

OPINION PAGES

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Our VIEW

Where's our music? Corporate merger will hurt bands, fans

When corporations start to lose money and downsizing hits the fan, the 40-hour-work-week folks tend to be the first ones to get the pink slips.

The record industry is losing money, and as a result, downsizing has begun in the big-bucks and tight-pants set. A recently announced \$10.4 billion merger between Polygram and Universal Music has sent waves through the industry, and a whole bunch of 40-hour-work-week folks certainly will face the chopping block soon.

But on a more visible plane, several artists who are the equivalent of working-class will be without record labels.

The effects of this new type of downsizing have yet to be seen, but most industry soothsayers believe it won't be good.

According to the latest issue of "Rolling Stone," about three-fourths of the labels' artist rosters for 1998 will be dropped.

That's a lot of out-of-work bands, and a lot of shelved new releases.

It won't be a massacre by any means.

Many of the artists will most likely head for the slightly less green pastures of independent labels, and others will opt to release their albums on their own.

Many of these artists will receive pay cuts, and some less-resilient bands may choose to dissolve rather than soldier on.

The real casualties of this recording industry jumble will come further down the line — in the stores. More specifically for the music fans who don't have the good fortune of living in a major-market metropolitan area.

You may think it's hard to find the latest release by your favorite non-Top-40 band now. Just imagine the horrific quest you will be forced to undertake in a few short months when that band is on the roster of a company with two or three employees and strictly mail-order distribution.

If you live in Norfolk and you don't particularly care for Celine Dion, you may be out of luck.

If you live anywhere in Nebraska outside of Omaha and have less-than-conventional music tastes, you may be out of luck.

When your only option for new music is the local Wal-Mart, your choices are already limited. In the coming months, those choices will dwindle significantly.

So the record industry's latest attempt to increase profits and drop the dead-weight artists — the ones who don't move millions of units — has hurt the artists, the employees and the countless fans who keep the industry afloat.

It's not too surprising, but it still hurts. We'll know how much it hurts soon enough.

Lupo's VIEW



DN LETTERS

Celebrate King's message

I can understand Professor Harbison's frustration with what he refers to as "diversity." There are examples of failed attempts to establish equality everywhere. However, I feel it necessary to defend King day celebrations.

We celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day because of what he did to help bring freedom and equality. Since these ideals are still far from being achieved, it is crucial to have some reminder of how important it is to keep striving. We need a reminder and an inspiration. Martin Luther King Jr. provides that inspiration. He is celebrated as a civil rights leader and martyr, not as a writer or scholar. Focusing on his failings as a writer only diminishes the more important message that society can be improved, even if the effort begins with just one person.

Society can't afford to lose the role model and inspiration King can be to so many people. Leave the study of King's papers to the appropriate scholars, and leave the celebration of his life and dream to a society that is still in need of much improvement.

Efthimia Papastavros
graduate student
geosciences

Don't make war

I was reading over the meetings section of the classified advertisements on the last page of the Jan. 19th edition when something disturbing caught my eye. An ad read: "College Republicans: Declaring war on the Campus Left. Come enlist in the Right side." I had to reread this in shock. Declare war?! If there is something all Americans can learn from the mess in Washington, it's that no one wins when sides are at war with each other. Throwing insults and threats around does no good. I will admit I am a registered Democrat, but I also see the importance in working together, compromising and learning from everyone and everything. The same day I read this, Republican Congressman Steve Largent of Oklahoma reminded the country after the State of the Union that the word Congress comes from two Latin words: walk together. I don't mean this as an attack on those who wrote this, but I do hope we as college students can lead a trend away from partisan politics and toward politics that reflect and focus on ideals and improvements, not anger and scandal. We are the

generation that will control the 21st century; let's make it a good one filled with hope and change!

Amanda McGill
freshman
broadcasting

A rejoice

What a whoosh of fresh air to read J.J. Harder's words in "Moral Decline." Hallelujah, a young man with his head screwed on straight and his mind clear as cascade. Now if everyone would just read this column, and put on their thinking caps for five minutes! We might get a movement going. I hope he starts one. J.J., God bless you and much success to you.

Lisa Bennett
Seward

And a condemnation

So, J.J. Harder loves the 1950s ("Moral decline," DN 1/20/99), an era of segregation and open discrimination.



against women and ethnic, racial and religious minorities. We have a long way to go to achieve genuine diversity in our university, our state and our country, but when comparing the 1990s with the 1950s, I find it easy to determine which decade can be called morally corrupt.

Andrea Shahan
University of Nebraska Press

Capital commentary

Thanks to the DN for a well-written editorial in the (1/13) edition regarding Nebraska's illogical use of capital punishment. However, I find Josh Connelly's letter (1/14) to the editor quite outdated.

Killing a suspected criminal on the scene of a crime immediately following the event is hazardous to everything America stands for. With that logic, we should resurrect Hitler, set up camps and just kill each other. A society of that nature has obviously lost all means of civility and control.

This is the United States, where everyone is guaranteed freedom and opportunities. Replacing appeals with Connelly's system would rewind America to an age of Neanderthals.

Interestingly, Connelly also brings God's judgment into the death penalty issue. Being raised Catholic, I cannot see Jesus flipping the switch that would send volts of electricity into another human being, an act that would totally recant what his life and teachings were actually about.

Jesus himself was a victim of capital punishment, and if they would have had electric chairs during his time, we would see chairs on the top of every church instead of crosses!

When we live in an age where 50 percent of murder victims are minorities, but 82 percent of the people we execute have murdered whites (Death Penalty Information Center, Washington, D.C., 1996), that's a problem. We live in an age where people are judged on the amount of money they make. Try to find a death row inmate who makes the salary of Donald Trump or O.J. Simpson.

Mr. Connelly, you have no right to judge who should live and who should die in our society.

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