

Entertainment



Moral Hazard sheds light on nonconformity

Moral Hazard resists conformity

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With "Signals From Sheba," Moral Hazard shed some light on the dark side.

On one level, the performance Saturday night in Memorial Hall Ballroom was about lesbian lifestyles. More generally, though, the rock-comedy-dance group spoke to resistance to conformity — to anyone's life outside the circle of approval.

For Moral Hazard, the medium is secondary to the message. Accordingly, while the writing in the show was rich, the production was pretty bare-boned.

Lighting effects were minimal, and most often the group and the ballroom were simply bathed in light. Dancers Louise Udaykee and

Barbara Covington provided a visual variety that is too often lacking in all-aural rock and roll shows. With more dramatic lighting, though, the impact of these "snake dancers" could have been even greater.

The production had sound problems, too. Jan Gibson's vocals were often muddled, and overamplified music drowned out the lyrics many times. If Sheba was sending signals, they were sometimes lost to the noise.

The musicians — KC Wildmoon on lead guitar, J.B. Sapp on bass and Jane Black on drums — were competent, and Wildmoon proved himself to be a writer of some talent.

The band has a new wave inclination, and most of the 15 songs were high-energy rockers. The snake dancers, with their spandex slacks

and plastic sunglasses, added the perfect visual touch to songs like "Punk Lover" and "Eat Sweet Treats."

Gibson's raspy, strong voice was better matched to the bluesy songs, though, and she and the group shone on the funky "Peter Gun" (Never Known A Woman). Lyrics, vocals, music and choreography — all parts formed a cohesive, impressive whole.

Since Moral Hazard is a theatrical concept band, integration is really the goal, rather than just the sum of the parts. The performance fell short of that goal at times.

Though the group stressed the collaborative nature of the show, Gibson was undeniably the focal point. Her creative contributions and considerable talent forced her to the

foreground.

In fact, unaccompanied comedy and commentary by Gibson was the most meaningful and the most entertaining part of the show. Her characters were imaginatively created and exceptionally funny.

In one scene, she played all the members of a Southern-styled "God" family. She was Mom, Our Father, Little Jesus and Jesus Lynn engaged in a hilariously mundane "down-home" dinner conversation.

Sheba's most effective signals were satirical ones such as this. At these moments, the show was wonderfully irreverent and comical. Moral Hazard has a sense of humor, and the group uses it wisely to shed light on the dark side.