It was a rather non-descript night in the middle of the week, somewhere between Syracuse and Albany, and I was talking to Scott Hobart, guitarist and singer for Giants Chair, about some of the more creative outside aspects associated with his band.

"A friend of ours owns a press, Hammer Press, in Kansas City and he does the mechanical side of things. He also helps design stuff, he designed the cover for this book."

He shows me the small, quarter-size pressed book entitled, 'Point Of No Return', a miniature documentation of his father's life as a country musician who wandered from town to town, which he's stamping addresses on.

"I did these books last time we went on tour and this is the next book I made. When I printed them I forgot to put the address on them. So today I saw this stamp maker and said, 'I better do this'. I usually would have waited but this one was round and I'd never seen the round stampers."

Things like this give a certain air to Giants Chair, having formed a few years ago after Scott met their bass player, Byron, in art school. Both their full lengths, 1995's "Red and Clear" and last year's "Purity and Control", sport handmade covers with card inserts as lyric sheets, braille type, and no pictures. They always bring handmade postcards on tour, and Byron creates strange machines that loom over his bass cabinet. It's original to say the least.

As far as music goes they belong to what is popularly being called the Midwest punk scene. It's a little hard to figure, considering that Giants Chair is too rock n' roll to be punk, but too smart to be rock n' roll.

"Ya know", he responds, running his hand through an unkempt head of Kramer-like hair, minus the caffeine-inspired quirkiness, "I never really was into punk. I was from a super small town, like one stoplight. I didn't come into contact with it until I went to school with Byron. He'd always be playing stuff and I'd say, 'ugh! What is this? These guys can't sing!' But finally, the turning point for me was the record from Pitchfork and that was some really amazing stuff. It was very pure."

Beyond the musical side though, I had been itching to ask some lyrical questions. That's more where I was finding purity in their songs - their honest, yet somewhat mysterious at times. Like in that song "New Orleans" - I just couldn't get the line, 'Now that I found you I don't know if I can tell you' out of my head - what exactly can't he tell?

With a slight smile at his face he states, "I think it's better sometimes, something like that, to be left to interpretation. It's... it's a blues song."

Hoping to push the matter I pry a little harder.

"It wasn't inspired so much by the town, but it's a street name and it also has to do with girls and stuff", he says, slightly laughing as if it sounded like some corny generalization, "It's a song about a broken heart."

As the discussion went on and time wore thin we had to call it quits. But I still couldn't quite figure where to put Giants Chair - emo without a crybaby? Math rock without the nerdiness? Rock n' roll with intelligence? Punk without the punk? It was a tough call, but I got a strange answer. A strange answer I'll roll with as being a good answer.

"It seems a lot of bands in the quote, unquote 'punk genre' spend a lot of time and energy refuting the fact that they're rock n' roll and they almost try and cover it up. To me rock n' roll is really pure. And when I say rock n' roll I mean AC/DC, "Back in Black", because that's the quintessential rock record to me."

I don't know if I'd go that far. Perhaps James Brown, Led Zeppelin, or something?

"That's another one we got in the car! A better word for it is soul music where there is more of a pouring out and not contrived - I would even consider AC/DC soul music because, for me, when I put that on, that same thing physically happens to me as when I put on James Brown. And that is, 'man, I can't help but move'. That, to me, is what rock n' roll is."