

Fairweather Fan

Hootie jams with Giants at concert

By CLIFF HICKS
Music Critic

OMAHA — The thing that sets Hootie & The Blowfish in a category of its own is Darius Rucker's voice.

At the show Saturday night, while Rucker's voice was a little poorly amplified, it still rang through Civic Auditorium.

Fans seemed extremely enthusiastic and continued to trickle in to the awkward seating while They Might Be Giants played its opening set.

TMBG snuck on as a tape of "Lady Is A Tramp" played over the speakers. Without warning, the band broke into "Istanbul (Not Constantinople)."

John Flansburgh, one of the two founding members, said to the audience, "If every one of you buys our record, I'm talking total life change here."

TMBG kept its set tight, clocking in under 45 minutes, a little shorter than a lot of the audience would have liked. Only three of the 10 songs played were not off the new album, which was also a bit disappointing, but the new material was great and the fans loved it.

One of the high points of the set was when Mark Bryan, lead guitarist from Hootie & The Blowfish, came out and played mandolin on "Spy," a giant improvisation conducted by John Linnell, the other founding member of TMBG.

The crowd went into an almost deafening cheer when Hootie & The Blowfish took the stage.

Hootie played for more than two hours, counting both encores. The sound quality started pretty poorly, but gradually improved.

When the band came on, Rucker's voice was almost non-existent and the guitar could've been the only instrument on stage. At the end of the show, before either of the encores, the sound quality was at a decent level. Rucker's voice was clear and fit into the whole scape of the band's sound.

Hootie played all of their big hits, from "Time" to "Tucker's Town." The best of the big hit songs was, of course, "Let Her Cry," which began with only Rucker and his acoustic guitar.

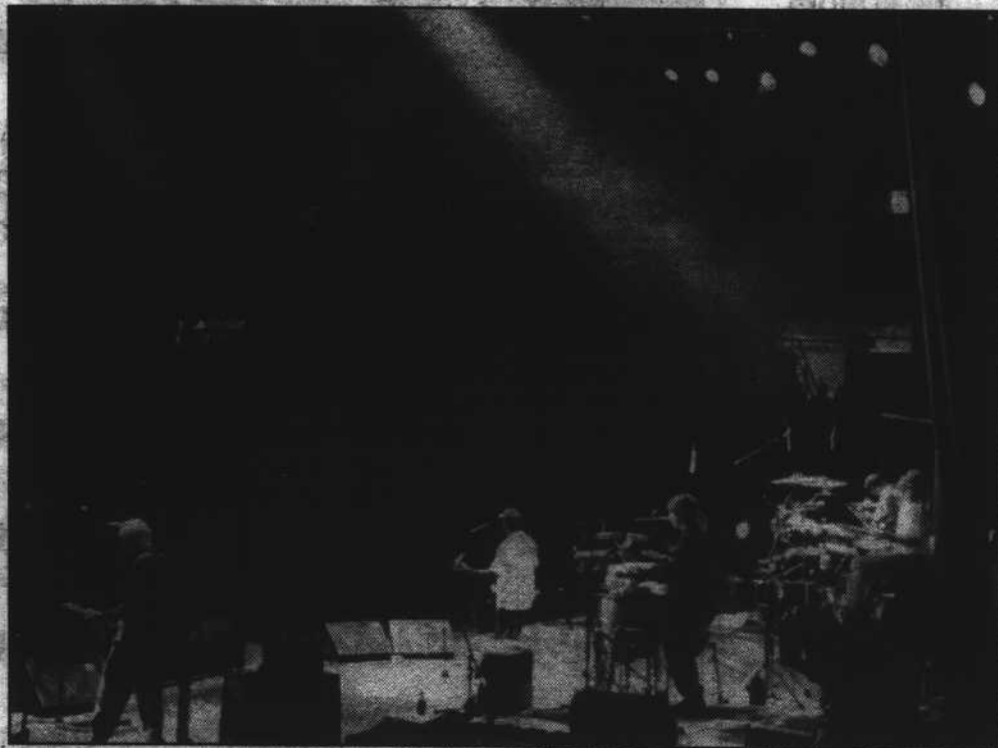
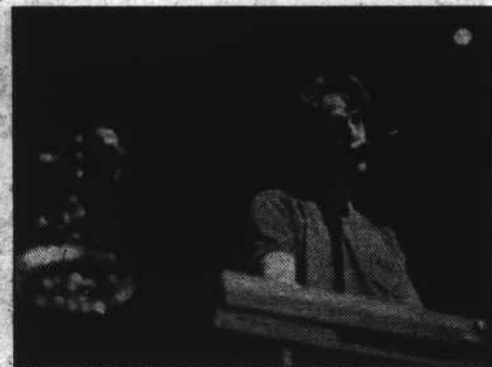
With swirled multicolored lighting, the band put on a really good show. Once the sound was cleared up, the band and the audience really got into a groove together. The band loved the show and the audience loved the band.

Some of the band seemed to be having the most fun, however, when they were playing other people's material — they played R.E.M.'s "Get Up" during the main show and during the second encore they jammed to The Surfaris' "Wipe Out."

By the end of the show, in addition to the band and Peter Holsapple, who played guitar, mandolin and keyboards the whole show, there were two additional drummers and the two horn members of They Might Be Giants. The show turned into one giant jam session.

The band even drank a shot on stage to their "good friends," They Might Be Giants. It was evident from that point on that the band was just cutting loose and enjoying themselves.

It was a fun show for both band and fans, and whenever either of these bands returns to the Heartland, they will probably be welcomed with open arms.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Mark Bryan, guitarist for Hootie & the Blowfish, fires off a jazzy riff. Playing the accordion, Peter Holsapple adds to the sound that filled the Omaha Civic Auditorium Saturday evening. They Might Be Giants co-founder John Linnell helped open the evening concert. Hootie & the Blowfish made the audience stand and dance to the rhythm. Darius Rucker, the lead singer for Hootie and the Blowfish, sings to the near-sellout crowd.

Photos by
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