

'Plex' pride

► SHARI WEISS

The Flaming Lips versus Fall Out Boy: two different bands with different sounds and different reputations in the music world. So whose career would the members of Northwestern's horn-and-bred pop rock band the Foster-Walker Complex rather follow?

"It would be cooler to be the Flaming Lips than Fall Out Boy," says Complex's drummer and Weinberg senior Dave Moyer, citing the Lips' 20-year run in comparison to Fall Out Boy's current "it" status.

Weinberg senior Danny Leavitt, the band's guitarist and former high school classmate of Fall Out Boy's Patrick Stump, nods his head in agreement with Moyer and says, "It's just dangerous to rise really fast because you inevitably fall."

Reluctant or not, Moyer and Leavitt — along with vocalist/guitarist/lyricist Marcus Ricci, also a Weinberg senior — can't help but smile when reflecting on the band's journey thus far.

Only two short years ago these three students formed the Foster-Walker Complex along with Jon Echt, McCormick '05 — who in addition to playing bass now works a 9-to-5 job as a material engineer. They all wanted to ensure music was a part of their time at NU.

The band found their first opportunity to play live at a fundraiser for *The Vagina Monologues* in 2004. By that spring, the band won the campus-wide "Battle of the Bands" competition, securing themselves a spot playing alongside the likes of Gavin DeGraw and the Waiters at NU's annual Dillo Day.

The Foster-Walker Complex has since moved on from playing fraternity parties to performing in bars in Evanston and, more recently, playing in Chicago venues. The band will play a 21-and-up show in celebration of their first full-length, self-titled album Jan. 21 at Martyrs', 3855 N. Lincoln Ave.

"We wanted to have something where we could send a press release to major newspapers and radio (stations) and say, 'Hey, we're doing something for

Campus band tries to shed 'college' rep

real," Moyer says. "We're not just a college band."

The band is offering a \$10 package — available on their Web site, www.thefosterwalkercomplex.com — to the show for NU students, including transportation, admission and a copy of their new album, a follow-up to the band's self-recorded EP *Eleven-O-Three*.

"I don't think we took a lot of risks on (the EP)," Ricci reflects. "It was more about just getting the tracks down."

While the band says they're proud of the EP, it was a struggle to make.

"When you're doing it all yourself and you're pressing 'record' and playing at the same time, you don't really have room to try all sorts of different things," Leavitt says.

This time around the band had assistance, mainly in the form of Matt Allison, a well-known punk rock producer for bands such as the Lawrence Arms. Allison co-produced the album with the band, which recorded its material at his Chicago-based Atlas Studios.

"I think he really helped us progress in terms of our sound," Moyer says. "If you listen to the EP, it really sounds clean and sort of dainty. It doesn't have a lot of grit. And then we went into the studio with a guy who does (work with) Alkaline Trio and he's like, 'Every track needs distortion,' (and) 'Play fucking louder.'"

With countless shows behind them, a sold-out EP and this new album ready to go, the Foster-Walker Complex knows they still haven't finished paying their dues. Still, they're hoping everything else will just fall into place.

"If there's any time you're going to make it with an original band, it's while you're young," Leavitt says. "We just have to take this risk and make this jump into the unknown. It's an exciting time for us." ►

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We Are Scientists are unavoidably tagged as the "next big thing." While everyone and their mom is into post-punk lately, they're the only band of the genre to make holding cats in front of your face cool. You decide.

"So, if you're way too scared to pick up an old Joy Division LP — and even Interpol is a little too intimidating — then We Are Scientists are definitely for you. It's boring and utterly non-threatening, but that seems to be what sells these days."



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Former Unknown



MEGAN BROWN
Sorori-fastic Stoner



THE UNKNOWN
Bitter Curmudgeon

"Here's the gist of it: They hate their scene (it's sooo over), but they're immobile; with blasé lyrics and riffs, they do nothing to move past the hipper-than-thou genre. Real scientists may be boring, but that's because they're smarter than you. This is just vapid."

"If chem was as engaging as We Are Scientists' new album, I'd consider pre-med. But since I'm on the fast track to becoming an uninsured freelancer, I'll content myself by listening to this punchy, radio-ready CD on my way around campus."

"I, too, wanted to make a punny remark about the band's name and an academic subject. Alas, this album is catchy through and through, with buzzing bass lines and kicked-up drums. Nothing too substantive, but nonetheless fun to listen to."

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