Concert Review

Giant slays Renaissance

By Claudia Perry

Playing before a sellout crowd at the Upham Friday, Gentle Giant and Renaissance displayed only a fraction of the talent that has made their past concerts memorable. Although these two bands can turn in a mediocre performance and still appeal others at their peaks, they hardly lived up to the expectations of the crowd.

Second-billed Gentle Giant's opening set was uneven at best. Their finest moments came during the introduction to "On Reflection." With bassist Ray Shulman on vocals and keyboard player Kerry Minnear out cells, it was an interesting change of pace from their usual jazz/rock sound. "Funny Ways" and the previously mentioned song were enough to make one forget about Gentle Giant's total lack of stage presence. Since most of the band members play more than one instrument, their show resembled some sort of freaked-out Beatle-Me-Chek. Lead singer Derek Shulman's antics compare unfavorably with those of an overweight martial artist. He spent most of the evening squatting and throwing his bulk around.

Musically, Gentle Giant is anything but clumsy. Their versatility and inventiveness are what sets them apart from most active rock bands. At the conclusion of their hour-long set, cries of "More!" filled the hall. When they did not reappear, a cascade of boos descended from the balcony..InnerException from their inspired presentation. For some reason, that motivation was conspicuously absent Friday night. The band's playing was flawless but lacked the energy to excite the crowd. Perhaps if the billing had been reversed, Gentle Giant had closed the evening. Renaissance's music is fairly even in tone and performance. There are very few surprises in their concerts. Most of the excitement comes from their inspired presentation. Perhaps if the billing had been reversed, Gentle Giant had closed the evening. Renaissance's music is fairly even in tone and performance. There are very few surprises in their concerts. Most of the excitement comes from their inspired presentation.

Brasilian pianist Nelson Friere will present a program of Franck, Ravel, Chopin, Villa-Lobos and Liszt Wednesday, March 2 from 8:30pm to 9:30pm. The concert will take place at Sanders Theater, Harvard and is free to the general public. For further information call 326-4844.

The Cambridge Ensemble will hold over their production of Aeschylus' "Oresteia" Thursday, Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm through March 12 at the 1511 Mass. Ave. theater in Harvard Square. For ticket reservations, group rates and further information call 876-2544.

The Windermer Brass Quintet with Andrew Wolff on piano will perform at Longs School of Music, Friday, March 4 at 3:00pm. For further information call 354-5678.

The Museum of Fine Arts annual book sale will be held from March 8 to March 10. Admission to the sale is free. For information concerning its location and hours, call 567-9300.

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