

## CONCERT REVIEW ★★★★★

## Lotus' beats transform Cat's Cradle

Sophie Duensing  
Reviewer

The hide-away music venue Cat's Cradle was transformed into an ethereal galaxy Nov. 6 by the electronic beats of Philadelphia-based jam band Lotus. Unlike other electronic music bands, there are no laptops — the band plays as a full-instrument rock band.

Twirling lights mirrored the rhythm of the thumping bass played by Jesse Miller, while the audience danced with glow sticks in hand. The effect was otherworldly, a psychedelic light show beautifully in sync with the completely instrumental set.

The audience was diverse, from the Lotus groupies who follow the band around the coast to Raleigh hippies adorned with feather headdresses, and from young ravers carrying light up wands to hipsters in skinny pants and vests discreetly bobbing their heads.

About 20 Elon students were in the crowd, escaping from the mundane weeknight West End bar scene for an experience far more unearthly.

Lotus is on tour promoting its newest album, "Hammerstrike," which is the band's sixth album since its debut "Germination" in 2003. Hammerstrike was released in stores Oct. 21, but the serious Lotus fans in the audience were already familiar with the entire album, rocking along with the band to new songs



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such as the high-energy, techno-laced "Bellwether" and swaying to the calmer, melodic "Disappear in a Red-Blood Sky."

One could memorize every album released by Lotus and still be unable to predict the direction the band's set will take. The band members feed off each other's energy, extending five-minute tracks to 15-minute jam sessions. Perhaps it is this element of surprise in their shows that has developed such a strong following.

While some bands sound better recorded and disappoint live, Lotus' musical talents thrive on stage, suggesting its style and skill isn't meant to be confined to the recording studio.

Even those who have never listened to Lotus before were enthralled by the music during the entire set, transformed into devout fans by the time the show ended.

The band is headed by

lead guitarist Mike Rempel, whose sounds intertwined and bounced off of accompanying guitarist Luke Miller. Miller also mixed samplers and synchs into the organic guitar chords. Steve Clemens and Chuck Morris on drums beat out energized backbeats that completed the hypnotic set of the five-member band.

After giving an already entirely soul-satisfying show and clearing the stage, Lotus returned for an epic encore that turned out to be the climax of the night.

They ended their performance with an extended jam session of "Spiritualized," one of their hits off the album "Nomad." Tiny flashing white lights danced off disco balls and transformed the venue into a sparkling galaxy of positive energy, a truly spiritualized experience, proving people don't have to venture far from Elon for one long, strange trip.

## A&amp;E IN BRIEF

Film screening: "Darwin's Nightmare"

The Human Rights Film Festival continues this week with "Darwin's Nightmare," the fifth film in the series started by Safia Swimelar, assistant professor of political science, and her POL 389 International Human Rights class.

The documentary by Hubert Sauper focuses on poverty, AIDS, the arms trade, civil war, environmental damage and other issues facing Tanzanian relations with the Western world. The movie won a European Film Award in 2004 for Best Documentary.

"Darwin's Nightmare" will screen at 7 p.m. in McEwen 011.

Hip-hop artist DeLon to perform as part of Sri Lanka Week

Rapper DeLon is the first Sri Lankan to ever land a spot on the U.S. Billboard charts.

The award-winning and internationally acclaimed hip-hop artist will be performing as part of Elon's Sri Lanka Week at 8:45 p.m. Thursday in McKinnon Hall.

Tickets are \$5 or 2 meal swipes in Moseley. All proceeds from DeLon's show will benefit the Periclean Scholars class of 2011. For more on DeLon, visit: <http://delonmusic.com>.

Elon's Electronic Ensemble makes debut performance Saturday

Elon's new Electronic Ensemble will perform popular music from the

1980s during its premiere performance this week.

The group is under the direction of Todd Coleman, assistant professor of music. The Electronic Ensemble will perform at 7:30 p.m. Saturday in McCrary Theatre.

Movie on the Lawn: "The Dark Knight"

Postponed from Oct. 25, SUB's Movie on the Lawn will show "The Dark Knight" this week. Christopher Nolan's comic book adaptation was a critical and commercial success, grossing \$158.4 million in its opening weekend alone.

The movie's all-star cast includes Christian Bale, Heath Ledger, Gary Oldman, Michael Caine, Morgan Freeman, Aaron Eckhart and Maggie Gyllenhaal. "The Dark Knight" will screen at 9 p.m. Saturday in LaRose Digital Theatre.

Senior Seminar Series presents "Boeing-Boeing"

The senior BFA acting class will present the comedic farce "Boeing-Boeing" early next week.

