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Dylan's artistry captivates audience

By Peter Breaden

A dreamy mist surrounded McArthur Court by the end of an epic Thursday night appearance by Bob Dylan, Van Morrison and Lucinda Williams.

The concert was a lifetime achievement award for an audience that has embraced the marginally mainstream poet rockers of the past 35 years.

Dylan verged on breakdancing at times, sweating liberally in his undertaker attire and cow-pie kickers. Although Dylan was the senior player, he trailblazed for the well-dressed backup musicians. Flanking Dylan in an electric blue shirt and a purple coat and pants, the two standing guitarists looked almost as slick as The Wallflowers.

Dylan fed the crowd's electricity with the hits "Rainy Day

Women # 12 & 35" and "Tangled Up In Blue."

If performers can be divided into musicians and artists, Dylan surely falls into the latter category. Some of his most devoted fans cannot identify in-concert num-

bers based on opening bars.

The rafter-packed crowd saw the backup guitarists join in acoustically and crowd around Dylan's vocals for a campfire

version of "Blowin' In The Wind." Van Morrison had an almost exhausted crowd waiting for his closing set. Several people retreated to their pipe-passing circles or

simply left.

Stragglers stepped off Dylan's

thrill ride into a mystic's tent of poetry. The seven-piece set was in full swing when Morrison en-tered like a big-band conductor. Early on, he crowed, "Won't let the bastards grind me down," but his cold presence seemed to have been ground down.

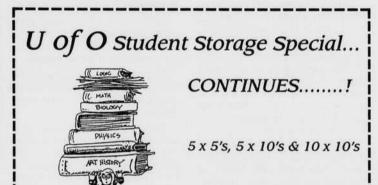
But the more popular "Jackie Wilson" revived the crowd and brought Morrison to belting out his legendary vocal improvisa-

Morrison covered substantial material from his recent album "Days Like This." The result was a spiritual needlework of music and poetic repetition.

Considering her company, Lucinda Williams held her own as opener for Dylan and Morrison. She moseyed and stomped through nine numbers with Tom Petty-esque instrumentation and powerful vocals.



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The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. A member of the Associated Press, the Emerald operates independently of the University with offices in Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable

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