

Posse ringleader of show

Ranch Bowl plays host to urban circus

BY PATRICK MINER
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COURTESY PHOTO
REJECTED BY DISNEY but adored in Nebraska, Insane Clown Posse makes yet another showing in the Cornhusker State. The group plays Omaha's Ranch Bowl with opening acts Kottonmouth Kings and Phunk Junkeez.

Clowning around encouraged. Fronted by clown-faced Violent J and Shaggy 2 Dope, the Insane Clown Posse returns to Omaha's Ranch Bowl, 1600 S. 72nd St., tonight for an outside-in-the-sand performance that is sure to hinder volleyball action for at least a few days.

Also featuring the Kottonmouth Kings, Phunk Junkeez and Twiztid, tonight's all-ages show begins at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25.50.

ICP, a Detroit-based "horror-rap" band, is known for spouting foul language and numerous bottles of Faygo-brand soda on its crowd. While dodging bad pop and tossed bottles may seem absurd to many concert-goers, ICP has never done anything as expected.

Insane Clown Posse is the first band to have an album debut in the Billboard Top 200 twice in a five-week period. The band released "The Great Milenko" on Hollywood Records in July '97, but hours later it was pulled off the shelves because it was considered obscene by label standards. Still, the record sold enough copies in the short period of time to debut at No. 63.

On Aug. 23, 1997, the album was re-released by Island Records featuring three tracks not included on the original version. The new version of the record debuted at No. 66 and sold more than 18,000 copies.

Although the band has taken numerous hits from critics, ICP has gained considerable popularity, or more likely, infamy. After playing in front of a small capacity Ranch Bowl crowd in October 1997, the band played the much larger Royal Grove in Lincoln last April to a near-capacity crowd.

The Kottonmouth Kings, best known for their mini-hit "Suburban Life" from the "Scream 2" soundtrack, will also appear. The band's mix of hip-hop and rock is best featured on its latest release, "Royal Highness."

The Kings' raw style seemed out of place at a previous Ranch Bowl show, when the act appeared with the Urge, 2 Skinnee J's and Sprung Monkey on July 8. The crowd was more of the light-hearted type, so the Kottonmouth Kings performed to little applause. However, tonight's crowd should suit the act much better, with ICP looking to draw in fans eager to listen to more con-

troversial music.

The Phunk Junkeez are also back at the Ranch Bowl for the second time since July. The band is on the road in support of its new album, "Fear of a Wack Planet," released July 14.

The Phunk Junkeez are an odd choice to play with ICP and Kottonmouth Kings. Their funky riffs and party-friendly vibes may not be best suited for "horror-rap" fans, but the band does enjoy widespread appeal from other music fans. Based on the lineup, the crowd should be just as interesting as the show. Bring your camera.



Phunk Junkeez
"Fear Of A Wack Planet"
Trauma Records
Grade: C+

It's about time.

After promising an album release in March '97 at an Omaha show two years ago, the past summer saw the long awaited, but confusing, release of "Fear Of A Wack Planet" by Phoenix's Phunk Junkeez.

The album leads off with its best track, "Million Rappers." It's the type of party song every funk-rap band wished it had, carrying a strong chorus with Soulman's lyrics changing up nicely halfway through. With the Phunk Junkeez standard guitar by Jeff O'Rourke and DJ Roachclip's quality cuts on the turntable, it's a perfect song to lead off the typical PJs record.

The only problem is this isn't a typical album for the band. This time around, the Phunk Junkeez have added a lot of extra background cuts to lay out a much softer sound. Unfortunately, on songs such as "In the Dirt," and "Party People," additional samples simply

make the songs annoying.

Also, while the Phunk Junkeez standard of funky guitar and bass are still evident, the choruses of "Wack Planet" aren't as lively as those on the band's previous album, "Injected." Because of this, the chorus of "Party People" is too close to something from the Bloodhound Gang, and "Downtown" is much too similar to the Fun Lovin' Criminals style. Even when the band has a decent verse going, such as the rapping on "Problems," they ruin it with a messed-up chorus.

Other songs, such as "My Reality" and "Once Again," sound decent but seem to lose a lot from the live setting. Although "Once Again" has become one of the biggest crowd-pleasers at Phunk Junkeez shows, it is hindered on the album by too many background noises that take away from the strong grooves of the song.

There are some positive aspects of the record, though. A remake of "Phunky Phunky," a track from the band's self-titled debut record stands out, due especially to the inclusion of DJ Roachclip singing the verses instead of former member K-Tel Disco. Also, the plain and pure punk song "Deadbeat" is a quality track.

In the end, vocalist Soulman just sounds a little too bored on this album. The Phunk Junkeez aren't the most talented band around, but they can't pass without making people shake their butts. Listeners will expect the Phunk Junkeez to excite, but this album doesn't do that.

-Patrick Miner

Dropped Notes

Windy City bands blow into Lincoln

■ Three groups, known for their live acts, play Knickerbockers tonight.

Knickerbockers, 901 O St., will once again offer a combination of local and national rock 'n' roll with an all-ages show from 6 to 9 p.m. tonight.

The concert showcases two bands from Chicago, Lustre King and Sweep the Leg Johnny, as well as Lincoln's own Erik the Red.

If nothing else, the show promises to be interesting. Sweep the Leg Johnny is known for intense live shows as well as a unique brand of music - rock 'n' roll hooks heavy on the drums and saxophone.

