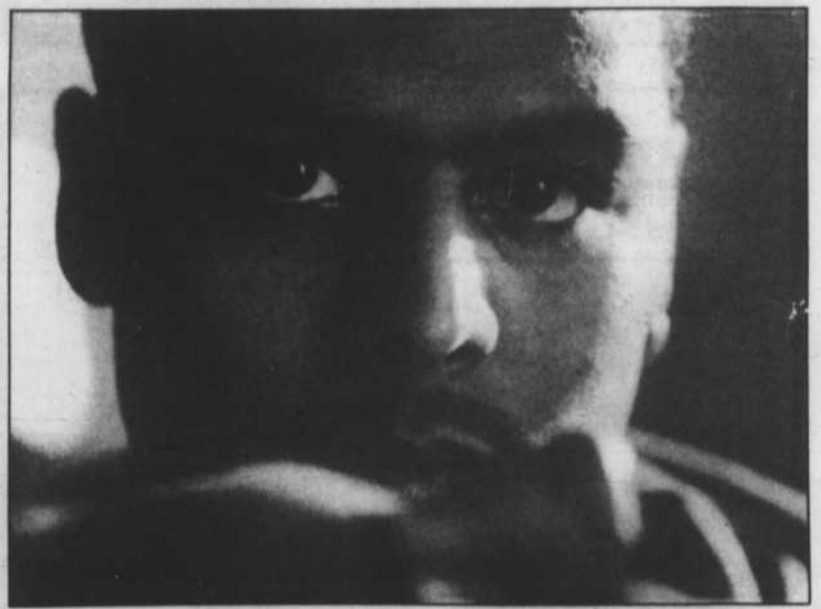
But Sure is back once again with "Sexy Versus," a 13-track attempt to bring himself back into the spotlight.

"Sexy Versus" opens with "Right Now," the first single released from the album.

"Right Now" is a mid-tempo cut that has a lot going on, and judging from this song, it appears that Sure might be able to save face.

"U & I," "Playing Games" and "Natalie," help get "Sexy Versus" off to a great start. At this point it appears that Sure is back on same track he was in 1988.

Sure kicks up the funk on "Ooh 4 Your Girl." On this cut Sure is able to recapture that persona as a pretty-boy



Courtesy of Warner Brothers Records

Al B. Sure returns to his quality style with "Sexy Versus," his third release.

ladies' man. For this song it seems to work.

This formula also works on "Turn You Out" and "See The Lady," featuring rap star Chubb Rock.

Through the first three quarters of this disc, Sure does a good job at putting together a quality LP. It is at this point where Sure falls down and almost loses all of the momentum he has gained.

"Thanks 4 a Great Time" is a poor excuse for a song that should have been left off of "Sexy Versus." This is the song that earns "Sexy Versus" the Tipper Gore parental advisory sticker on the cover.

This tune is not all that bad, but the fact that the Sure chose to show off his manhood at the beginning ruins the song.

Fortunately, Sure is able to rebound, and the last four songs of "Sexy Versus" are a nice way to round out this LP.

Overall, "Sexy Versus" is a good effort. The listener will not be disappointed this time.

With the exception of one song, "Sexy Versus" will not drive Sure underground and make him almost extinct like Salman Rushdie.

— Anthony D. Speights