

GIANT: MUSIC FOR MUSIC'S SAKE

BY BRYAN REED
DIVERSIONS EDITOR

There's a sense of epic urgency that spills from Giant's music. Guitars clash, surging against each other as they propel melodies to soaring heights.

Powerful drum hits fill the space, nailing shut the lid as Isaac Jones' gruff vocals battle against churning waves of sound — exasperated, desperate.

But when the fury recedes — even if only for a moment — it leaves a raw, vulnerable haze of gorgeous melody and melancholic atmosphere.

As the opening band at Cat's Cradle tonight, Giant should prove a tough act to follow.

The Greensboro-based band has been on a far-reaching tour with Between The Buried And Me, perhaps N.C.'s best known metal band, which Jones says has been "awesome," except for being unable to play dates in Canada.

But now, the band is bringing its massive music back home, in a tour that started Wednesday in Greensboro and continues with tonight's show and a set Friday in Charlotte.

Musically, Giant is a dynamic, brooding beast, but after talking to vocalist/guitarist Jones, who founded the band with his brother, Zac, it all makes sense.

"We just wanted to create music that had some weight to it," he said.

It's a dark, heavy sound indebted to the brothers' days spent listening

to hardcore and metal, but equally important is the group's tenacity when it comes to composition and experimentation.

"Whatever emotions we're trying to display with the music, we want that to translate," Jones said. "That's why we've become so turned on to soundtracks, just because the more visual we can make it, the better."

Their sound's unrelenting dynamic only augments the urgency in Giant's music.

Much of the band's philosophy stems from radical politics and social discontent: the search for positive change in what can seem to be a harsh world.

"For me and my brother, when we first started Giant, a lot of that stuff was really relevant," Jones said of the band members' leftist sentiments.

"We kind of latch on to the things that are more movement-oriented," he continues. "I don't like to tell people how to live, but it's how we live ... Giant, musically, was an expression of a lot of the anger we were feeling."

But he's also quick to note that politics don't dominate Giant's songwriting.

"A lot of the lyrics do talk about that sort of thing, but a lot of them don't, you know? When you write

music it's a really personal thing." Personal enough that it plays into the band's business practices. "We love music for the sake of music," Jones said. "I don't even know if we actually own any of our music."

He doesn't fault music being sold as a commodity; it's when it's made for the sake of being sold, rather than for the sake of expressing something important, that he sees a problem.

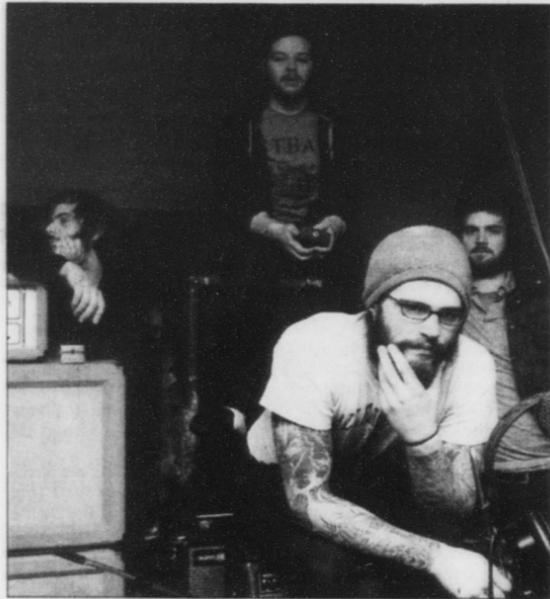
"Essentially, business put to music is what makes people f--k with other people's music," he said.

"The motives are essential." As the band continues its tour with BTBAM, the notions of commercial success blending with musical progression become apparent. In contrast to Giant's relatively small-scale operations, BTBAM can celebrate a huge fanbase, a big-time record deal with Victory Records and much wider renown — and the commercial success that comes with it.

But Jones sees a balance. "It's just one of those things that Between The Buried And Me is just so talented that you had to

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Info: www.catscradle.com



COURTESY OF THE END RECORDS

Giant, a quartet from Greensboro, will bring its heavy, dynamics-laden sound to Cat's Cradle as a supporting act for Between The Buried And Me.

"We just wanted to create music that had some weight to it."

ISAAC JONES, GUITARIST/VOCALIST, GIANT

pay attention. "There's bands that evade that commercial ideal. You have to pay attention to it because it is what it is. We knew Between The Buried And Me would either be cult-famous, or, well, famous."

"Those dudes really know what they're doing." The same easily can be said of Giant, who with this tour finishing up and a new recording in the works, finally might see a dawning horizon where the music the band makes is greeted with a reception as huge as its sound.

And it would make a fitting story for the band whose songs express a deep, heavy turmoil but at the same time bring a sound of hopefulness — always looking forward, always pushing on, always progressing.

Art can't exist in stasis. The band will continue to push its boundaries, constantly evolving and making music for the sake of making music.

It's a quest befitting a Giant.

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

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