Lustre King, also visiting from the Windy City, claims a loud and busy instrumental rock show and also has been known to go crazy on stage.

Bringing Lincoln fans a local angle on tonight's rock-a-thon is Erik the Red, a band comprising former members of Sideshow, Lullaby for the Working Class and Eamon. The group's sound is heavy on rhythm and melody and sports some downright poetic lyrics.

Tickets are \$4.

Lumberjacks carve niche at state fair

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Stolze finished him off in the finale.

Afterwards, Stolze appeared enthused about defeating Salzman in the log-rolling competition, particularly since he placed fifth in the event behind Salzman in July's Lumberjack World Championships. Stolze's professional log-rolling career spans 10 years, and this year, alone, he and the other lumberjacks performed at 15 different fairs and festivals.

"We try to show the people of America the importance of the lumberjacks who built this great country," Stolze said. "Seeing the spectators enjoy the shows is tremendous for me because I'm showing them a bit of the history of America."

All of the competitions performed by the lumberjacks directly descend from the working day skills of the old-time lumberjacks, Stolze said.

"Not only is the show entertaining, it's also educational," he said. "It's a family packed half-hour of fun, for any age."

And people of any age can compete. Father and son team, Matt and Jim Freeman, competed against 37-year-old Jim O'Dell. When O'Dell isn't performing in lumberjack shows, he's a forester in Hominy Falls, W.Va. Since West Virginia is the third-most-forested state in the union, O'Dell has lived among heavily wooded areas for most of

his life.

"I always enjoyed chopping, using axes and sharp tools. I was a lumberjack, and I worked in the woods with axes and did things similar to the competitions," O'Dell said.

Even though he didn't compete in the log-rolling event because he lacks the adequate footwork, O'Dell, with biceps bigger than tree trunks, schooled two of the younger lumberjacks, Stolze and Salzman, in the ax-throwing competition. O'Dell defeated them in three-round affair by tossing two bulls-eyes and another that nearly missed.

O'Dell said ax-throwing was a skill he acquired through his years of being a lumberjack.

"It takes awhile to learn the skill. It's an art," he said.

In its first year at the Nebraska State Fair, the Great American Lumberjack Show enjoyed large crowds, which should encourage the lumberjacks to return to the Cornhusker State in 1999.

"If the response is good at this year's fair, maybe we'll bring a 60-foot climbing tree to next year's (fair)," Salzman said.

The Great American Lumberjack Show runs three times daily at the East Exhibit Area of fairgrounds, with each show consisting of 30-minute competitions. On the weekends and Labor Day, the show can be seen at noon, 3 and 6 p.m., and on weekdays at 3, 6 and 8 p.m.

'Top secret' party honors Bill Gates

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) - They wore sunglasses in the pouring rain. A few blew kisses or waved to the common folk. Bodyguards stood by while trinkets were purchased in gift shops.

More than 500 of the world's most famous, well-to-do and well-connected flew in to Alaska's capital Friday for a "top secret" party aboard a posh cruise ship. It was being thrown by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen for fellow billionaire Bill Gates.

On hand were Candice Bergen, James Cameron, Debbie Reynolds, Dan Aykroyd and Jeff Goldblum, among others. In addition to rafting and shopping, the stars had to brave an unexpected rainstorm with wind gusts up to 70 mph.

Guests arrived on 20 or so planes, most of which stayed far from the passenger terminal. Guests were whisked by bus to the Crystal Harmony, a 960-passenger cruise ship rented for an undisclosed price to cruise Glacier Bay and the Inside Passage.

Carrie Fisher bought a sweat-shirt and a Russian lacquer box. Gates browsed but didn't buy at the Alaska Fur Gallery, while director Penny Marshall got so caught up buying furs that she delayed the ship's departure.

Rapper assaults fans

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) - A rap artist went on the run after police charged him with assaulting an unhappy fan.

Noreaga, whose real name is Vincent Santiago, was booted off the stage at the Zombo Mosque after one song Friday night, said Harrisburg Police Det. William Jackson, who was off duty and working as a security guard at the concert.

Jackson said the rapper, who was four hours late, criticized fans as having "no money" and being "a sorry crowd."

Angry fans followed Santiago to the parking lot. Police said one person threw a bicycle at the rapper's car, and then Santiago and his bodyguard beat up 16-year-old Clinton Burns. Burns was treated for his injuries and released.

Authorities tried to arrest Santiago at his hotel, but found that he had already checked out. Police consider him a fugitive.

Santiago is perhaps best known as half of the musical group Capone-N-Noreaga, whose songs include "Stick You" and "War Report."

Cocker no-show for concert

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP) - Joe Cocker's fans were anything but feelin' all right when the British singer's show at the Toledo Zoo Amphitheater was washed out.

The sellout crowd of 4,500 sat in a steady rain for nearly two hours Friday night, waiting in vain for the Grammy-winning rocker to take the stage.

The crowd heard the opening act, Rick Springfield, but then there was nothing. And promoters didn't explain what was happening, audience members said.

"A little communication would have been nice. We asked the security guards, but they didn't know anything," said Kim Dietrich, who made the hour drive from her home in Napoleon, Ohio.

Cocker, who has sung hits for movies such as "An Officer and a Gentleman" and "9½ Weeks," began his career in the late '60s with covers of "Feelin' Alright" and "With a Little Help From My Friends."