

Red Hot Chili Peppers

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If the Red Hot Chili Peppers had an iota of originality or intelligence, they might make great dance music. The Hollywood-based band, who performed Thursday at the Ritz (119 East 11th Street), command some of the funk basics - a stomping rhythm section, a defiant attitude and a taste for noise. But the beat and the snarl add up to a pointless display because the Red Hot Chili Peppers - a white band - blatantly imitate black rap groups, adding a tinge of ugly, self-serving arrogance.

The band played four types of songs Thursday - slow raps with power chords mimicking Run-D.M.C.; faster raps recalling Melle Mel; imitation James Brown funk, and punk-rock songs modeled after the Sex Pistols' repertory. Its vocalist, Anthony Kiedis, eventually stripped down to an athletic supporter; between songs, he boasted about his sexual prowess and put down band and audience members.

From Elvis Presley to Talking Heads, whites have borrowed from black music to good effect. But the Red Hot Chili Peppers have no musical twists of their own, and Mr. Kiedis can't even live up to the first requirement of rap - he doesn't enunciate.

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