

'Mentalists' impress skeptical students

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Mind control, uncanny predictions, gravity-defying feats — if this were 17th-century Salem, Mass., a show like this would have likely ended with a lynching.

Wednesday night held an event chock full of shock as the University Program Board brought professional mind readers and psychics — or “Mentalists,” as they prefer to be called — Jeff and Tessa Evason to campus. The Evasons performed to an excited — — — audience in University Center 107 for two hours Tuesday night, offering what their website refers to as “a slick blend of interactive entertainment and comic relief that defies logic.”

A husband and wife duo that specializes in mind reading and mind control, the Evasons have been hailed by NBC as, “The finest act of its kind in the world.” Their tricks and surprises ranged from guessing willing participants’ personal information — such as their names and birthdates — to predicting what an audience member would exactly cite as the object he would first buy after winning the lottery. As wife Tessa stood onstage, often blindfolded, husband Jeff walked throughout the audience picking out the next participant for the next electrifying mental challenge.

One audience member challenged Tessa’s ability to sense what was in his hand. He held a piece of Indonesian currency, which she knew almost immediately. In addition, she was also able to offer the value written on

the bill and the serial number on the dollar bill, although she was blindfolded, standing face against the stage.

The Evasons tested student abilities by offering them formidable challenges of wit, trust and strength. A feat was performed where four male contestants lifted — er ... levitated — a female student using just two fingers each underneath her armpits and behind her knees.

Three of these male participants were faced with a challenge in which they had to trust Tessa’s skills of omniscience. Four chairs lined the stage, with a red cup on each.

The three students were alerted of the fact that one of these cups had a sharp nail underneath sticking straight up. The three faced away from the stage along with Tessa as an audience member decided under which cup to place the nail. When this step was complete, the three contestants were told to sit as hard as they could on top of the cups.

When Tessa asked one of the contestants if he trusted her he said, “Do you trust your lawyer?” The three students sat on the cups and emerged from the exercise thrilled and unscathed.

Tessa had “the strongest guy in the room” lift her up by her hips once. This first time, he had no trouble. However, the second time she was able to miraculously render herself too heavy to be lifted and the shamed contestant bashfully trudged back to his place in the audience.

“I can’t believe she guessed my middle name,” freshman Maurice Sun Kim said. “There is no way she could have just guessed it like that. I was really impressed.”



MEGAN WALLNER

Junior Julia Sheffield reads a letter supposedly written by Tessa that morning which predicted exactly what the student would be wearing, down to the brand name of the jacket.