

# Latest 'Weezer' is addictive pop-rock candy

■ After a five-year wait, hardcore fans can indulge in more geek-love music

By Lori Musicer  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Attention Weezer fans: The fix is in. After a five-year withdrawal, thousands of drooling fiends can enjoy the sweet intoxication once again.

Many remember Weezer as the band that made being a geek cool again with its palatable grunge-punk-pop anthems from a 1994 self-titled debut, which yielded mega-hits "Buddy Holly" and

"Undone (The Sweater Song)." Well, it's time to dust off those thick, black frames, because the boys of Weezer — the kings of geekdom themselves — have returned.

Weezer's third studio album, titled "Weezer" but otherwise known as "The Green Album" (continuing the tradition of their debut, which was appropriately coined "The Blue Album"), has arrived five years after a poorly received second album, "Pinkerton." Given the slight hint of Beatles influence, it's possible the color motif is a subtle shout-out to the Brit heroes' "White Album." With their first single off the new album, "Hash Pipe," infiltrating alternative-rock radio stations nationwide, the spunky Los Angeles quartet is proving to be more than the "now you see us, now you don't" band they were rumored to be.

So what has Weezer been up to in the last five years? The band contributed a track to a 1999 tribute album to The Pixies. They also toured for a while under the pseudonym Goat Punishment (don't ask). Bassist Mikey Welsh joined the crew in 1998 after Matt Sharp left to join The Rentals. The members have been involved in several side projects, such as Homie, a band in which frontman Rivers Cuomo collaborated with members of Soul Coughing and Cake. In the meantime, Weezer's "emo" cult following

of obsessive fans has been growing steadily.

Both in and outside the United States, dedicated fans have rushed to buy the album as if it were one of the most hard-to-get drugs in existence — and they haven't had their fix in years. "Hash Pipe" is a perfect choice for radio play, partially because of the catchy chorus, filled to the brim with rowdy "whoa-oo-oh" sing-alongs. The repetitive, ascending guitar riff also blends perfectly with Cuomo's addictive, eight-step downhill pattern.

Crunching power chords, beautifully simplistic melodies and playful beats seep through every pore of this candy-coated album, and it goes down as smooth as ever. "Photograph" seems like an optimistic flashback to "Happy Days" with its "Buddy Holly"-esque feel, old school "oh baby" backup vocals and hand clapping. With the opening lines, "If you want it / you can have it / but you got to learn to reach out there and grab it," listeners may find themselves grinning and bobbing their heads with childlike joy.

Lyricaly, Cuomo has generally held on to his recurring theme of love issues, but he also has retreated to the less intimate, specific accounts which he boldly displayed on "Pinkerton." The final track, "O Girlfriend," is a lonely ballad in which he calls out to an ex-lover, "Suddenly / we're apart and I can't see you every night / Though we

fight I love you so much / Now I can't feel your touch."

Perhaps a part of Cuomo's genius for catchy pop songwriting is guitarist Brian Bell, whose licks often mimic Cuomo's vocal melody and culminate in brief guitar solos that literally echo the singing. These hum-along gems arrive on time — between halfway and two-thirds through — for every single track. No wonder these songs instantly hang on and stick all day, like little pop leeches.

The downfall of the album definitely lies in its length — or lack thereof. Ten songs in less than 30 minutes is simply not a big enough dose of Weezer, especially for the first time in five years. Cuomo allegedly wrote more than 120 songs during the break, so it's certainly not writer's block. "The Green Album" is missing a crucial element that contributed to the strength of the "The Blue Album" — the emotionally packed instrumental at the end of "Only in Dreams." The new album, short but sweet, cries for such an extension.

It's likely that those who didn't dig Weezer before won't convert suddenly, but all those eager fans will be finally satiated with this long-awaited fix of rock candy in its purest form. For the true Weezer experience, be sure to check out the band's energetic live shows during their North American tour this summer. Dates are to be determined, so keep an eye out for Northwest stops.



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## Symphony

continued from page 1

"The text of the piece is just exquisite," she said. "And the orchestration the conductor chose is very beautiful."

Wayne Bennett, a music professor and director of orchestral activities, said both of the chosen works for tonight's concert have romantic sounds. He said the Tchaikovsky piece is part of the composer's last three great works, which carry a common theme about fate controlling life.

However, he said the symphony doesn't give in to that idea and will perform with a more upbeat tone.

"The music is always triumphant," he said.

Bennett said this performance is particularly special because nearly half of the student musicians will be graduating this spring.

"I hate to see these guys go," he said. "I'm really going to miss the students that are moving on."

Brian Gardiner, a senior percussion performance major and a symphony member, said the symphony will not be the same without those

who are leaving.

"So many [graduates] will probably leave and go to the East Coast because there's a lot more happening there musically," he said.

Because the musicians will be moving on, Bennett said today's final performance should be special for everyone.

"This has been by far the best symphony we've ever had," he said.

Tickets for tonight's performance are available at the door and cost \$3 for students and senior citizens, and \$5 for general admission.

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