



Floater Rising

Power trio matures, but still rocks.

Even doped up on Vicodin following minor surgery, Floater's lead singer Rob Wynia is witty, slightly snarky and sharp as a razor. It's been more than a decade since he held down a regular job and after all those years doing the rock star thing, it's obvious he's hit his stride.

On tour after a long hiatus to promote their new album *Acoustics*, Floater plays at

the McDonald Theater Saturday, Oct. 2. For the last year or so the stuff of life — love, kids, marriage — took priority and kept Floater off the stage. After so many months away from their fans, let's hope they've got some pent-up energy that we'll see on stage.

The push for *Acoustics*, an all-acoustic CD, came from their record label, Elemental Records. There's no kinda, sorta or maybe

with *Acoustics*. Long-time fans will either love it or hate it. We love it.

Instead of just unplugging their favorite tunes, the power trio (Wynia on vocals and bass, Peter Cornett on drums and Dave Amador on guitar) gives us more aggressive, soulful, melancholy music that maintains their heavy, lyrical rock sound.

"I think it's really unfortunate that people think if you're changing you're starting to suck," Wynia said. "I think the reason for that is that people have a tendency to discover a band at one point in their career, whether it's through MTV or a friend at a party. And they fall in love with them. Then anything the band does after that, or even before that, they don't like as much."

He likens it to the honeymoon phase of a new relationship, the first few months after you've just started dating someone.

"It's really exciting. Then you're trying to recapture that heady drunken party, that feeling of when you first kissed. And it's a lost cause. But that's sort of how people feel about their bands."

So how exactly have they changed since they first started playing garage parties and amping up drunken sport fans at the UO beer garden in 1993?

First of all they've grown up, and their music has grown up with them. Over the last nine years they've changed from a group of mid-20s guys with something to prove, wearing their influences on their sleeves, into real musicians, songwriters and storytellers.

Their songs sound more crafted, less raw.

Their lyrics continue to improve with more eloquence and poetry. And their live shows are tighter with more showmanship.

If you've ever seen them in concert and experienced their awesome stage presence and connection with the audience, it might surprise you to hear that for the first few years they all had serious stage fright.

"Oh definitely," Wynia said. "We got really nervous. Now we've made so many records it's old hat to us."

Floater has been compared to everything from Peter Gabriel, Pink Floyd, Neil Young and U2 to Pantera and Led Zeppelin. Basically they make really good rock with lyrical riffs, complex lyrics and fresh melodies rooted in tradition.

"It's not like we're saying, 'Oh we're so different. We just can't be pigeon-holed,'" Wynia said. "Look, we're not curing cancer. Fifty years from now people are going to look back and say, yeah, that was rock."

Not traditionally a political band, Floater's lyrics tend to be more about life, love, angst and anger. But in the current political climate, that's starting to change.

"I never felt like I wanted to have politics be a part of who we are," Wynia said. "But we're becoming a much more political band. I never felt like I was driven to it before but I've been watching things spiral so far out of control into a Nazi dictatorship that it's really scaring me. I have kids now. It's not just about me anymore. I feel like I need to protect the world and make it a place that I would like to live in."

EW

WIDMER BROTHERS

CROATING AN EVEN BETTER BEER THROUGH FIELD RESEARCH

Kurt listens as Rob records Kurt listening to Rob.



— DAY 40 —

TEST SUBJECT: Cliff Nickerson

WIDMER BEER OF CHOICE: Hefeweizen

SWIMWEAR: Trunks or banana hammock



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Shoulder scans indicate that a shoulder was present.

After several hours of coaxing, the subject allowed us to enter his natural habitat. Subject was observed drinking a Hefeweizen. Records indicate he enjoyed the crisp refreshing flavor. Records also indicate Kurt not enjoying it when subject sat really, really close to him. But most importantly, we discovered that permanent ink should always be used in the field.

