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Entertainment & Life

Club 9-Ball looks to change Cape music scene

By Jason Savio

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The hard-rock trio has gotten off to a fast start since forming in October 2018, releasing its debut EP “Tomorrowland” the following April and keeping up with a busy gigging schedule.

There is a clear sound of excitement and a youthful exuberance in the voices of the members of **Club 9-Ball**, one of the newest groups to hit the Cape’s local music scene. When the three Sturgis Charter Public School East Campus graduates are together and talking about music, it’s hard not to get excited about it yourself.

“Music has been good to us” as a creative outlet, the three musicians say by email. “It’s the love of our lives and we want to share that with people,” guitarist Paddo Devine adds during an interview.

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But the band’s roots go a lot farther back to when Paddo and his brother, Seamus Devine, started playing guitar and drums. Paddo first picked up the guitar when he was 7 years old, and Seamus followed on the drums two years later, when he was also 7. Growing up and practicing together, becoming the yin to the other’s yang, has had a profound impact on their musicianship, they say.

“It’s one of those things where you’ve been playing your entire life with one person and you know exactly what they’re going to do before they do it,” says Paddo.

Now at ages 22 and 20, Paddo and Seamus Devine have taken a page out of the Van Halen playbook, being a band of actual blood brothers and adding in bassist Bobby Simmons, 19, to round out their sound and bring a formal approach to balance their self-taught style.

“It’s very helpful to have someone who has a grasp on (music) theory,” says Seamus about Simmons, who has performed in jazz ensembles and theater productions. “Paddo and I have chemistry together that you can’t teach that comes from playing together, but Bobby brings a whole new level of knowledge about music in general.”

Instead of being intimidated by the older brothers, the younger Simmons says he feels like he has fit right in like a new member of their family.

“It’s really nice to get to work with these guys,” Simmons says. “It seems like they’re just idea machines. I get all this stuff from them and give it a little formal spin, put a little theory on it and give it some of my flavor.”

Family is a running theme with Club 9-Ball. The band’s name is inspired by “9-Ball,” a play set in the Vietnam War era play written by the Devine brothers’ father, Art, that was produced in 2001 at Cape Rep Theatre in Brewster (where Art Devine is an associate artist) and later in Boston.

In a bit of serendipity, Sib Hashian, former drummer of Boston and Seamus Devine’s drummer idol, was an actor in the play.

“One of the reasons why I started playing drums is because our dad’s friend was Sib Hashian,” says Seamus. “I just thought that was the coolest thing and I’d look at pictures of him and I wanted to do that. He was in the cast. It all felt right.”

Club 9-Ball plays covers of popular songs like Tom Petty’s “American Girl” and the Eagles’ “Hotel California,” as well as heavier-sounding material from Guns N’ Roses and Led Zeppelin that is more in sync with the members’ hard-rock roots.

But don’t start to think that Club 9-ball is your run-of-the-mill, paint-by-numbers, rock-star copycats. It only takes a single viewing of one of their live performances posted online to know that these guys mean business.

“A lot of people see the chains and the rings and tattoos and say ‘Oh, you guys are a heavy-metal band’ and we’re not,” says Paddo. “We’re a rock-and-roll band. We’re trying to take rock and roll and do our own thing with it.”

The guys get their kicks out of incorporating their own original songs into their set lists, and out of the idea of changing the Cape music scene.

“One thing I don’t like about (the Cape music scene) is that there is a huge fan base that is in high school or under 21 and almost all the venues are 21-plus,” Paddo says. “We’ve had shows where more than 15 people have had to leave at 11 o’clock because they all get kicked out.”

Paddo says that one of the band’s goals is to create “more of a music scene for everybody,” regardless of age.

“The music scene on Cape is fantastic because there are people that want to hear this music, but there are very few true rock venues on Cape Cod,” Paddo says. “There are some great bands on Cape but there aren’t really venues where you can have a following.”

Club 9-Ball frequently performs at the Chatham Squire, including on Saturday night, as well as Feb. 8, March 14, April 11 and May 16. Other upcoming shows include Jan. 25 and Feb. 29 at the Red Nun in Dennis Port and Jan. 31 at the Lanes Bowl & Bistro in Mashpee. As the band continues to establish itself on Cape, it also has plans to expand off the peninsula, hoping for a college tour in the near future.

Although Paddo, Seamus and Bobby are all hungry for the spotlight and to become the Cape’s next big thing, they still come across as down to earth and approachable. Just a group of buddies playing music together.

“At the end of the day, we’re friends from high school,” Seamus says. “We’re brothers and singer/songwriters, but we do it at a loud volume with a heavy sound.”