

# KISS

## Imitation is the biggest form of flattery

They slipped into Farmington without notice, without fanfare.

Without their costumes and makeup, they looked like any other group of young people one might see on the street. But once into their regalia, there is no mistaking them — Kiss.

What may be the rock group's most persistent imitators made one short, 45-minute performance last Thursday at Longacre Elementary School. The group was preceded in concert by the sounds of two other famous rock-and-roll groups, Ted Nugent and Aerosmith. But there was no mistaking what the crowd of nearly 50 kids was waiting for.

"Have they started yet?" one groupie about 12-years-old asked impatiently. Despite the high-energy performances of both Nugent and Aerosmith, the

crowd quickly became restless in the Longacre gymnasium.

When the time for the performance finally did arrive, the band, like any other popular group, was late. And, like any other crowd waiting for the start of a big concert, the Kiss crowd was filled with tension.

After a final publicity shot, the group did hit the stage, to the shrieking delight of their fans. Fireworks lit the stage and poured more smoke into the already dense atmosphere of the gym. The band went through a medley of their biggest hits while gyrating from one side of the stage to the other. They sounded just like they do on their record.

IN FACT, it was their record.

The crowd viewing the pantomime of the famous group consisted of youths from the ages of six to 15 years as the pseudo-group Kiss performed a concert for the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation department.

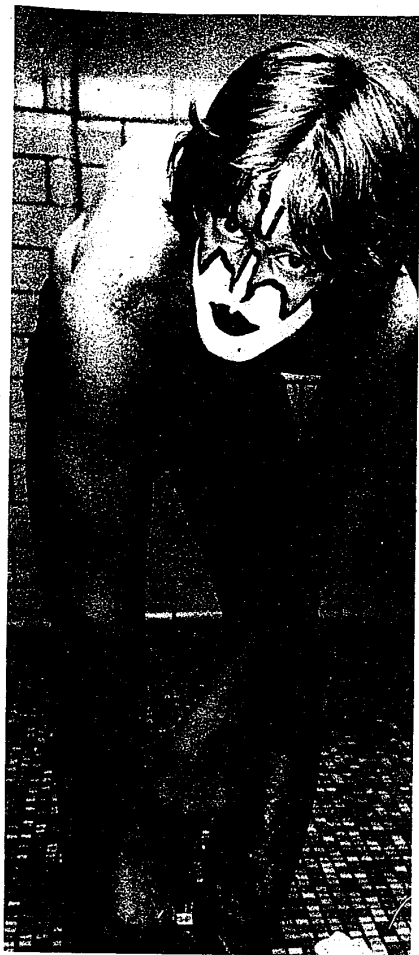
"This is our third year," said band member Charlie Weaver, who plays the part of Gene Simmons. "I've been in it two years, he's Rich Miller, who plays Ace Frehley, been in it all three years, and those two (Eric MacDonald as Peter Criss and Ted Rousos as Paul Stanley) are rookies."

The "concert", which took place Thursday afternoon, is just part of the parks and recreation summer playground program. With the wide approval displayed by the large crowd, it is evident that at least this part of the program is a success.

The show ended at about 2:30 p.m., as the stereo rang out the final high-pitched guitar note. The rowdy crowd was escorted out, despite several lit matches held in the air beckoning the group to play one more tune. The four members of "Kiss" disappeared into their dressing room, the door of which was emblazoned with a star.

The four kids that emerged bore little resemblance to the group that had thrilled the crowd an hour before. But that is the way Kiss has always wanted it — their stage life, complete with costumes and makeup, left behind when the show is over. Offstage, their lives are private, and no one recognizes them.

For the imitation Kiss, lack of notoriety is a very real part of their off-stage life.



Gearing up for another day as "Kiss" personality Ace Frehley is Rich Miller. (Staff photos by Randy Borst)



Who would ever guess that these guys aren't the real thing? The Kiss imitators are (from left) Ted Rousos, Eric McDonald, Rich Miller and Charlie Weaver. (Staff photo)



Ted Rousos (right) gives a helping hand to Eric McDonald as they prepare the elaborate makeup it takes to imitate the famous rock group. (Staff photo)

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