

LOS STRAITJACKETS

Viva!

Nashville quartet to perform instrumental surf rock 'n' roll

BY CLIFF HICKS
Staff Reporter

Concert Preview

Instrumental surf rock being played by guys in Mexican wrestling masks – need we really say more?

Tonight, the frantic Los Straitjackets will play Knickerbockers, 901 O St., at 10.

Formed in 1994, the Nashville quartet aimed to be something different, something they definitely have accomplished. In addition to having no vocals, the band literally has no stage face – merely the Mexican masks they wear.

"We're just trying to be entertaining on stage. That's why we wear them," guitarist Danny Amis said.

"We put

together something that we all thought would look really cool. Rock 'n' roll isn't supposed to be that deep, I think."

All of this instant recognition does have its downside, though, Amis said – anonymity after shows.

"After the show, with the masks off, no one knows we're in the band, so we miss out on all the compliments and other bonuses that come with being in a rock 'n' roll band," Amis said.

In addition to Amis, guitarist Eddie Angel, bassist Scott Esbeck and drummer L. J. Lester comprise Los Straitjackets. The balance of two distinct guitarists, both of whom have very different influences, gives the

band that balance between several layers of sound.

"Danny and I play different grooves, but there's great chemistry between us," Angel added. "It's intangible. I honestly have no idea how it works. All I know is that we can't force it."

As for why there are no words, Los Straitjackets are quick to point out their reasons.

"Seventy-five percent of the world's music is all instrumental," Angel said. "Do you think anyone misses lyrics in a Coltrane or Mozart piece?"

Los Straitjackets also has gotten its share of famous fans, from Quentin Tarantino to the members of Pearl Jam to Tom Petty.

The band is currently on tour for its second album, "¡Viva Los Straitjackets!" and has appeared on Late Night with Conan O'Brien. Tickets for the show are \$7.



MATT HANEY AND AARON STECKELBERG/DN



PHOTO COURTESY OF FISHBONE
FUNKMASTERS FISHBONE will play with Omaha homeboys 311 7:30 p.m. Sunday at Westfair Amphitheatre in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Fishbone opens 311's return home

BY PATRICK MINER
Music Critic

Concert Preview

Be prepared to jump up and down 'cause that's the 311 and Fishbone style.

Former Omaha band 311 and Los Angeles-based Fishbone will bring their hard-to-describe sounds to Westfair Amphitheater in Council Bluffs, Iowa, Sunday. The show begins at 7:30 p.m.

The multidimensional sounding 311 is making its first return to the area since the June 1996 show at the Mancuso Convention Center in Omaha. Since its last stop, 311 has garnered much attention – courtesy of plentiful MTV and radio airplay of their breakthrough single "Down," from its 1995 compact disc "311."

The band followed up that song with another modern rock hit, "All Mixed Up." This complemented an already abundant word-of-mouth grass-roots following.

With the success of "Down" and "All Mixed Up," 311 found itself touring extensively in '96 and early '97, instead of releasing a record and continuing its album-per-year trend.

Although the band released a four-song supplement to the "Enlarged to Show Detail" video, released Nov. 5, it took until Aug. 5 for its follow-up to the double platinum "311."

The band's fourth Capricorn album and seventh in the '90s, "Transistor" features 21 new tracks, as well as a new sound for the band.

The album features less rapping and more harmonizing than previous releases. Standout songs include "Beautiful Disaster," "The Continuous Life," "Rub A Dub" and second, and current, single "Prisoner."

The album wasn't exactly critically acclaimed, as it was bashed by most major magazine distributions for

being uncreative. The reviews didn't hurt record sales, however, as "Transistor" debuted on the Billboard Top 200 at No. 4.

At an Aug. 9 show at Denver's Red Rocks, 311 played 26 songs, 16 of them from 1993's "Music" and 1994's "Grassroots." Only five were from the new album.

The song selection made it clear the band chose to perform their standard, hard-driven show instead of playing several tracks from the new album. However, with more than a month since the album's release, the band could very well play more of "Transistor" since the Omaha fans have had a longer time to listen to it than the Red Rocks fans.

Although 311 has enjoyed some considerable recent success, the past year hasn't been as eventful for Fishbone. However, the band has enjoyed long-term success that 311

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