

Scottish rock clashes with Orange Peel audience

By Sam Hunt

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Instrumental rock legends Mogwai delivered an extra dose of their patented wall of noise to Thursday's Orange Peel crowd. The encore, a 25-minute version of the epic "My Father My King," forced the sizeable crowd to stand still and soak in

over 10 minutes of pure guitar noise at the song's end.

Concert Review

Many in the front row of spectators covered their ears for protection, while others seemed to gladly bask in the ear-splitting cascade of drones.

"Let's put all our cards on the table. Who here is a hippie?" asked lead guitarist Stuart Braithwaite after returning to the stage for the encore.

"Vietnam is over," Braithwaite said with a chuckle after the majority of the crowd raised their hands to acknowledge that they were, indeed, hippies.

To be fair, Braithwaite's deep Scottish accent made the word "hippie" sound like "happy," so perhaps there was some miscommunication.

For a band whose songs range from near silence to jet-engine volume, concentration is essential onstage. Apparently, the Glasgow, Scotland five-piece was taken aback by the crowd's loud between-song banter.

Braithwaite and bassist Dominic Aitchison seemed disappointed when the crowd yelled during the quiet intro of "Christmas Steps." On a few occasions,

Mogwai made their second appearance at the Orange Peel on April 23, playing to an eager crowd of Asheville noise enthusiasts.

the band signaled to the sound men to "turn up," as if to deafen the pesky crowd.

Although the band and the audience clashed, unlike at most Orange Peel shows, everyone, Mogwai included, seemed in good spirits and embraced each

others' differences. During "Batcat," the lone single from the band's latest full-length *The Hawk Is Howling*, Braithwaite laughed out loud and made flying motions with his arms, as if he were some kind of winged monster.



Photo Courtesy of Mogwai

The Hawk Is Howling could be the band's best album to date. All of Mogwai's facets can be found somewhere on the new record: the quiet-loud dynamic, gorgeous electronic beats and epic guitar-and-keyboard crescendos.

The diversity of sound on the new album translated into a crowd-pleasing Orange Peel show. Raw Mogwai classics kept the die-hards honest, while the more recent material kept fifth man Barry Burns switching between guitar, keyboard and laptop.

Burns, who joined Mogwai before they began recording 1999's *Come on Die Young*, has played a crucial role in expanding the band's sound from guitar rock to something more lush and synthetic.

Known for being one of the loudest live bands on the planet, Mogwai plays at absurd decibel levels, but also uses silence to stun its audiences. Several songs transition from silence to utter guitar chaos within a split second.

"Mogwai Fear Satan," a frequent shout-out request from the band's 1997 debut, *Young Team*, was especially jolting inside the venue. After a few minutes of tranquil echoes, the band's three-guitar onslaught kicked in all at once with distortion pedals turned to max volume.

Brilliantly textured new songs, such as the bizarrely titled "I'm Jim Morrison, I'm Dead" and "I Love You, I'm Going to Blow Up Your School," ensured a great show for Asheville fans, who could not have asked for a more well-rounded Mogwai experience.

Asheville summer festival schedule

By Brad Lovejoy
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French Broad River Festival: May 1-3, \$75

Hot Springs Campground and Spa, located in beautiful Hot Springs, N.C., just 45 minutes north of Asheville. Don't forget

to reserve a hot tub in advance! www.frenchbroadriverfestival.com

The Bele Chere Festival: July 24-26, FREE

The Bele Chere Festival an annual three-day festival on the streets of Downtown Asheville features four stages of live music and a variety of other activities. www.belecherefestival.com

Downtown After Five (DTA5), FREE

Celebrating its 21st year, the event takes place every third Friday of the month, May-September. The event's location is Lexington Avenue and I-240, and will be more environmentally responsible through the use of compostable cups, plates and utensils.

Free live music and dancing starts at 5 p.m. with food and drink available for purchase. www.ashevilledowntown.org

Shindig on the Green: July-September, FREE

Bring your instruments, families, friends, lawn chairs and blankets for good times at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. www.folkheritage.org/shindigonthegreen.htm

The Lake Eden Arts Festival (LEAF): May 7-10, \$29-\$140

LEAF's goal is to connect its festival-goer with culturally important, international and homegrown musical acts that are both entertaining and inspiring. www.theleaf.com