

Music reviews

Guitar virtuoso shows EMU he's worthy of legend status

■Guitarist John Scofield gets a warm reception at his EMU performance Monday

By Eric Pfeiffer
Oregon Daily Emerald

"Thanks for coming, John!" An unidentified audience member enthusiastically summed up the evening's performance even before the first song was under way.

"You're welcome, and thanks for having me," Scofield replied.

It was our pleasure, Mr. Scofield.

Monday night, John Scofield and his electric guitar were a-go-go, as the crowd in the EMU Ballroom swayed to luscious grooves drawn heavily from his most recent album.

Scofield opened the set with four songs from his new album

"Bump," a collection of beat-heavy tracks that put the crowd in a dancing mood, and filled the ballroom with eclectic energy. Scofield and his band responded well to the crowd, who became more animated with each successive number. The opening number began with Scofield picking at seemingly random notes on his guitar. Over several minutes, the song evolved into a tour de force that appropriately set the tone for the next two hours.

From there, Scofield revisited songs from his extensive catalogue that spans over two decades and twice as many albums.

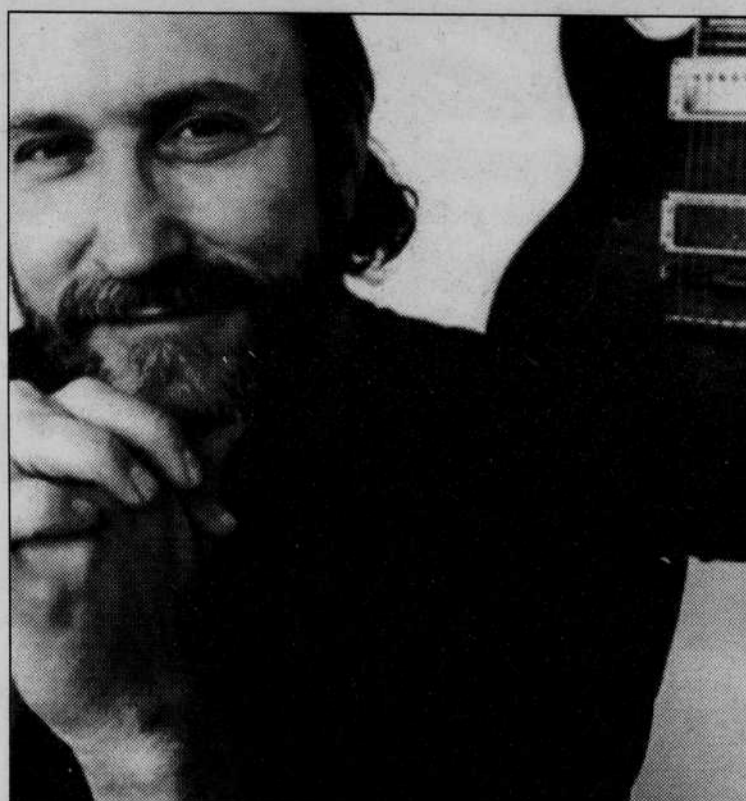
For close to thirty years, Scofield has been dazzling listeners with his wide array of influences and guitar techniques. Most recently, Scofield reinstated his influence with young jazz fans by collaborating with the trio Medes-

ki, Martin & Wood on his 1996 release "A-Go-Go." "Bump" is a continuation of that effort, providing extended jams and further funky collaborations with the hot jazz trio.

The crowd at the ballroom was as diverse as Scofield's playing style. College freshmen danced side-by-side with middle-aged men and women, and the entire crowd seemed thoroughly pleased with the show's festivities.

His band was also full of diverse styles, featuring Avi Bortnick on rhythm guitar, Jesse Murphy on bass, and Eric Kalb on drums. Scofield paused throughout the performance, allowing his bandmates to highlight their skills before a receptive crowd.

Overall, it was a rare opportunity for students to see one of the music world's most skilled performers in top form.



Courtesy photo
Legendary guitarist John Scofield rocked the house Monday night in front of a crowd in the EMU Ballroom, performing several songs from his latest album, "Bump."

'WYSIWYG' like spiked drink: slips down easily, messes with brain

■Anarchist band Chumbawamba's newest album is filled with social commentary and deeper meanings

By Mason West
Oregon Daily Emerald

Chumbawamba, the band that brought you the hit "Tubthumping," is back with its new album "WYSIWYG." The title, an acronym for What You See Is What You Get, is anything but the truth.

On first listen, I found the album to have no extraordinary tracks and only a few that my head even bobbed to. But I began to discover the deeper meanings of the album when I opened up

the sleeve notes. The picture of a dog's head on the cover unfolded to become two dogs doing the forbidden dance.

"Hmmm," I thought. "This must mean something."

The 22 tracks vary in style from pop to country to almost classical at times. The band seems to be very consciously contrasting hard songs with softer songs in the flow of the album. The songs themselves all seem to blend together, due to the lack of pauses between tracks. More than once I looked down at my CD player counter and realized that I was five tracks ahead of where I thought I was.

The second time around, I was growing fonder of some of the tunes, especially the one chosen to be the first single, "She's Got All The Friends That Money Can Buy." Hidden beneath a happy beat and a chorus of "la la's" are such well-crafted, sarcastic verses, such as, "both her faces/ so easy on the eye/ and everyone worth knowing/ is kissing her behind."

But the beat doesn't carry the pop-culture selling power of "Tubthumping." The album's songs are fast paced, but predominantly in the minor key. Songs like, "Hey Hey We're The Junkies," and "Jesus in Vegas," are what a normal pop band might sound like if heard with the musical polarity reversed. Kinda like Superman and Bizaro.



Courtesy photo
The band Chumbawamba recently released their CD "WYSIWYG." The band includes members (left-right): Boff, Lou Watts, Dunstan Bruce, Jude Abbott, Danbert Nobacon, Alice Nutter, Harry Hamer and Neil Ferguson.

Chumbawamba is the most well-known anarchist band in the music industry, and their rebellious nature is just below the surface of "WYSIWYG." Contained in the sleeve notes is commentary by the band on all 22 tracks of the album, some of which are quite lengthy. When I read things like, "We don't have friends, we watch 'Friends,'" and "Revolution, once the catch phrase of change, is now only what the ad man's offering," I

paused for a second and took a more objective look at the culture that I'm in. I'm sure that Chumbawamba would be proud.

In the sleeve notes they also mention such current events as the Columbine shootings, the controversy in New York over the elephant dung Virgin Mary as art, and the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle. The CD may be worth buying just to read what the band has to say that didn't make it in the songs.

If you are a person who likes or dislikes albums based on the tunes, then leave this one alone. To fully appreciate what Chumbawamba has done on "WYSIWYG," you must enjoy the subtle stabs at society and pop culture made in every line on the album. I think their press release summed up the album best when it described the CD as "the sonic equivalent of a spiked drink. It slips down easily and then messes with the brain."

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