

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Rocking Thieves ready to steal into BG

By DAVID DUPONT

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With their new CD wrapped and ready to go, the members of the power-rock trio The Thieves did what any diehard rockers would do to kill time before the recording's Oct. 4 street date, they hit the road.

Talking from their California home last week, founder guitarist Hal Stokes said the band had just done its first warm-up gig before heading east. The tour will make a stop in Bowling Green at Howard's Club H Thursday. The show will start between 10 and 11 p.m.

The CD, "Tales from the White Line" is being released on the Liquor and Poker label.

The trio are unrepentant hard rockers, unabashed throwbacks to AC/DC, Led Zeppelin, The Who.

Those were the songs that Stokes and his younger brother Sam heard growing up in Oxford, England, courtesy of their father's stash of records. "When we were jamming as kids those were the songs we played," Stokes said.

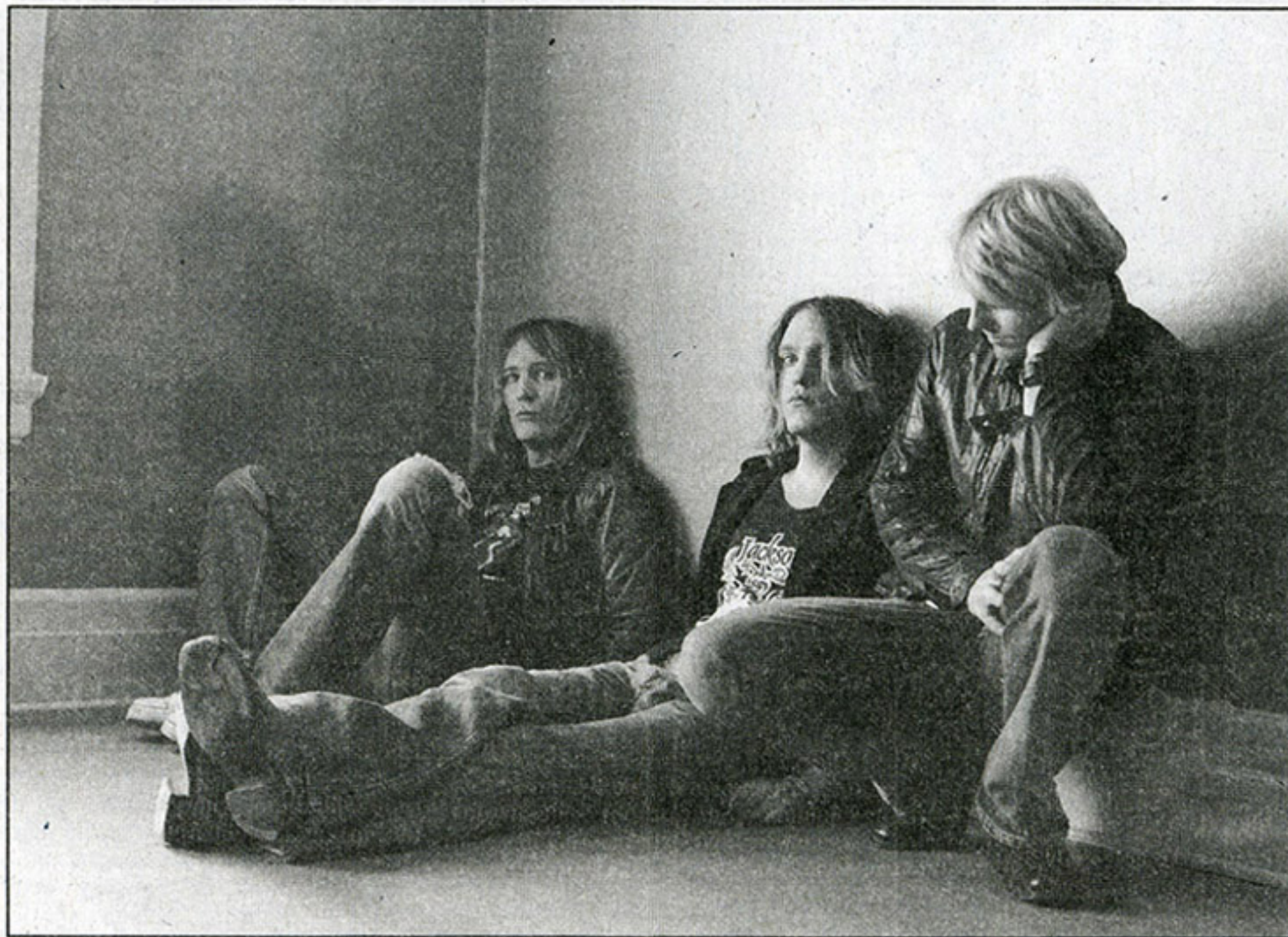
Now "when we write, it comes that way."

Rock is not fashionable. Pop music passes in and out of fashion, but rock-'n' roll persists, bubbling under the surface.

"It's very primal," he said.

And the CD has that primal throb that belies the skillful construction of the tunes.

Hal Stokes got an early start on his career leaving home at 17 to seek his fortune in London. He left behind a



Transplanted British rockers The Thieves play Howard's Club H in BG Thursday

bass guitar for 12-year-old Sam. "When I got back two years later he was the best bass player I'd heard."

For the next five years, they jam and locked in a groove. One night they played the final show at The

Point, a local institution akin to Howard's, which was ending a long illustrious run that included a role in launching The White Stripes and local bands including Radiohead and Supergrass

The idea was to play covers — the Stokes brothers selected songs from the rock mockumentary "This Is Spinal Tap."

They had a new drummer that night, Jamie Dawson. He ended up

completing the trio.

The foundations of the band were there, though they still were called Vade Mecum. The band found that name a little hard for secretaries to handle, so in contrast to The Police, they became The Thieves. In 2002 they jumped the pond and the continental divide to take root in Los Angeles.

The band had established business contacts over here, Stokes said, so the move seemed practical.

What wasn't lost was the band's showmanship. Stokes has been playing shows since he was 14, and that embedded a love and understanding of the need to perform not just play on stage. But he also remembers the thrill of being a fan.

"You get a unique moment," he said last week. "It's that one time, that one place. Every place you play, it's a different moment."

That energy is created as much by the audience, he said, as by the band. The band taps into that moment. "There's real energy in live music."

And playing in smaller towns like Bowling Green, he said, "can actually be the most fun to play because people come out and people seem to enjoy it more."

Bowling Green's the smallest town on The Thieves' itinerary with stops in Chicago, Toronto, Boston, Houston and finally New York City.

The trio then will return to California for a couple weeks off before "Tales from the White Line" hits the streets, prompting The Thieves to do likewise.