

July 8 2006, A&E Arts  
**In Rotation**

**Soft Machine Legacy** is a very pale ghost of the wildly erratic free-form jazz-folk-rock-R&B-blues-raga group Soft Machine that emerged from the intellectually explosive and artistically liberal atmosphere in Canterbury in the mid-1960s.

The original Soft Machine contained, in various combinations over the next decade, such notable members of the British pop-jazz avant garde as bassist/composer Kevin Ayers, singer/drummer Robert Wyatt, singer-songwriter Daevid Allen, keyboardist Michael Ratledge, bassist Hugh Hopper, drummer John Marshall, sax players Elton Dean and Karl Jenkins and guitarists Allan Holdsworth and John Etheridge.

The four-piece revival called Soft Machine Legacy - Hopper, Etheridge, Marshall and Dean - manages to evoke much of the progressive spirit of the original band and the heady era that spawned it in the live concert DVD, *Soft Machine Legacy*, shot last December at the venerable Paris concert club New Morning, only a few weeks before Dean passed away.

The 10-song set, ubiquitously available on countless Internet music retail sites for less than \$20, includes classics "Ash," "Baker's Treat," "KiteRunner" and "Strange Comfort," as well as several more recent Machine-worthy originals and pre-performance interviews with the 60-something band members who trace with witty, provocative repartee their personal memories of the distant and strange history of one of Britain's most inventive and influential musical collectives.

-- Greg Quill