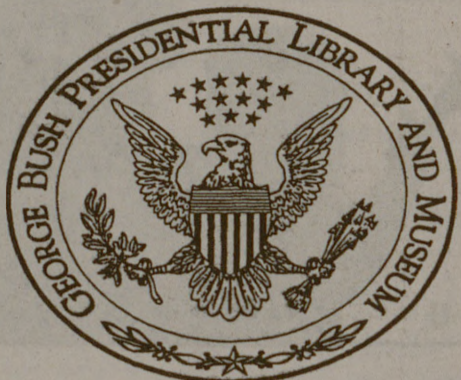


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AggieLife

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THE BATTALION

Thursday, November 1, 2001

EXIST

By LYCIA SHRUM
THE BATTALION

The band named

The unique sound of Bryan-College Station band Exist is best described as music with a message.

Exist members Jesse Thomason (vocals/guitar); his wife Ami Thomason (vocals); Crit Russell (bass); Mark Henderson (auxiliary hand percussion) and Justin Rusch (drums); see themselves as artists, who together, create a musical masterpiece.

From classical and Spanish guitar movements gone rock, to incorporating a cell phone (yes ... a cell phone) into its music, Exist has enough flavor that the band said can linger with the listener long after the last song has ended.

The band said its sounds are different from that people might be used to hearing in today's rock music. They describe their songs as being morphed into a completely different feel from the beginning of the song up until the end.

With such influences as Chris Cornell of Soundgarden, Keith Green, U2, Delirious, the Police and Bob Marley, and a sound that is often compared to those of Incubus (minus the DJ), it is no wonder that Exist is well on its way to establishing a solid fan base in College Station.

"This one guy came up to me to tell me he'll jump in his car just to drive around and listen to our CD," Jesse said.

When someone approaches the band like that, Russell said, "that is when you know people love us for doing what we love to do." Ami said Exist is about speaking to people. She said their music shows what has happened in their own lives.

Although Russell, Henderson and Rusch have been playing together since 1997, Ami

and Jesse are the most recent editions on board in 2000. Playing together in College Station for the past six months has helped become a tightly knit group.

"Through playing together, I think we each learned something from the other members," Henderson said. "The whole process is an evolution of music from then to now."

With a self-titled EP already under the belt, Exist is still in the process of getting things ready before beginning to record their first full-length LP. Crit said the band wants to make sure it has devoted listeners before releasing a full-length CD.

"Before we release a CD, we want to make sure we have people to actually release it to," Russell said.

Exist members said they are thrilled to be able to play for a receptive College Station crowd. However, the band also looks forward to expanding its fan base to towns such as Austin, Dallas and Houston. Jesse said the band is in the process of speaking with different people in order to make connections to play at venues in these towns.

Jesse has also started a small record label named Infiltrate Records. While Jesse is a founder, he said each band member contributes to the business. With the other members handling promotions, merchandise, advertising, public relations and other aspects of the band, the entire band is busy with the music.

"The band does realize that before we are able to promote other bands, we want to concentrate on successfully promoting our own music," Jesse said.

Those hoping to catch one of Exist's performances find show dates and times at www.existmusic.com. The band's EP will be on sale for \$5 and T-shirts will sell for \$10 at all performances.



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