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READ MY MIND: Mentalists Jeff and Tessa Evason perform tricks for students Tuesday evening in the Ballroom.

Mentalist duo 'wow' students

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Reporter

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Not even a thunderstorm warning could keep a significant crowd from coming to view Tuesday evening's presentation. The crowd was noticeably energetic, looking forward to seeing the mentalist duo Jeff and Tessa Evason perform.

There was techno-pop music playing 15 minutes before the event, keeping students in an enthusiastic mood. They even managed some applause after a playing of Jewel's "Intuition."

They may not have known it at the time, but intuition was the theme of the evening. The Evasons, hailing from both Toronto and Baltimore, brought their self-described, "slick blend of interactive demonstration, comic relief and spellbinding entertainment," to the Lenhart Grand Ballroom and wowed the gathered crowd.

Mentalism is the belief that there are capabilities and practices the mind can perform which science cannot explain.

There wasn't a clear impression among the students as to what they had expected coming into the show.

Kaitlin Schmidt, freshman, had never heard of the duo, but was looking forward to the performance. "I like illusion type of things, and I'm willing to see the different aspects of what they do."

The show began with several displays of their telepathic prowess, as Tessa was able to guess different combinations of numbers without having seen them, or guess someone's name without looking at them or having ever seen them. They weren't perfect, and she made an occasional error, but only with names and once with the serial number on a Canadian bill; she was able to correctly guess the denomination and all the other numbers and letters.

There was a noticeable difference between their show and other performances of their genre. They weren't there just to perform, but to bring a message of openness to one's own inner sense of the world around them -- one's own intuition.

"We invite you to keep your minds open," Tessa said during the show.

For the doubters in the audience they had a challenge as well, \$25,000 to anyone who could prove they used any special assistance or communication devices to enhance their performance. They brought three young men on stage and were required to sit on a cup atop a wooden disk that might contain a metal spike. "Do you trust me?" Tessa said. "I dunno!" the first student said. But it didn't seem like most of the crowd was there to doubt, but rather to enjoy an impressive display of mentalism.

On their Web site, evason.com, they describe their show as an, "uncanny demonstration of mind reading, levitation, prediction, memory and telekinesis [which is] both thought provoking and mystifying."

Stacy Ferris, senior, thought they lived up to their description, "It was amazing how they could see someone's ID card and say their name without having ever met them."

Brad Grochowski from Toledo agreed and added that they were, "Amazing. Knowing the playing card the lady had on the phone was really amazing."

Brad was recalling one of the most compelling parts of the performance. The duo had a member of the audience call her mother, instructed the mother to get a deck of playing cards in her house, shuffle them, turn over a top card and shuffle the deck again. She eventually revealed the one turned over card -- the King of Spades. Meanwhile, Tessa had a deck of her own that she had been shuffling. She also turned the top card over and proceeded to shuffle again as well. Tessa's card was the King of Spades. ■
