

Spoons: A Great show for those who saw

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A crowd estimated at more than 500 jammed themselves into the SUB cafeteria Friday with every intention of seeing and hearing the Spoons, a young Canadian pop group that seems to be gathering quite a following. Unfortunately, very few people actually got to see the performance, which brings me to the point of the not-quite-a-review: something has got to be done.

Let me say right now that I am a firm believer in live music and I applaud any efforts--by CSL, the Student Union, or whoever is responsible--to bring bands to this campus. But having a band as popular as the Spoons (or Rough Trade --remember that?) play in the cafeteria presents one obvious problem: with a stage less than a foot high, once the wall of devoted fans has gathered at the front, most of the audience can see very little, if anything. It's ironic that a relatively unknown band elicits a less hysterical response -- meaning that people stay in their chairs -- and thus everybody gets a chance to see what's going on. But a group like the Spoons or Rough Trade comes, everybody goes nuts, and most people end up hearing, not seeing the band. After all, isn't acutally watching the performance the whole point of having a live band?

I realize there are no simple solutions. Ideally, students should show consideration and sit down, out of the way. But since this is highly unlikely, maybe they could try a slightly different arrangement for bands they know are going to be primarily watched up close and not listened to. Instead of a dance floor, the area immediately in front of the band could be filled with tables and chairs. Patrons would be required to remain seated except while going from table to bar, or wherever. Those who consistently violated this policy would be asked to leave. For those who really wanted to dance, an area could be cleared to the right or left of the speaker stacks for this purpose.

Another possibility involves putting the major band in the ballroom and using a higher stage. A standing-room-only crowd could then see the band, but this presents at least two major problems: no room for tables, and poorer acoustics. But in an extreme situation like that which existed for the Spoons and Rough Trade, it may be the better choice. Obviously, though, the cafeteria is still a much roomier and more comfortable place to watch bands.

Oh yeah -- the Spoons. In all honesty, I didn't stick around very long: fighting constantly with people around me to catch half a glimpse of somebody's back is not my idea of fun. But what I heard did impress me: interesting vocals, good harmonies, solid drumming, inventive bass playing. Like many bands working this genre today, the musicians seem to have eschewed individual flash for a unified group sound. I'd very much like to hear the Spoons again -- and maybe even see them this time.

