

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

retrospective

Rock should see rebirth in next years

By CHRISTOPHER HEINE
Senior staff writer

Hip-hop is king; its future looks like gold records.

For now, all we have to do is watch as its walls become more cluttered with them.

Rock 'n' roll is the castle drunk, not sure where to stumble next.

If the past year is any indication, rock doesn't seem quite ready for self-recovery. A little counseling is in order.

Hey rock 'n' roll, let's talk about your problems.

Confusion and headaches have dominated your psyche since grunge tried to give everyone brain piercings in the early 1990s.

Subsequently, reports of slow retail have given you a consistent hangover.

International businessmen in three-piece suits and independent upstarts have been wondering when you'd get a moment of clarity.

Because of your short-term decisions, your best friends — customers — have also been in an uncomfortable fog.

A slew of can-of-worms questions have made modern music fans quiver with insecurity:

Rock 'n' roll, are you dead again? Does hip-hop have enough fertile soil left to take even more of your territory? Besides Hell, what could possibly be next for you?

Your biggest problem lies with pop-rock executives. They try to start bands in the stratosphere instead of on the ground.

They've allowed tours and hard-won fanfare to become obsolete methods of gaining a following.

In the last half of the 1990s, major-label marketing strategy has been dubiously simplified to spending a fortune on an MTV-friendly video and hoping for a quick return.

Worse yet, finding true artistic talent has been replaced by the search for bad party bands.

Building a grass-roots fan base now means signing 311 sound-alikes who perform marijuana lyrics.

Rock 'n' roll, you haven't completely lost your pulse. However, there are symptoms to your sickness.

FM radio, for the most part, doesn't play modern rock. It relies on flocks of post-mortem bands such as Journey or the Eagles — or Flocks of Seagulls for that matter — to cover the airwaves because rock creativity is at a lull.

Hip-hop reigns because of such ineptness and your executives' inability to reinvent and compete.

No matter how bad your heroin thing got back in the late 1970s, you didn't have much competition to take advantage of it. (For Pete's sake, rock 'n' roll, everyone knew disco was just a fad.)

Times have changed.

MTV has replaced your old drinking buddy, radio, as the influential marketing source. And hip-hop is now as

Please see MUSIC on 14



FRESHMAN SARAH HARRIS and classmates stretch on the balance bar in Ballet III/IV class. The dance program has been in a state of limbo this past academic year as it is in transition between the theater department and the music department.

RICK TOWNLEY/DN

Dance program sees through major flux

By LIZA HOLTMEIER
Senior staff writer

Despite a year of transitions, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln dance program experienced a year of growth and renewed optimism, dance faculty said.

"There were some bumps and bruises along the way," said Lisa Fusillo, a UNL professor of dance. "In light of the difficulties, I think we came out shining."

Richard Durst, dean of the College of Fine and Performing Arts, said he had heard fewer rumblings of discontent from the dance program.

"Usually when I don't hear something, it's usually pretty good news," Durst said.

Throughout the year, the dance program existed in suspended limbo between departments. The program, which used to be under the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, began its move to the School of Music during the fall semester of 1998.

The move resulted from budget cuts in the College of Fine and Performing Arts. Under the School of Music, the dance program should attain more funding stability.

Despite the uncertainty of the program, much of the students' optimism came from the hiring of two new dance faculty, Kelly Holcombe and Julie Kane. As is to be expected, students took awhile adjusting to the styles and methods of Kane and Holcombe. By the end of the first semester, Kane said, rapport between the new faculty and the students had grown.

Sara Schmid, a senior dance major, said Kane and Holcombe were instrumental in turning the morale of the dance majors around.

"They brought our attitudes up," Schmid said. "They refocused our minds on dancing rather than what was going to happen to our program."

Both women have been given an offer to fill the same positions next year. Kane has declined, opting to return to San Francisco to dance professionally.

"I have to follow my heart and not just my wal-

let," Kane said.

Schmid said the students would miss Kane, but were happy to see her return to performing.

"She's been talking about how she misses it," Schmid said.

With Kane's announcement aside, the students said they hoped Holcombe would choose to stay. Holcombe has not decided if she will return, although she said she would like to come back.

Megan Dant, a sophomore dance major, said the dance majors were nervous about more new faculty members.

"The new faculty always turn out good, but you have to go through a period where you don't know them. You have to adjust all over again," Dant said.

Kane said she hoped the dance majors could turn the changes into a positive experience.

"I hope they can see it as, 'We are going to get another layer to put on the cake,'" Kane said. "It's yet another view, another flavor of what dance can be."

Another change for the dance program involves next year's new freshman dance majors.

This semester, the Academic Senate passed a proposal to change the dance major from a bachelor of fine arts to a bachelor of arts, Durst said.

The new degree will place more emphasis on liberal arts courses. It is geared toward students who are more likely to graduate and teach dance as opposed to perform.

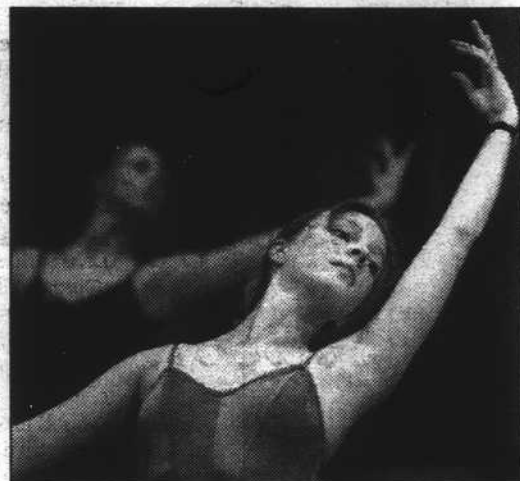
While the dance majors remained optimistic this year, dance faculty members said a feeling of instability still exists.

They are still uncertain when they will officially become a part of the School of Music.

Durst said the request had been forwarded to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs' office. That office will then pass it on to the Academic Senate, which will forward it to the University of Nebraska Board of Regents.

"We don't know what the future is. We hardly know what the present is," Fusillo said.

"Sometimes, I wonder if my key will fit tomor-



BETSY ERICKSON, a senior human resource management major, dances in Ballet III/IV class.

RICK TOWNLEY/DN

row," added Lynne Nevin, a part-time dance faculty member.

Without an official department, the dance faculty are sometimes unsure where to take their concerns.

"None of us has answers to certain issues and problems, because it's all new," Fusillo said. "With the addition of two new faculty, we were all jumping in at the same time."

"When everyone jumps in with two feet at the same time, the water goes over your head."

The ambiguities of the situation sometimes created overlapping responsibilities, Fusillo said, but did not affect the program's success.

"Everyone got on with their jobs," Fusillo said. Schmid said she felt the administration was more supportive of the dance program's concerns this year.

Durst said the College of Fine and Performing Arts was taking the program's request for a new dance floor very seriously.

"We are looking for ways to increase the program's operating budget to fix the floor," Durst said. "We just have to get something done about that. We need to reduce the chance of injury for both the students and the faculty."

The addition of a new floor bears a promise of hope for the program's future. Given the commitment of students, faculty and administration, the dance program's fate seems to be a promising one despite the current questions.