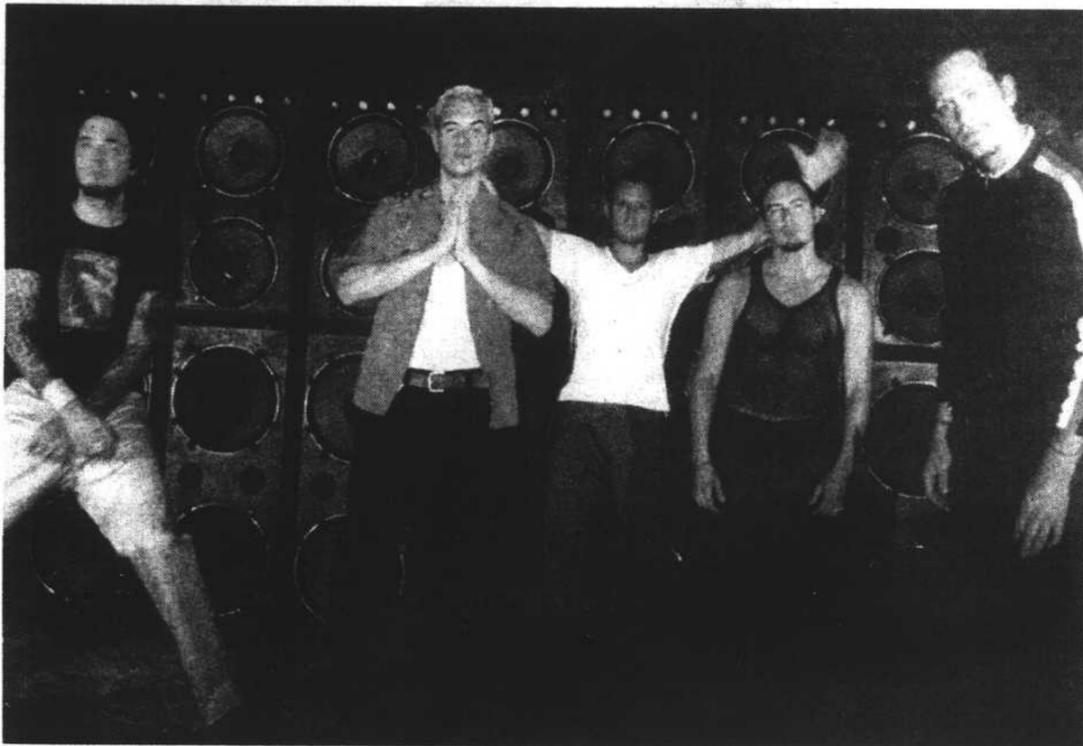


Omaha natives 311 to bring home rock



By Josh Nichols

Staff writer

They're back.

The group that one decade ago was just another Midwestern band, toying with a unique, unheard of mix of rock, reggae, funk and rap, returns to Lincoln tonight for another show at Pershing Auditorium.

And like always, the group of Omaha natives who call themselves 311 are happy to be back, said vocalist and guitarist Nick Hexum.

"It's always great to come back home to Nebraska," he said. "Even though we've all been living in L.A. for quite a while, our roots will always be in Nebraska."

Despite the dedication to their home state, odds are the group has no regrets of leaving it.

Since the band's move to Los Angeles in 1992, when it signed with Capricorn Records, 311 has two certified Gold albums, one certified Platinum album and a certified Triple Platinum album, which together have sold more than 5 million copies.

Tonight's show is part of a tour promoting the album "Soundsystem," which was released last October.

Like its previous recordings, "Soundsystem" is a little bit of everything.

It's a little rock, a little reggae and a



Courtesy Photos

and overlapping of rock and hip hop are more common.

Artists such as Limp Bizkit and Kid Rock are topping the charts with the new sound – the sound, in a sense, that 311 helped create.

This doesn't bother Hexum.

"For the most part, I think music is moving in a pretty interesting direction," he said. "It seems like artists are no longer afraid to really experiment and mix styles and cross genres."

Hexum likes that new sounds are being accepted and that 311 played a part in the renovation.

"When we were coming up, our rap, rock, reggae hybrid was not really accepted," he said. "A lot has changed since then, and I'm glad that in some way we were a catalyst for that change."

The return to Lincoln brings back memories for Hexum of when 311 was just another local band playing in Lincoln and Omaha bars.

He cited one particular example in Lincoln when the group was scheduled to play a gig at Duffy's Tavern, 14th and O streets, but had recently parted with its first guitarist.

"We played with no guitar!" he said. "We just rocked out – drums, bass, and vocals ... Our friends all showed up and danced. What a trip."

Memories like this one are why

Chicken Shack making most of touring with local legends

By Josh Nichols

Staff writer

A group that is described in its press release as a little schizophrenic and is known for thriving in its own twisted universe is opening for 311 tonight at Pershing Auditorium.

Jimmie's Chicken Shack, like 311, plays a blend of sounds, and its music is difficult to categorize.

"It's a mix of a lot of different sounds," said lead singer Jimi HaHa.

"It's like if Black Sabbath, the Beach Boys and the Beatles had a child."

