

Music school to present classic works

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ence." Bach mentions that the pieces are intended for music lovers and connoisseurs, Ritchie said.

"One could make a case for this as being the greatest collection of organ music ever written," he said. "He was out to show what he could do, with pieces as complex as he wrote for any medium."

Ritchie plays 12 of the 27 pieces contained in the collection. Though the works were not meant to be played together in one setting as a performing cycle, Ritchie said, they do fall into certain categories based on German

Lutheran hymns. Ritchie also enjoys the creativity involved in working with different instrumental colors.

"Because of the limited possibility of the change of dynamics, creativity comes in the rhythmic dimension," Ritchie said. "Where you place notes in time gives the illusion of dynamics. If you're doing it right, the listener hears loud and soft."

Ritchie, who is recording all the organ works of Bach, said that the pieces performed in Sunday's concert will be released in May as part of a two-CD set.

The Flint Hills Trio also performs Sunday. The 1 p.m. free concert in

Westbrook Recital Hall features chamber music from the Classical Period to the 20th Century.

Three professors from Emporia State University make up the guest ensemble. Clarinet player Priscilla Balasa, a native Nebraskan, is professor of clarinet, saxophone and music education.

The Flint Hills Trio is named after the Flint Hills of Kansas, where Emporia State University is located.

Allan Comstock plays the bassoon in the trio and is a professor of double reeds and director of orchestras. Pianist Marie Miller is chair of the music division at Emporia State University.

Band opts to splash into Omaha

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"Cracked Rear View."

"Cracked Rear View" went on to sell more than 13 million copies and won the band two Grammys—one for "Best New Artist," and one for "Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group With Vocal" for the song "Let Her Cry."

On top of all of this, "Cracked Rear View" spent eight weeks at number one on the national album chart, and a total of 55 weeks in the top 10.

In October 1995, the band had been on tour for almost five years; instead of taking a lengthy break, they opted to rush into recording their next album.

"Fairweather Johnson" was released earlier this year, and Rucker said that the album was darker than "Cracked Rear View."

"It's just how it came out," Rucker said. "It (the album) turned out to be what it was."

Rucker said when he sits down to write lyrics to songs, they frequently change into something else.

"Usually, you think about something, then listen to what you said and realize you weren't talking about what you thought were talking about," he said.

Hootie & The Blowfish recorded 30 songs for "Fairweather Johnson" and whittled it down to the 14 that are found on the album.

Rucker said he was sure the other tracks were "recorded and still in the vaults somewhere."

"We loved Omaha. It was one of those places that when I saw it wasn't on the summer schedule, I asked why it wasn't there."

DARIUS RUCKER

lead vocalist for Hootie & the Blowfish

On "Fairweather Johnson," not only did the band play a song with Toad The Wet Sprocket, it performed a song with singer Nanci Griffith. Two other songs with Griffith eventually made their way to "Sweet Relief II: The Songs of Vic Chestnut."

Rucker said that both Toad and Griffith were pleasures to work with.

"She (Griffith) is the sweetest, greatest, most beautiful person I know," Rucker said.

A few weeks ago, the band played with Toad the Wet Sprocket again — this time in Santa Barbara.

"It's funny how two bands can sound so different, and be such good friends," Rucker said. "It's always fun to work with them."

The band's current tour takes them through the United States, then back to Europe and Japan in December. When that leg of the tour is finished, Rucker said, the band will take a break.

"We're going to take like two years off. We've got homes. I'd like to see

mine," Rucker said.

Opening for the band Saturday is They Might Be Giants, who have achieved relative underground success. Their best-known singles are "Particle Man" and "Istanbul (Not Constantinople)."

Omaha's Civic Auditorium is a change of pace for Hootie & The Blowfish, who have been used to filling much larger auditoriums. Still, the Civic is a far cry from the small clubs the band played at the beginning of their career.

"They both have their good things," Rucker said. "Small clubs where everyone's up in your face are great, but we do that so rarely these days. They're both fun."

Even after six years of touring, Rucker said the band still savors playing live.

"We just want to have fun," he said. "We always do."

Saturday's show will begin at 8 p.m. Tickets are available for \$28.

Kiss revives good old days with familiar rock 'n' roll

By ANN STACK
Music Critic

OMAHA — Few bands around could get away with the type of show that Kiss puts on. They'd be laughed off the stage and blasted as a gaudy, overhyped production.

But this is Kiss, and Kisstory has shown that this band can do whatever it wants.

The sold-out show at the Civic Auditorium Wednesday night had an air of unreality to it — like it was a rockumentary unfolding right before your eyes.

The big hair, the makeup, the pyrotechnics, the classic rock 'n' roll all night, party ever day sentiment — it was everything politically incorrect about the '90s. And it was fabulous.

The 11,000-plus fans that were there thought so, too, judging by the crowd reaction. There was plenty of Kiss look-alikes, including Robert "Paul Stanley" Paul of Fridley, Minn., and his "Gene Simmons" sidekick Greg Nelson of Pierre, S.D.

The lipsticked, black-haired duo recently began a quest to take in as many shows of the reunion tour as possible — Omaha was their second. The pair looked so much like the originals (right down to the 7-inch spiked moon boots) they drew stares, whispers and gasps wherever they went.

The duo also posed for pictures for fans.

"They can say they met the next best thing," Paul said. The two are also in a Kiss tribute band, Strutter '79.

Royal Crown Revue opened the show, to a less than enthusiastic crowd response. But they knew what they were getting themselves into.

"Stick with us for 20 minutes, and then you'll get Kiss," lead singer Eddie Nichols said. "Pretend you're watching an old movie."

To their credit, RCR put on an

amazing show. They played to a packed house at Duffy's Tuesday, and hopefully the reception they got there helped to make up for the fact that people cheered the loudest when they announced the end of their set.

Kiss took the stage shortly after 9 p.m., playing "Duce" as the now-famous "Kiss" logo blazed in yellow lights behind them. They rocked as if 17 years hadn't passed, doing a set list that could've been — and probably was — straight from 1978.

One indication that things had come full circle was an 8-year-old girl with long brown hair holding on to her mother's hand and proudly wearing dad's Kiss "Love Gun" T-shirt.

Another sign of maturation on the band's part was Stanley's admonishment against drunken driving before launching into "Cold Gin."

So what is Kiss' appeal, after all these years?

The answer is simple. People like the escape, the theatrics, the magic. They want it.

Kids not even born when Peter Criss and Ace Frehley left the band and the makeup came off could sing all the lyrics perfectly.

Kiss' show is arena rock at its finest. The appeal is in the show itself — the spitting blood, the fire, the bombs — it's as raunchy and hardcore as it was 20 years ago, and probably just as much fun.

For their first encore, they sang "Detroit Rock City." Then Peter Criss came out and sat on a stool on stage, towel around his neck, and sang "Beth," simply and sweetly.

Lighters blazed, tears fell, and it was easy to understand why the band never did the song after Criss and Frehley left. They finished two hours after they started amid explosions and lights to "Rock and Roll All Nite."

Here's to hoping it doesn't take them another 17 years to come back this way again.

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