

OPINION

Complaining Out the Ying-Yang

Emily Gamiel

Upon first finding out that the Ying Yang Twins, two highly talented rap artists, were coming to Meredith College for the Sizzlin' September Concert, I was more than thrilled. For the past two years I have been let down by the annual concert lineup. After going through a breakup my freshman year, the shrill cries of Edwin McCain would have been too much for my feeble heart, and I'm not an alternative rock kind of girl so last year's choice, The Red Jumpsuit Apparatus, didn't catch my interest, much less take up two hours of my time. This year, after excitement about the Ying Yang Twins concert at Meredith built up inside me for days, my giddy attitude was crushed after being told that there was controversy over the concert. The argument that the Ying Yang Twins objectify women does not surprise me, just as the age-old argument over modeling companies' almost exclusive use of skinny models doesn't shock me. A generation gap that is present between parents and their daughters makes agreeing on something such as music a difficult and sometimes impossible feat.

When I jump into my mom's car, the last thing I want to hear is her James Taylor CD playing the same songs that I have heard since I was three - and when my mom gets in my car, the last thing she wants to hear is the newest Wiz Khalifa mix tape, also known as "that rap

mess." Of course parents of students at Meredith College wouldn't choose the Ying Yang Twins as their annual concert. But this concert is for the students, and the widely famous rap group is what the students chose. The generation gap between mothers and daughters shown here includes many years and events in history that have revolutionized the world and changed the culture of America, and women in their late teenage years and early twenties today are very different from their mothers at the same ages. As much as the parents of students at Meredith College don't want to believe that their daughters were up on stage at Fubar last Thursday night dancing to a song by the Ying Yang Twins, the daughters probably were...and they were probably getting "crunk" while doing it.

I am embarrassed to be part of a community reprimanding an organization whose sole purpose is to organize activities for women attending Meredith College. To criticize and chastise the committee that approved this group for the concert is immoral and absurd. The women who put their few hours of spare time each week into an organization that strives to entertain students should be praised for their good deeds, not criticized.

Pleasing the students is their job, and, in this case, I believe they succeeded. The students had the ultimate decision of who would perform; a vote was held and the students chose the Ying Yang Twins. When was the last time you were given free tickets to a rap concert? The Meredith College community should be grateful for having a free show for students, no matter who the performers are. And to raise serious concerns about something as superficial as a concert is ridiculous.

If women don't like the subject matter of artists such as the Ying Yang Twins, then women should stop being the subjects. Rappers would have other things to rhyme about if women didn't throw themselves at male celebrities. I am confident that I will

never fling myself at the feet of a man because of his "bling" or "ballin' pimp cup." I am not offended by the controversial lyrics because they do not apply to me or to women like me, and it may be that those who are to blame for the unnecessary uproar have guilty consciences about their own conduct. If one of these women would actually do something about the bad image of women that they help to continue through their own actions, then maybe someone would listen to their protests.

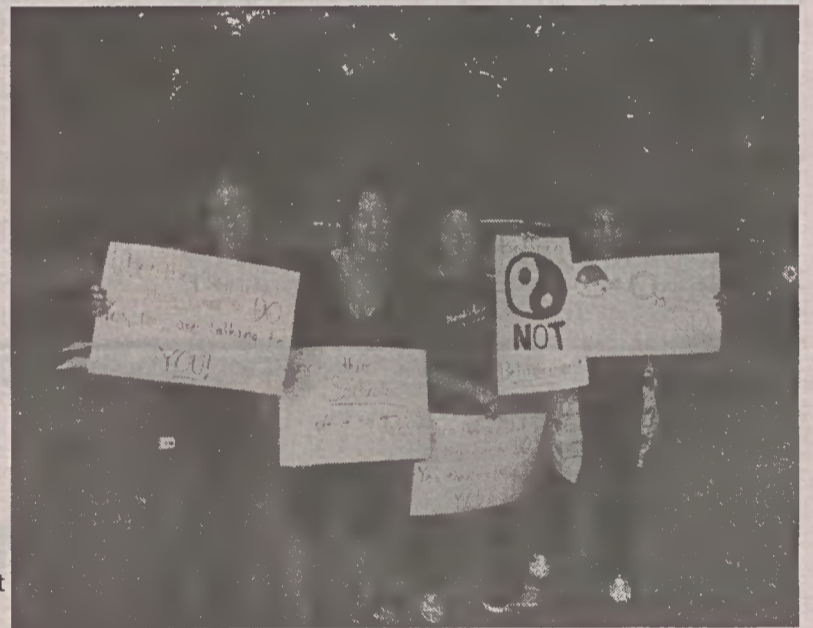


photo by Izzy Bouchard

Misogyny Has No Place at a Women's College

Tiffany Stokes '07

The recent performance of the Ying Yang Twins at the Sizzlin' September concert event sends out a clear message: Meredith College supports violence against women.

It seems antithetical; how could a women's college host such a misogynistic and woman-hating music group? During my four years here, this campus was my sanctuary. It was a place where I felt encouraged and supported in who I was and what I could do in the world. I learned about leadership, civic engagement, and global awareness. Because of my time here, I became involved in the women's movement and discovered my passion for advocacy and activism.

However, all of that seems cheapened now. I feel deceived; like my experience here was just a joke. By inviting (and paying for) the Ying Yang Twins to perform on campus, the place I loved so dearly has become just another obstacle to the struggle for women's rights.

The Ying Yang Twins are not just a regular hip hop group; they epitomize

rape culture through their sexually charged lyrics and music videos. For those unaware of the term, rape culture is a culture that makes rape and sexual violence commonplace. It can be created and fostered by words in a song, images on television, or sexist jokes among friends; it makes it socially acceptable to treat women in a sexually degrading way, which some argue excuses or justifies rape and sexual violence against women. Meredith participates in this culture by allowing this group to perform on campus; it affirms that these types of attitudes toward women are encouraged and supported.

The Ying Yang Twins' music centers on treating women as merely a method for men to experience sexual gratification. Their lyrics express that it's okay to threaten and hit women when they don't do what you want, and that their only value comes from their body - not their heart, soul, or mind.

Their offensive and derogatory music is no secret to the world; this group has made tons of money through appearances, record sales, and performances. Surely someone at Meredith knew who they are before they were put on a ballot, and if not, the student body and the administration have an obligation to research these groups before they are even selected as an option.

Notwithstanding this, the Ying Yang Twins are on their way. Some might tell me if I don't like it then I shouldn't attend. I should just change the radio station, flip to another channel, or get out of the club. But my response is this: if you lived in an apartment, and you heard a woman being beaten by her partner in the next unit over, would you just cover your ears?

True, no one is being "actively" assaulted by this hip hop group, but their lyrics and actions contribute to the larger message that it's acceptable to treat women this way. This message communicates that women like it

when we are abused, disrespected, and degraded, and that women's sexual identity and experience exist only for the sexual pleasure and stimulation of men. Not only do we fail to speak up, but we'll even dance to the beat and buy the songs on iTunes.

And for the free speech advocates, I am not arguing that this group be silenced - I just don't want my alma mater supporting or paying for their messages. It tarnishes the college's reputation and sets back any work that it does for the advancement of women. I feel a strong sense of community and accomplishment whenever I look at my degree I earned from Meredith, and a part of that has now been lost.

This event should have been canceled - if not for the worldwide goal to end violence and degradation against women, then for the preservation of Meredith's reputation as a collegial and supportive environment for women.