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Thunderlip is keeping rock disreputable

Scott McLennan | Telegram & Gazette

There was a time when such bands as AC/DC, Judas Priest and Mötley Crüe did not carry the imprimatur of respectability, something that time has bestowed upon the like, effectively paroling former menaces into mainstream pop culture. The band Thunderlip honors the debauched days, as the upstart group from North Carolina is hell bent on delivering the sound of harmonized guitars, motorcycle-rumble rhythms and demonically preached lyrics with all the threat and sweat such music deserves.

“A lot of the music we love comes from the ’70 and early ’80s, stuff by Deep Purple, UFO and Thin Lizzy,” said Thunderlip guitarist John Manning. “It’s really just about people having fun.”

As Thunderlip prepares to release its sophomore album “The Prophecy,” the band is hitting the road hard, already logging numerous dates with the group Lucero and is now embarking on some gigs of its own, including one tomorrow at Ralph’s Chadwick Square Diner, 148 Grove St., Worcester.

“The Prophecy” is due out Aug. 21 on Lucid Records, an imprint launched by former Thunderlip member Chris Broach. Lucid previously put out Thunderlip’s self-titled debut, a frenetic snapshot of a band finding its footing amid an interesting rock landscape. That first disc is a declaration of intent, with Thunderlip swearing allegiance to a nation whose flag is stitched from leather and denim and testifying to the masses about the power of unbridled rock. There is nothing fancy to the album, at times echoing the most careering efforts put forth by Motorhead, but the Thunderlip record ultimately conjures all manner of miscreant rock moments, right down to an improvised outro song “Dead Horse Blues” that sounds like a stoned-out Brian Jones outtake from beyond the grave.

Manning said the newer material is better honed especially now that the band has been together for a while.

“We had been playing together for a year when we got signed and made the first record,” he said. “The new record has just eight songs, but we spent a lot more time putting it together. We wanted to focus on the quality.”

Songs posted on the band’s MySpace site, as well as a sampler of new music mailed out in advance of Thunderlip’s arrival here, do reveal some added depth to the sound, but not at the expense of the lunatic vibe that makes this band so interesting in the first place.

Manning said that Thunderlip’s live show has been its main calling card, and seeing pictures and primitive video footage (thanks YouTube) of singer Chuck Krueger doing his thing, wearing a cape no less, hinted at what the payoff may be in catching this band in its maiden voyage into Worcester.

“Facing a crowd for the first time is an interesting situation. It doesn’t matter if we go into a place where nobody has heard of us and we play to 10 people. We’re going to do the same show we do when there are 300 people in front of us,” Manning said.

While a retro vibe has been shooting through underground rock for some time, most bands are finding inspiration from the era of ’60s garage rock. But there are those bumping up a decade and recasting the glory days of ’70s arena rock. The style has been taken pretty far by fellow North Carolinians Valient Thorr, a band that Manning said has helped blaze the trail for the likes of Thunderlip.

“We’re just trying to keep spreading what we think is good music,” Manning said.

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Amid differing press releases, we printed some bum info about the upcoming tribute to singer **Brad Delp** happening Aug. 19 at The Bank of America Pavilion in Boston. We have been assured that the following is where things stand: The show will include an appearance by Delp’s most famous project, the band **Boston**, which now consists of founder **Tom Scholz** plus **Gary Pihl**, **Kimberley Dahme**, **Jeff Neal** and **Fran Cosmo**. Original Boston members **Barry Goudreau**, **Fran Sheehan** and **Sib Hashian** will join in on a version of the Boston classic “Don’t Look Back.” Guest vocalists for the event will include **Sammy Hagar**, **Stryper’s Michael Sweet** and **Starship’s Mickey Thomas**. The bands **Ernie and the Automatics**, **Farrenheit**, **Beatlejuice**, **Godsmack**, **Orion the Hunter** and **RTZ** will also perform. Dubbed “Come Together,” the event will also feature a film about Delp, who took his own life earlier this year, produced by his daughter Jennifer, a graduate of the University of Southern California’s film school. Proceeds from the tickets, which cost \$35, will benefit The Brad Delp Foundation and other charities, including Scholz’s The DTS Foundation. Tickets are on sale now through Ticketmaster.

In another show note, those truckin’ to the Bank of America Pavilion tonight for the **RatDog** concert will catch guitarist **Steve**

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Kimock sitting in troupe. **Mark Karan, Bob Weir's** usual guitar foil in RatDog, recently announced his decision to sit out this tour to take care of a medical problem. Kimock previously teamed with Weir in the post-**Grateful Dead** band **The Other Ones**.

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