

state

OF THE ARTS

By Ann Stack

## Trip-hop lends new pulse to music scene

OK kids, gather 'round. Aunt Annie's got a little tale to tell. Some wise words to pass on. Some hot air to blow. A yarn to spin. Some... OK, you get the point.

Last week I met a wise seer. She told me many things. She revealed to me secrets of the universe—how to draw blood from a stone, how to walk on water and how to remove grease stains from pants.

She told me the meaning of life in one sentence (but if you don't know, I'm not going to tell you).

She also told me to look for something very important and innovative coming to American music—the next new thing, the next big burrito.

She said that Darth Vader would come to me in a dream with the prophet David Lee Roth, and if I didn't listen to him he'd melt my brain and...oh wait. That wasn't me. That was George McFly in "Back To The Future." Never mind.

But in a way, that's valid, because it's all about electronics. It's the wave of the future. Even—no, especially—the music future.

My soothsayer lady called this new buzz of the underground "trip-hop." It's based on monotonous, repetitive pulsation on keyboards, basically. Call it a higher state of techno, if you will.

But trip-hop's not something you're going to hear on the radio—except maybe on 90.3-FM (KRNU). The next U2 album will be as mainstream as the genre is going to get.

Speaking of U2 and trip-hop, the band has a new member—Howie B—who owns the trip-hop label Pussyfoot. That's why, obviously, their next album will have elements of trip-hop.

I checked out trip-hop on the World Wide Web, which put me in touch with a Shane Mudgett, a hoser in Alberta, Canada, eh. He was very polite, despite the fact that I woke him up.

"Trip-hop's a psychedelic strain of hip-hop," he told me. He compared it to psychedelic '60s music, where musicians would play for a while, then switch themes in the middle of a song—so it's possible to have a song about love and hate at the same time.

But in the '60s, he said, there were words, so you didn't notice the changes in the music. Trip-hop has few vocals. But it's not fair to call it background music, like ambient, or acid jazz, or jungle or even techno.

So who are some trip-hop bands to look for? The ones most well-known on the scene are Portishead, Tricky and Massive Attack. Some ambient brothers of trip-hop would be the Underworld, the Orb, Orbital and the Chemical Brothers.

I doubt trip-hop will ever make it big in the mainstream corporate radio world of American music. But it's out there. And now, I hope you have a better idea of what it is you're listening to in the back room.

Stack is a senior news-editorial major and Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.



## Kiss prepared to rock 'n' roll all night in Nebraska Rock City quartet brings circus show to Omaha this week

By ANN STACK  
Senior Reporter

Sometimes things happen that can't be explained. Ross Perot. Arizona State. Dennis Rodman. A Kiss reunion.

But the gods of rock 'n' roll must have had divine intervention in mind for the Rock City quartet, because after more than a decade of separation, the original members of the legendary band are back together—and they're coming to Nebraska.

Kiss is bringing one of the best arena rock shows around to the Omaha Civic Auditorium tonight and Thursday at 7:30. Both shows are sold out.

Not only does the influential rock outfit have the original lineup back, but they're also back in full makeup and costume, with the complete pyrotechnic stage show.

"I'll never say never again," drummer Peter Criss said.

Criss left the band in 1980, vowing never to return.

"I didn't want to have anything to do with Kiss for the last 17 years," he said.

But all that changed when he took his 15-year-old daughter to a Kiss convention.

"I wanted her to see her dad's life," he said. "They (the band members) got wind that I was coming."

"We've known each other for 24 years and we bring that on stage. We're having the time of our lives."

PETER CRISS  
Kiss drummer

He met Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley for lunch, and they decided to hold an impromptu rehearsal.

"When we walked out on the stage, the place just went insane. Gene had a look in his eyes I haven't seen in years," he said. "Then we did MTV unplugged, and that was total magic."

He said there was talk of a reunion tour, but at that point, he still wasn't sure if he wanted to go through with it.

"I thought if we were ever going to do it again, it had to be now," he said. "I said if we do it, we have to do it 110 percent."

That meant hiring personal trainers to help the band get back into the Spandex. Criss said he worked out five hours a day, and then rehearsed on top of that.

"I'm in the best shape I've ever been in," he said. "We're doing five shows a week. We didn't even do that in our heyday."

Criss reasserted that he wanted the reunion to be even better than the band's original shows. He said the physical fitness of the members was just as important as the actual production.

"We didn't want to blow up people's dreams they've had over the last 17 years," he said. "We felt the worst thing would be for four old guys with bellies to come out. We had to be perfect."

The shows are even more intense than they were when the band was in its prime, Criss said, thanks to modern technology. The show includes a drum kit that levitates 148 feet in the air (instead of the original 16 feet), bombs, rockets and a flying Gene Simmons.

"We're like a circus," Criss said. "You gotta bring a safety belt, because it's one helluva roller coaster ride."

Criss said the success of the tour has surprised even the band members. Kiss is booked and sold out 'til 1997.

"It's insane. At the shows I see these five and 10-year-old kids with makeup on, and their parents are standing right behind them in makeup," he said. "We're pulling in a generation that wasn't even around. It's amazing—it's like we're reborn. We're bigger now than when we were first together."

And they're better friends, too. "We're getting along better now than we ever have," he said. "There are no poisons—it's out of our lives. We're more mature, more interesting and more focused."

"We've known each other for 24 years and we bring that on stage. We're having the time of our lives."

Kiss formed in 1972, with Simmons, Stanley, Criss and Ace Frehley. In 24 years, the band has produced 27 albums. Kiss has influenced everyone from Garth Brooks to the Gin Blossoms, and are showing an influence over a whole new set of future rockers.

The new generation of Kiss fans is a sign of the times, Criss said. People are tired of the whiny, angst-filled music from the first half of the decade and are ready for something new... or is that something old?

"I'm sick of hearing bands in plaid shirts sing about depression," he said. "I'm sick of it—rock 'n' roll should be a party."

And Kiss is a band that's determined to bring the party to the people. "If we can't find a place to play," he said, "we'll build it."