

Prettiest rockers not best

by Christine Holm

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No doubt I am guilty of auditory voyeurism, even if I deny total responsibility for it. Enough people in public — the loud talkers, the across-the-room conversationalists, the shouting cell-phone storytellers — all but approach and ask for eavesdropping.

Not to sound unappreciative. It can serve as a pleasant means of distraction from pursuits of academia and offers an experience of more accomplishment than mundane spacing out. More importantly, listening in on the dialogues of others offers a wide variety of actually quite useful information.

For example, it was inadvertently advised to avoid the corners of State and Mifflin this past weekend due to a particularly deceptive patch of ice. Had someone talked just a touch louder, I might have also avoided the bruises of sliding along Gorham. I also became aware that the Profits' JP Roney is, and I quote, "too hot for his own good." What such a statement means exactly is beyond me, but it certainly interested me enough to search around for some photographic representations.

Indeed, the boys are a lovely bunch. But possessing a seemingly wacky propensity toward listening to bands in lieu of looking at them, it did not take me long to shift from the pictures to their sounds. Now there was something hot.

I had seen the band's name around campus, with posters advertising shows and reviews comparing them with the likes of college favorites such as Jack Johnson and John Mayer, but the sounds apparently remained just out of earshot. Why had I never overheard that the guitars were smooth, the bass was elusive or the lyrics were profoundly honest? Exactly why is there so much more general public emphasis on the visual aesthetics than the aural valor?

If I am not mistaken, music is supposed to be about the sounds. I do not think I have ever seen a boy so beautiful as to justify my suffering through a set of screeching chords, flat notes or uninspired lines. ...

Is the tradeoff between the look and the sound essential? Without the necessity to stay in the limelight by pushing a musical envelope, evolving an auditory genre, it seems there may never be a Pharell look-alike with the genius of Tribe. Major labels may play it safe by pushing pretty faces rather than promoting revolutionary rhythms.

This is not a recommendation to find the most visually offensive artist and expect a diamond-in-the-rough musical experience, though it might prove an intriguing experiment. Rather, a suggestion to put a musician on the list of favorite artists because there is substance in his sound. Returning to the Profits, perhaps Roney is too hot for his or, more importantly, the band's own good. Content with visual appeal leading to what will likely be a full house at Luther's this Friday night may mean contentment with production of more of the same. More importantly, running the risk of being known for anything but the quest of their creative endeavors. Rather than leaving the eyes to determine musical preferences, keep the ears open.