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IQ's gigs bring jammers together

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* Members: Troy Heinz, vocals/guitar; David Jerome, vocals/guitar; Jerry Sparkman, upright bass; Bob Martin, drums

* A quick history: After playing solo sets at IQ's open mike, Heinz approached Jerome and Martin at the weekly showcase with the idea of competing in the University Avenue bar's battle of the bands contest last winter. The group ended up winning and decided to stick together, playing under the Bar Tab Band banner, which Heinz said was chosen to evoke a sort of "roadhouse" feel.

The trio, all from Green Bay, recently added bassist Jerry Sparkman from Fort Wayne, Ind., to round out its sound. Sparkman previously played in a nationally touring rockabilly outfit.

* Sound: The group's material falls in the alt-country/jam band category, a bit of a stretch for the Green Bay area, Heinz said. He's hopeful they can break stereotypes about the two genres with their live shows.

"We're pretty much finding we're one of the few bands with this type of sound in the Green Bay-Appleton area," Heinz said. "It's interesting, because people will ask us where we are from and they'll be surprised to know we're a local band. But it works well for us. I think people who are more open, or who've been away to college or places like Madison, appreciate the music and enjoy us."

* Influences: Grateful Dead, Widespread Panic, Johnny Cash, Uncle Tupelo.

"Widespread Panic's 'Porch Song' is probably our bread and butter right now," Heinz said.

* Set list sampler: The majority of the set consists of cover songs, with the Dead and Phish sprinkled throughout. Most of the covers are obscure, however, and don't necessarily make the set list every night, Heinz said. The group also plans to slowly incorporate more originals into the set once they are finished refining their sound.

"We try to use the mind frame of the Dead and Widespread Panic. We don't like to play the same show twice."

* What to expect from the live show: "We want people to get up and dance," Heinz said. "With our kind of music, it's about the feeling more so than the actual lyrics. We try to get people feeling good and having a good time.

"Also, the great thing about the music is there's a lot of improv stuff. Our lead guitarist prides himself on doing whatever feels good, and not just playing a solo from beginning to end. We really build big time off the crowd, so if they're into it, we're going to have a lot of fun."

* Upcoming gigs: 9 p.m. tonight at BrewBaker's Pub, 209 N. Washington St., Green Bay; 9 p.m. Friday, with The Northern Pines Band from Madison, at IQ's, 2105 University Ave., Green Bay. There's no cover for either gig.

Know of an area band or artist you'd like us to check in with? Drop an e-mail to weekend@greenbaypressgazette.com.

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