

Floater

By Mina Carson

Floater is a three-man rock band founded in 1993 and based in Portland since 1998. A persistent and popular rock ensemble, Floater has won an audience beyond Portland for its thoughtful, pointed lyrics and undressed-up style. The band is squarely based in guitar rock but has evolved with stylistic changes that incorporate pop notes, reggae-inflected sounds, acoustic rock, and jazz.

In the early 1990s, Peter Cornett answered a musician-wanted ad placed by Robert Wynia in Eugene. They created Henry's Child in 1992, but Wynia and Cornett soon left the band because of creative differences with other members. The duo then formed a short-lived group called the Dog's before transforming the ensemble into Floater, with Robert Wynia on vocals and bass, Peter Cornett on drums, and David Amador on guitar. After performing at local venues, particularly near the University of Oregon, and releasing two albums with the indie label Elemental, Floater moved to Portland.

Floater has a solid fan base, and the band continues to sell out concert venues. In 2009 and 2010, the band was voted Best Band in the *Willamette Week's* Best of Portland poll—almost two decades after its formation. Floater has regularly played important Northwest venues such as the Crystal Ballroom and the Aladdin in Portland and WOW Hall in Eugene. The group has also toured extensively in the western states and appeared at CBGB before the demise of that iconic New York rock venue.

Though all three members keep side projects alive, Floater still has its original members, now together for thirty years. Wynia is the band's main songwriter. His lyrics are often dark, passionate, and intricately structured, and many of the songs are theatrical, using samples as effects or narrative devices. Floater released eight studio albums between 1993 and 2010, in addition to EPs and live recordings.

Floater received two preliminary level Grammy nominations from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (formerly The Recording Academy), one in 1995 for Best Rock Performance on their album *Sink* and another in 1996 for Best Alternative Performance on *Glyph*. By 1998, the band had sold a combined 21,000 copies of *Sink* and *Glyph*. Their work has consistently appeared in *the Rocket's* Northwest Top Twenty Chart and they have been ranked as one of the best bands appearing at the NXNW Music Festival. Floater was inducted into the Oregon Music Hall of Fame in 2017.

Sources

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Floater website.

The Oregon Encyclopedia

<https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/floater/>