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GOOD AND GIGGING?

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A higher power: Rock band Echo After is, from left, John Steed, Cameron Hurd, Drew Hamlet, Jason Zeeff and Scott Walters. The band plays tonight at The Intersection.

'A living diary'

LOCAL BAND DELIVERS MUSIC WITH SPIRITUAL MESSAGE

BY TRICIA WOOLFENDEN
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

GRAND RAPIDS — Drew Hamlet is an open guy, playing in an open band.

The vocalist for local Christian rock band Echo After has no problem using music to express his feelings about personal triumphs, setbacks and spirituality. He and his bandmates — guitarists Cameron Hurd and John Steed, drummer Jason Zeeff and bassist Scott Walters — pride themselves on creating music "with a message."

"I think what sets us apart, locally speaking, is that we bring a message. Our message happens to be about Jesus Christ," Hamlet said.

Hamlet said the band is clear in its message, openly talking about its connections to religion and God. The musicians use their spirituality to create songs that speak about life experiences and issues, positive and negative.

"The songs are a living diary," Hamlet said.

The band's popular tune, "Run," is particularly important to Hamlet, who penned the song about his brother, who passed away. Though it

IF YOU GO

Echo After

When: 6 tonight

Where: The Intersection, 133 Grandville Ave. SW

Cover: \$12

Also playing: Thousand Foot Krutch will headline; Far-Less and The Mines also will play.

tackles a painful topic, Hamlet said the song is inspirational.

"That's a song that really touches people," Hamlet said. "It helps people grieve. I've heard so many things across the board from people who find something in that song."

While Hamlet handles most of the lyric writing, the songs are considered collaborative efforts, with each member contributing a unique element to the final sound.

"These guys have just as much say in how the lyrics sound," Hamlet said of his bandmates' contributions to the structure of the songs.

Echo After cites bands such as Kutless, Switchfoot and Anberlin as primary influences, though the band's alterna-rock sound also reflects the members' various tastes. Hamlet

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- Download Echo After ringtones, computer wallpaper and read song lyrics at the band's Web site, echoafter.com.

said he "tends to have some harder influences," including bands like Staind and Three Days Grace. Steed leans toward Radiohead and Led Zeppelin, while Hurd has a jazz background.

The band's debut recording, a six-song EP titled "Learning to Leave," was released in May.

"When we came out of the studio, we started working on more vocal harmonies," Hamlet said. "We came out with a tightness ... in the studio, you get a real clear picture of what you're doing."

Hamlet said the band's songs are constantly evolving, and several have changed, even since the completion of the disc.

"Some people think that once a song is pressed into a CD, it's set in stone," Hamlet said. "For an independent band, that's not true. There is a constant reformation."

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