The play follows a wealthy bachelor who is dating three female flight attendants at once, and complications arise when they are all scheduled to return home sooner than expected.

"Boeing-Boeing" will be performed at 2 and 7:30 p.m. Sunday and 7:30 p.m. Monday and Tuesday in the Black Box Theatre. No tickets are required but seating is limited.

## Music theatre major Chris Wood pushes the limits

Kate Austin  
Reporter

He wanted to be a surgeon and an actor. "A 'Broadway actor' I called it," he said. In second grade the surgical dream faded and a decision was made: actor.

With an older sister who participated in the local children's theater in Dublin, Ohio, junior Chris Wood was anxious to join in the fun.

"I was 5 years old and wanted to do [children's theater] too, but I was too young," he said. "I think you had to be 7. So when I was 7, I did 'Pied Piper' with her."

From then on, he was hooked. Wood was lucky enough to attend high school in a place that was prolific in its theater department. Dublin Coffman High School performed about six shows a year, two of which were musicals. It was early on in his journey that Wood got a taste of the spotlight.

"My first lead role was Ren in 'Footloose' sophomore year," he said. "It wasn't a big challenging part, but it's one of my greatest memories because it was the first time that I was the most important part of the show. Up until then I had been little characters or ensemble."

From then on the roles kept coming. A production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" transformed Wood into a donkey in the role of Bottom, and he played bad-boy T-Bird, Danny Zuko in the school's production of "Grease."

"In high school I played all these parts that I probably shouldn't have played for my voice type because I'm not really a tenor," Wood said. "They were kind of the opposite of 'Sweeney Todd' or any other part I should be playing."

One wouldn't think that "Sweeney Todd" would be the ideal character for



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Chris Wood's most recent role was the title character in "Sweeney Todd." "It's easy to get caught up in the fact that you know so much about the characters," he said. "You just have to know what you know, but sort of forget it so that you can just be the character."

Wood to portray. With his personable nature and friendly smile, he's the last person one would picture on a deranged killing spree. But it is Wood's hardworking demeanor that makes him perfect for the part.

"I know that he put months of preparation into his portrayal of Sweeney Todd," said Tal Fish, senior musical theatre major and Wood's mentor and close friend. "But don't let that dark demeanor fool you. The first time we shared the stage he was doing a spot-on Groucho Marx in 'A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine.'"

Not only was Wood selected to play the lead in Elon University's production of Sondheim's acclaimed musical "Sweeney Todd," but he had been dreaming of this opportunity for a long time.

"It has been my favorite musical for so long," he said. "It's my dream

role. It's my favorite show. It's my favorite composer. It's great that I got the chance this early in my life to play the part. Most people don't have the opportunity to play parts like this until they're the typical age range."

Wood isn't most people. He has worked hard to take advantage of every acting opportunity, throwing himself into parts outside of his comfort zone.

"I was in the ensemble of Chicago, so I danced, which is something you'll never see me do — at least not well," he said.

Another role that pushed the line of normality for Wood was playing Frank N. Furter in the "Rocky Horror Picture Show."

"I had to wear four and a half-inch heels and a corset," he said. "[The heels] hurt my feet so bad!"

This summer pushed Wood in a different way. Working in Kentucky for

three different shows simultaneously, his voice took "the biggest beating it ever has."

"I only had Mondays off, and I did that for three months straight," Wood said. "It was hard to push through because I was busy, I was tired and I was grumpy because I didn't have any free time."

One tool that Elon has given Wood is the "Meisner technique." It seems to come through in his everyday nature, as well as his acting.

"The technique teaches being open and ready to do anything," he said. "To listen and respond with another actor on stage, and just breathe through each moment."

With so many successful well-known actors associated with the part of Sweeney, Wood had a lot to live up to. The expectations concerned him a little, but he knows he doesn't play the character the same as they do. His portrayal of Sweeney is younger and oddly alluring.

"There are all these comparisons for the part," Wood said. "I mean, Johnny Depp, George Hearn and Len Cariou, the original Sweeney. Some people will like [my portrayal] better and some people may not like it, but that's the same with every part."

Fish swears that when he first met Wood he was "a shy, soft-spoken freshman." But he quickly became "a dominating force in the department."

Wood is far from shy when he sweeps across the stage in "Sweeney Todd." He sends chills through the audience with resonating bass tones and a frighteningly charismatic portrayal of the crazed killer.

"He is not only a skilled, versatile actor, he is also a man of faith and integrity," Fish said. "As his mentor, I look up to him just as much as he looks up to me."