

TOM MAINELLI

Out & about under WRAPS

Lincoln, Omaha musicians to compete in Rapfest '93

By Greg Schick
Staff Reporter

Concert preview

the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus will rock Saturday night when Rapfest '93 takes hold of the Nebraska Union Ballroom.

Sponsored by the Afrikan People's Union and Alpha Phi Alpha, the festival highlights area rap groups as they compete for cash, trophies and air time on a local radio station.

Nasim Fariqsu Suhayb, a UNL sophomore business major and chairman for Rapfest, said the two-hour show, which begins at 7 p.m., will "basically be a compilation of Lincoln artists and some Omaha groups."

"There are a lot of rap artists in the Lincoln and Omaha area who have no outlet," he said.

Suhayb, who is also APU's second vice president, said he wanted to help rappers showcase their creative talents.

Artists scheduled to perform include: Flow E-Z, Ray Rae, Deja Ranks, Jacques, the Basement Society, the Prime Minister Wisdom, Da Sistazz, the Almighty C, King Solid, Baby T and Suave.

While all of Rapfest's artists are now based in Lincoln or Omaha, many did not grow up in Nebraska. Points of origin include Chicago, Mississippi, the Bahamas, Houston and the Bronx. But they all came to Lincoln for one reason or another,

many to attend UNL.

The artists also have different reasons for getting into rap music and for participating in Rapfest. Some will be there just for fun, while others see it as a step towards a career in rap.

Jerel Ford, a sophomore art major from Omaha also known as Flow E-Z, plans on making rap his profession. Ford said he had recorded some demos, but that his work hadn't appeared in record stores yet.

Ford is part of the duo Supreme Soloists. His partner is out of town at another college so he will perform alone Saturday.

"I didn't know there was a rap scene in Lincoln," Ford said, "but in Omaha there are shows every once in a while."

Another scheduled performer is Ernest Ray Jones, also known as Ray Rae.

Jones, a freshman architecture major, hails from Chicago, but he moved to Omaha when he was in junior high.

Jones, who plans to become an architect, not a rapper, said rap was a hobby for him.

"I just have fun," he said.

Jones said his influences included rappers Ice Cube, Snoop Doggy Dogg and MC Eiht. Consequently, his rhyme style leans toward the hardcore.

Barbershop duet

Lincoln hairdresser spends nights making 'soul-funk-lounge-type music'

By day — a mild-mannered hairdresser who takes a little off the side, shaves the neck and sends you on your way. By night — a soulful funkster, born to perform.

He is Tom Ficke, owner of Mr. Tom's Lincoln Hair. He is also the lead singer and bassist of the Tom Ficke Group, which will be appearing at The Edge on Saturday night.

Ficke, a Lincoln native, has been interested in music for quite some time. In fact, he said he originally intended to make it his career.

"When I started off, music was my direction. Eventually I decided to learn hair as a trade — to help support me while I did music on the side."

Ficke has cut hair for about six years, the last three in his own shop at

1417 O St.

Over the years Ficke has played in a number of local bands, as well as the Chicago-based group "Think Tree."

He met Richard Eggar Jr., when the two played together in the local band Bob Popular.

Nearly seven years later, the two continue to enjoy making music together. Eggar is the Tom Ficke Group's drummer and the only other member of the band.

Having only a bass guitar and drums makes for a distinct sound, Ficke said.

"It is really a unique brand of music," he said. "It is a kind of soul-funk-lounge-type music. It's very danceable — and it is fun to watch."

Ficke said he didn't want to compare the group's sound to any other bands.



"We have our own sound — there isn't a good comparison," he said.

The group performs all original material, Ficke said. He and Eggar work together to compose the music; then Ficke pens the lyrics.

"Most of the lyrics are improvised," he said. "Mostly they just happen — they come from the soul."

Ficke said the group was working on its first CD. He hopes to have it available for purchase in the near future.

Until then, fans will have to pay for a haircut — and hope he sings — or else catch the group live.

The band opens Saturday night's over-21 show at 9:30. Also scheduled to play are Straw Dog and Such Sweet Thunder. Cost is \$3.

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