



The Zachs, Lockwood (left) and Thomas (right), practice for their upcoming 41 North concert

41 North Releases First CD

Renamed hometown band, formerly Zinc, takes big leap on road to fame

By Claire Kearney

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The pop music drifting out from the white ranch house in Old Lyme on a quiet Sunday evening is muted, but unmistakably live. Down in the basement, the decibels boom as the five members of 41 North rehearse for the "Battle of the Bands," an April 8 fundraiser at the high school to benefit the Lymes' Youth Services Bureau Youth Advisory Council scholarship fund.

"Let's take it from the break," says lead singer Zach Lockwood, and the keyboards, guitars, drums and saxophone merge seamlessly into "This is the Time," the first cut on their newly released CD. The polished sound is impressive. Hard to believe they're a group of high school juniors who juggle band practice sessions with classes, homework and sports.

Saturday will mark a turning point of sorts for the band, the first live performance of four of the five songs on the CD that carries their new name, 41 North - a reference to the latitude of Old Lyme. It had recently transpired that their former moniker, Zinc, was already in use in the music industry.

They've been working on the CD tracks since last summer, all original material written by Lockwood and expanded on by his band mates.



“We never really thought we could make a product like that,” drummer Tom Koski (above) says, sitting beside his friends on the Lockwoods’ couch after practice. “When you consider that a record company will give a band a million dollars to produce a record... We tried to produce this with the money we had, about a thousand, but it cost more.”

They recorded the tracks “all over,” but they had the most difficulty with the vocals. Originally laid down at Connecticut College, they eventually found the best acoustics in a small room at the Koskis’. Before recording they had to turn off every electrical

appliance in the house. (“Do you have any idea how loud a computer hums?” asks Lockwood.)

The result is an alternative pop sound reminiscent of John Mayer, which appeals to a younger audience of middle and high school students. “We’re trying to be as commercial as possible... And this kind of music attracts a clean kind of crowds,” says saxophone and guitar player Zach Thomas (left).

“A lot of people don’t understand we’re not your typical garage band,” says Koski, referring to the fact that the band doesn’t indulge in destructive behavior as part of their performance. “The equipment’s way too expensive,” adds Lockwood.

Their reputation is on the rise. In addition to venues like the local high schools and the Madison Art Barn, they’ve played at Toad’s in New Haven and the Webster Theater in Hartford. They’re one of the bands on Radio Disney’s roster, appearing at promotional events for business openings, and they play frequently for benefit concerts.



“It’s way more fun to play for strangers, it’s new for them,” says bass guitarist James McCawley (above).

People have even started to recognize them in public places. “I was in the mall one day,” says Thomas, “walking with my mom, and a group of high school girls walked by... One of them said, ‘Oh my God, I didn’t realize that was him!’ That’s cool when that happens.”

This summer they’ve been booked for a four-hour gig at the Hamburg Fair. It will give the group an opportunity to run through their full playlist, which, in addition to their own

material, includes covers of songs by bands like Bob Marley, Coldplay, Edwin McCain and Will Hoge.



Where do they get the sheet music for the songs? “In the band we don’t need to read music,” says keyboard player Stephen Hackett (left). He says he can “just listen” to a song like Journey’s “Don’t Stop Believin’” and work out the notes.

They all play instruments in the Lyme-Old Lyme High School jazz band, where “Mr. Wilson (the band director) knows his music,” says McCawley. “He means a lot to us musically,” adds Thomas. “He’s really supported us.”

And in spite of their talent, none of them is counting on 41 North to make it big on Top Ten radio. They all agree that if the band creates enough “buzz,” they’ll go with it, but they’re realistic. The boys stay in the band

because they love to play music, they find it relaxing and fun, and other people certainly seem to enjoy coming to hear them.

But just in case they do make it big, here are a few little known facts for the blogs – the initial CD press was 1130 copies (not 1150 as planned), their favorite radio station is 92.9 FM out of Long Island, they get “butterflies” when they go out on stage, and the band’s official snack is ... Cheez-Its.

Editor's Note: *The Battle of the Bands* takes place in the Lyme-Old Lyme High School auditorium on Saturday, April 8 at 7 p.m. 41 North's CD is an EP (extended play) with five songs and costs \$5. The band's website is www.41northband.com and their email address is info@41northband.com