The band's current single, "Do Right," is getting nationwide radio play and is its first release off of "Bring Your Own Stereo," the group's most recent album.

Jimmie's Chicken Shack first received attention in 1997 when its single "High" received considerable radio and MTV play.

The single was from the album "Pushing the Salamanilla Envelope," which HaHa said came across as being filled with discontent and anger.

He said "Bring Your Own Stereo" has a happier sound.

"With this one, all of us were just feeling so good and we had so much fun," he said.

The band's recent success has allowed it to tour with the likes of Live, Everclear and now 311.

HaHa said the current tour is going well.

"Traveling with 311 has been awesome," he said. "We're having a blast."

The tour, which wraps up March 31, is making a sweep throughout the Midwest including gigs in Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Iowa.

Playing in the Cornbelt hasn't fazed the East Coast natives.

"The crowds have been awe-

some," HaHa said. "People have been digging us."

Once this tour ends, HaHa said the group plans to go back east and then head overseas to tour Europe.

Despite its recent success, the band members don't get overly concerned about what will happen in the future.

"We expect nothing, and are never disappointed," HaHa said.

"If we can play music, we're having fun."

"It's like if Black Sabbath, the Beach Boys and the Beatles had a child."

Jimi HaHa

Jimmie's Chicken Shack

A group that prides itself in being a little confusing had those intentions in mind when picking a name.

Jimmie's Chicken Shack was Malcolm X's favorite Harlem restaurant.

"It was just an old blues/jazz joint in Harlem," HaHa said.

"We just chose it to confuse people."

When asked about what to expect from tonight's show, HaHa took the same laid-back approach.

"Just come out early and enjoy," he said. "If they think they don't like us, come check us out anyway."

well, if not better, than it ever has, and it plans to continue making new music.

"I think we're playing better than ever," he said. "We've added some new elements to the show, and we've also brought a mobile studio on the road with us, so we are already working on some new material."

"We're still having a blast."

Classic operas hit high note in performance

■ Ariel Bybee wants to expose Lincoln to music with production that showcases famous pieces.

By Jason Hardy

Staff writer

Opera, like any art form, definitely has its classics.

Works like "Madame Butterfly," "Carmen" and "Carousel" are colossal undertakings for any opera house. Nevertheless, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's school of music is proud to present a production that will showcase scenes from the aforementioned operas as well as other famous works.

But what makes the show so special isn't the operas themselves, it's the way they're being presented. "At the Met: Onstage and Backstage at the Metropolitan Opera" is the brainchild of Ariel Bybee, UNL's artist-in-residence who spent 18 years as a mezzo-soprano at New York City's world-famous Metropolitan Opera.

"I've never done anything like this before.

We just sort of conjured up this idea, partly because people are very curious about what goes on backstage," Bybee said. "I just wanted to show what kind of stuff is onstage and then just gossip a little bit and dish about what goes on backstage."

She said the format would be fairly simple. After a brief introduction, Bybee will discuss the first excerpt she and her students will perform, including information about her experiences with each particular show. She said the show itself was like nothing she'd ever done.

"It illustrates my experience through personal stories," she said. "I'm talking between each of these scenes, so I come totally out of the action and talk to the audience. In fact, I change costumes while I'm talking."

For Bybee's students, the show presented a number of opportunities that would be hard to come by otherwise.

"I was really happy to be able to perform with Ariel because it's an unusual chance. Usually she's there supporting us, and now she's onstage with us," said Karen Hughes, a second-year UNL masters student and performer in the program. "The fact that she's bringing in her experience and staging it from

her point of view is different from a director who is seeing it from the outside. She's doing it how the great stars she's worked with have done it."

Hughes also said performing such famous roles and talking about the Metropolitan Opera was very inspiring.

"For me, I guess the Met would be the ultimate goal," she said. "So to sing with someone who's sung there is exciting – it re-ignites the passion for what we're doing."

While the show has re-ignited Hughes' passion for opera, Bybee said it was also well-suited for people who might be interested in opera but who've had limited exposure to it.

"If you're not a devotee of the opera, this is the easiest way to get a start," she said. "Having come to Lincoln from New York, I realized that there's not as much of an opera following here. Maybe this is my way of building one. It's fun – it's serious fun – it's accessible and it's to be enjoyed by everyone, not just old fogies."

Hughes said aside from the quality opera experts, Bybee's discussion greatly enhances the experience.

"She talks about it from such a personal point of view that it brings it down to earth,"

AT THE MET: ONSTAGE AND BACKSTAGE AT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA.

WHERE: Kimball Recital Hall, 11th and R streets.

WHEN: Tuesday, March 28, 8 p.m.

COST: free

THE SKINNY: Ariel Bybee brings inner workings of the opera to UNL.

PREVIEW

she said. "She talks also about the experiences about how it's not easy to be an opera singer. It's a nitty-gritty profession."

Ultimately, Bybee said she hopes Lincoln audiences will have as much fun with the piece as she and her students have had.

"It's very popular in New York, and when I came here I was surprised that opera hasn't caught on, so I wanna boost opera," she said. "I want to share my love for it with the Lincoln audience. I hope I can show my enthusiasm and my love for these pieces."