

fULL-bLoWn **KISS**

*Band to revisit
Omaha for tour*

By **JASON HARDY**
Senior staff writer

It's been almost 30 years since four dirty kids formed what would be one of the most influential and successful bands in rock 'n' roll history.

The Beatles notwithstanding, of course. Since their first show in 1972, Paul Stanley, Peter Criss, Ace Frehley and the legendary blood-spitting Gene Simmons have carved their group's name into rock 'n' roll history. And they've got the paraphernalia to prove it.

Vintage '70s KISS merchandise goes for big bucks now and includes make-up kits, masks, board games, pinball machines, comic books and even a full-length sci-fi movie, "KISS Meet The Phantom of the Park." Add that to the countless hits and platinum albums, a live show dubbed by many as "the greatest rock 'n' roll show ever on Earth" and other feats, including the release of four solo albums, one by each member, on the same day in 1978, and it's easy to see why KISS is such an institution. It seems it's done just about everything.

Until now. This Wednesday, KISS will once again assure its place by coming to the Omaha Civic Auditorium, 1804 Capitol Ave., with its groundbreaking "Psycho-Circus" tour. The tour is in support of the group's "Psycho Circus" album, which marks its first new studio album in 18 years, and incorporates cutting-edge three-dimensional technology into KISS' already legendary and extravagant live show.

Via three gigantic screens and a number of eye-scorching visual effects, KISS plans to bombard fans with a two-hour blitzkrieg of explosive images.



ORIGINAL GLAM ROCKERS KISS are reuniting for a worldwide tour in support of its first album in 18 years, "Psycho Circus."

COURTESY PHOTO

The "Psycho-Circus" tour features all four original members and was prompted after the success of the 1996-97 KISS reunion tour, which sold out two Omaha shows in October of 1996. According to an official press release, KISS bassist and rock 'n' roll icon Gene Simmons seems to think even the most experienced mem-

bers of the KISS army will be blown away by the band's current tour. For these and all KISS fans, Simmons has a message.

"We're going to take our live performance and raise the stakes yet again with in-your-face 3-D technology. We're gonna spoil you. The next time you go see a band, you're gonna be bored no mat-

ter how much you like the band, because they're just gonna stand there and strum, and we're gonna take you away. There's no limit to what we can do."

Tickets for Wednesday's show are available for \$33 at Omaha's Civic Auditorium and Ticketmaster outlets.

Comic 'Carol' lacks emotion

■ Despite some good acting, the play doesn't possess Christmas spirit.

By **LIZA HOLTMEIER**
Staff writer

Forget the miserly, old Scrooge we all love to hate.

Actor Bill McCauley's Scrooge was endearing even in his most cantankerous episodes.

McCauley portrayed the mean-spirited grouch in the play "A Christmas Carol," a collaboration between the Lied Center and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. The play, a biennial production performed mostly by UNL theater students, ran for four performances this weekend.

Since the show only comes around every two years, it's easy to forget or embellish the ghost of past productions.

But though this year's production maintained a more fluid pace, it still lacked the overwhelming spirit of Christmas championed in the 1996 performance.

McCauley's performance proved to be the show's redeeming element. As a professional actor, McCauley's experience helped him give Scrooge a sense of naturalness and spontaneity.

With his stooped posture and cantankerous tone of voice, McCauley brought the coarse old Scrooge to life. His cacophony of "Bahs!" and "Humbugs!" lent the role more



MATT MILLER/DN

BOB CRATCHIT (KRISTOPHER KLING) hugs Mrs. Cratchit (Amy Rafa) before enjoying their Christmas dinner. Tiny Tim Cratchit (Christopher Creveling) sits on the table.

humor than in the past, lightening the play's often doomsdayish tone.

Nebraska state Sen. David Landis provided the character of Dickens with a bit more spunk and charisma, as well. As the narrator, Landis helped to pep up the play's tempo, moving the scenes along with a jovial, jocular delivery.

But though the play benefited from the comic talents of these two men, it failed to achieve the sentimental mood of the holidays.

While some of the characters profited from the lighter tone, others failed to rise above it. Several characters substituted slapstick comedy and farcical acting for the traditionally

deeper, more moving interpretations. The comedy also cheapened the sense of fear that should accompany Scrooge's redemption. The audience never saw a truly evil Scrooge. Instead, it saw a man lovable because of his eccentric foibles.

When Scrooge confronted the grave bearing his name, all sense of imminent damnation was lost.

While McCauley's Scrooge was delightful to watch as a slightly more comical character, other actors were unable to achieve the precarious balance of humor and spiritual sobriety.

Please see **CAROL** on 17

Grasshopper Takeover returns from West Coast

By **SARAH BAKER**
Senior staff writer

He says he's not a sell-out.

And he's got the chance to prove it with his first hometown show since his departure from the Midwest.

Curtis Grubb, vocalist for native Omaha band Grasshopper Takeover, said even though his band has moved to Los Angeles, he still has just as much pride for his home state as ever.

"I am very excited to come back to Nebraska," Grubb said Sunday in a phone interview from his Los Angeles home. "We miss Omaha and we miss our friends. It's been grand out here, but it's also been harder than shit."

Grasshopper Takeover, an alternative pop trio, left its hometown about three months ago to try its luck at making it in the big leagues.

Grubb said the band has stuck to the same formula it has always used since it moved to California. The band has plans in the works to get a new recording project under way, and also plans to begin a national tour in March of '99.

The band's Dec. 23 show marks its first live performance in Omaha since it left the state. It will follow it up with another live show on Christmas night.

Grubb said things are taking off fast for the band, and its music is "well-received" in the Golden State.

"In a nutshell, things are going very, very, very well," he said. "We are work-

ing our ass off to get in the loop out here. I wasn't expecting it to go this quick, but I think it's a testament to our commitment and drive to make something happen."

Grasshopper Takeover isn't the only Omaha band to embark on a quest for greatness on the West Coast.

The most obvious comparison is to reggae-rap funk outfit 311, which has pursued a musically different agenda, and also left Nebraska to try to become the next big thing after achieving success in the Midwest.

311 has been accused by many Omaha music followers as "selling out." In interviews, 311 has claimed it is California-based, and has been known to disclaim its Nebraska roots, something that was a definite turn off to many who hail from the Cornhusker state.

Grubb said he felt the comparisons between 311 and his band were valid, but added that he didn't think either band was ashamed of its roots.

"We are not following in their footsteps, but like them, we decided we needed to make things happen rather than waiting for it to come to us," he said. "We have never turned our back on the state. The bottom line is that people are going to say things, but whatever, if they want to talk, let them."

Grubb said he had no negative or

Please see **TAKEOVER** on 17

"We are working our ass off to get in the loop out here."

CURTIS GRUBB
Grasshopper Takeover vocalist