nullified arguments about the retro nature of the Kentucky native’s musical persona with a crisp, convincing look that lacked any hint of nostalgia.

Yoakam’s generous 90-minute-plus set mixed material from his Warners/Reprise debut album, “Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc.,” with a number of songs from his upcoming album, “Hillbilly Deluxe,” scheduled for late-April release. Surprisingly, many of Yoakam’s ballads—including the new song “Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic,” the best received by the largely rock-oriented audience.

The show’s closing flourish filled the arena with the sonority of country-rock heaven with a distinctly hillbilly run-through of Elvia’s “Little Sister” (the album’s first single), an electrified cover of the Carter Family’s “Ring Of Fire,” a blue-grass-flavored instrumental, and Harlan Howard’s classic “Heartaches By The Number.”

DAVID WYKOFF

JOHN SCOFIELD

THE BOTTOM LINE, NEW YORK

TICKETS: $11

A S A GUITARIST, John Scofield has worn many hats during his career—and he juggled each of them when he brought his band here last month for a one-night showcase.

Scofield possesses the furious, sharp-edged sound of the most powerful rock guitarist, an attribute that earned him a piece of the spotlight during the late ’70s as a member of Billy Cobham’s band.

Yet, unlike others associated with the fusion camp, he commands the improvisational chops and dynamic range of a mainstream-minded jazz player. And, as he proved on his most recent Grammy-winning album, “Blue Matter,” he also holds respect for, and has the ability to express, the blues tradition.

Scofield easily shifted gears from one dimension to another during the course of the evening, and his band—keyboardist Robert Aries, drummer Dennis Chambers, and bassist Gary Grainger—kept pace. From the rambunctious show open, “Trim,” filled with rhythmic stop-and-go stylings, to the soothing and dreamy title track of last year’s “Soft And Warm,” the quartet delivered an array of crowd-pleasing Performances.

It’s possible that from a market-(Continued on next page)