

Is Omaha the next Seattle?

photo by Catherine Wessel

Probably not, but 311 is becoming the next big thing.

311

by Sue Delpino

After hours and hours of California gridlock, Omaha natives 311 have finally gotten their moving van into their new hometown of Los Angeles. Besides wanting to record their new album in L.A., 311's rapidly growing success and non-stop tour schedule made such a move inevitable. 311's previous two albums have already sold over a hundred thousand records each based entirely on their fiercely energetic funk-rap-rock sound. Their third and newest release for Capricorn Records, self-titled 311, may be the album that takes them to the next level. As we wait to find out, HYPNO writer Susan Delpino catches up with Nick (vocals) to discuss everything from bad acid to gun control to Newt's politics.

the security didn't know how to handle it. The bouncers got really beligerent and created more violence than our fans. There were times I had to step in. To avoid this communication barrier, we try to let those venues know what to expect before the show."

How do you feel about Newt Gingrich's attempt to ban rap music, moshing, and many other types of musical expression?

"Whether it be gangster rap, moshing or even bands promoting pot smoking, any conservative effort to ban musical expression actually gives these bands the press they need to sell records. Their theory always backfires. 2 Live Crew would never have gone platinum if it

wasn't for the conservatives bitching about them. Our first amendment will never be abolished, but then on the other hand, these conservatives could kill the National Endowment for the Arts, which would have a very negative effect."

What kind of chemistry happens between the band members when it comes to writing?

"There's no set way things happen in 311. Sometimes a jam session will produce a song that everyone helped to write. Other times I'll bring a completed song, and everyone will learn it, and we take it from there. It's always different."

What are some of the top-

ics 311 chooses to write about?

"We write about different observations on life in general. We're a bunch of optimistic guys, really. We believe life is what you make of it, so you have to enjoy yourself. Life is too short to be surrounded by negativity."

Since we're on the subject of your new album, tell me about the lyrics "Guns are for Pussies." Does 311 support gun control?

"It's really not that political. The song is about someone who needs to carry a gun. 311 sees it as giving into your fears, which therefore is a mental weakness. A stronger person can get through life without having to carry a gun. That's what this song is all about."

I know many interviews can become pretty monotonous, but is there a question you wish someone would ask and never do?

A long pause.....

"Um, not really. There's always certain people who ask what our name means. We don't have a prepared answer for that. It's something we don't really define so we always change the subject. I can't think of what I want to be asked, but I can give you a lot of questions I don't like to answer."

"No, let's not do that. I don't want to do this interview over," he jokes.

Is there anything else you would like to say?

"Yes, 311 is a band you must see live to figure out what we're all about. You haven't heard 311 until you've heard us live."



Tell me about the little blue aliens on your CD cover? Did you know there was once a problem with some bad acid with the alien's face on it?

"Laughing..... ha, no. That's funny. Wait 'til I tell everyone else. How bad was it?"

A lot of people got really sick. There weren't any deaths, I don't think. . .

"No, it really was a totally different reason. On our first album we were thinking about how we were going to make the best musical rap album with a lot of funk. In conjunction with that, we were thinking about space and other life forms out there. It may not make a lot of sense to some people, but that was sort of our 'grass roots.' In many of our lyrics, we talk about space and other life forms. It's also a cool image. I swear it didn't have to do with acid, but that is funny."

How do you feel about Red Hot Chili Peppers or Beastie Boys comparisons?

"It doesn't really bother us. Those are two of our most definite influences, and we have a lot of respect for both bands. We have jazz and reggae singing which aren't present elements in these bands, so yes there are similarities, but there are also many differences."

311 shows are known for their intensity, so do you encounter many problems with security at certain venues?

"A lot of it is lack of communication. The problems arise when we play at venues that normally don't have moshing-type bands. There was this place in Orange County where they never had a big band, and