



Jimi Lott The Seattle Times

A spiraling cyclone of guitars (above) and other instruments greets visitors to the Experience Music Project in Seattle. The entrance (below) is the most tame part of the buildings' trademark curvacious exterior.

KEEP ON ROCKIN'

If this spring break finds you in Seattle, stop by the Experience Music Project for a trip down rock 'n' roll lane. BY LISA GRIFFING

If your soul needs to be rocked this spring break, take a stroll to Seattle's Experience Music Project. It may cast you into a stratosphere of groove found only in your dreams.

Start off by jamming on your instrument of choice with four band members. Then, go on stage while eager fans pump up your adrenaline. It may be a dream come true. To experience this for yourself, simply enter the on-stage section of the EMP, in Seattle, Wash.

"You go backstage with four or five people, and each person picks an instrument and a band name. Then, you have a virtual audience of screaming fans — you name the band, play as a band, and it's so loud that no matter how bad you play, it sounds good," said EMP public relations manager Paige Prill. "Wild Thing is the song that people get to play, but it's different versions of that song."

According to the Web site, www.emplive.com, EMP is a \$240,000,000 creation with three floors of 80,000 artifacts, once owned by musicians who have shaped the history of music.

"It's the world's largest interactive music museum," Prill said. "It allows people to focus on music. You see them and listen and understand the exhibits. Then you get to play the instruments." Prill recommends people go through it in two visits.

The journey begins with the

EMP's structure. Frank O. Gehry's design was meant to convey the "evolving, ever-changing" state of rock 'n' roll music.

"It's flashy architecture — it's trendy but controversial. It doesn't respond to the buildings — it doesn't fit in with Seattle very well," said Anna deAnguera, a former EMP employee and a junior at the University. "It represents the spirit of rock 'n' roll."

DeAnguera, an architecture major, explained that EMP is supposed to look like a left-handed guitar — the handle being the monorail.

"People are in awe of it," Prill said.

"Materials used for the building were not environ-

mentally responsible," said deAnguera, adding that "there are no windows so it was like working in a cave."

After paying admission, one encounters an instructor who explains the museum exhibit guide, or MEG. It is a "three-pound hand-held hard drive with 12 hours of audio — it's a

self-guided tour," Prill said. MEG is composed of a set of earphones and a waist strap with a digital object that resembles a remote control.

"Everyone looks like zombies and they wander around. People are quiet unless you came with someone. Then you might look around and say, 'That's cool' or something like that. People wear the earphones wrong,

Funk Blast, the show displayed in the Artist's Journey. Visitors can ride the Artist's Journey, which combines special effects, theatrical lighting, film and state-of-the-art motion. It's an entertaining ride, but it doesn't come close to the experience that the rest of the museum bestows.

"[The Artist's Journey is] not that cool," deAnguera said.

The rest of the museum is a trip. Prill said that the Jimi Hendrix gallery is the most popular section of the EMP.

"It's an incredible collection. It shows how he influenced rock and who influenced him. The entire stage set used at Woodstock

is displayed. His notebook of lyrics and diary are also exhibited."

Other visuals include music paraphernalia from the late '40s through the grunge movement. In addition, hip-hop and punk are other roads to be traveled at the EMP.

"There is a lot to see," Prill said. The EMP Web site reads that the

EMP captures and reflects the roots of jazz, soul, gospel, country, blues and other genres of music. Guitars used by Bob Dylan and the late Kurt Cobain are shown.

However, "it's lacking female artists, like Ani DiFranco," deAnguera said.

"Sound archives, photographs and rare memorabilia tell the story of the creative and rebellious expressions that have defined American popular music," according to the EMP Web site.

"I saw a lot of parents and kids from two different generations; they learn from each other. It goes through the whole history of rock 'n' roll and you can see connections of different genres of music that you never thought of before," said deAnguera.

The multi-faceted musical experience at the EMP influenced deAnguera to listen to more classic rock, such as Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix. "If you're in a certain mood and listen to music that's of that mood, it makes it stronger," deAnguera said.

"I think music influences everyone, and people relate for different reasons. It can bring about memories. Or, the impact can be inspiring. Music is a great tool to be creative in your own way," Prill said. A musician told her that music could change the harmony of the way people interact if it was played in public places. "For me, it makes me feel good — it's energizing."

