

## Lawyers find a groove as moonlighting rockers

By [Lynn Peisner](#)

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On a recent Friday night, Brian Smith shouts into the crowd at East Andrews, “Nobody comes to Buckhead before 10:45 except Tron Jackson fans!” Hoots and cheers follow. Hands clutching cell phones spring up around the stage, snapping photos.

Is he being sarcastic? It’s hard to tell with this band, really. The devoted audience likely contains movers and shakers in middle and North Georgia’s real estate-law community. It could be a dig at their 9-to-5, non-clubbing schedule. Or it could be praise for their allegiance to coming out for live music. Either way, the bodies are packed into the little club to see Smith, guitarists George Greer and Zach McElveen, drummer Alex Sanders and bassist Baxter James blast through spirited set lists of rock music from the 70s up.

Tron Jackson, named after the Georgia football player with an homage to a Dave Chappelle character, Tron Carter, is a rock ‘n’ roll cover band that performs sporadically around Atlanta and Macon. The main thing they want you to know about them is that, because they are all attorneys by day (plus one banker), they’re just here to blow off some steam from their day jobs and have a little fun.

But when Smith opens the show, belting out “Baba O’Riley” into a vintage mic, backed by a big, tight Who sound, it’s obvious these guys are actually pretty good.

Earlier over pre-show dinner and beers, McElveen (a residential real estate attorney at Atlanta firm Campbell & Brannon) and Greer brandish their iPhones and BlackBerries to show off scratches from having used them as impromptu guitar slides.

“I can wield this thing better than a beer bottle,” Greer said, holding up his BlackBerry, pointing out its dings and scratches. When he isn’t shredding, Greer practices commercial real estate law at James, Bates, Pope & Spivey in Macon.

Except for James, a credit manager at State Bank & Trust in Macon, the band members all went to law school at Mercer University. McElveen, Sanders and Greer started playing together in 2004. Needing a singer, they nabbed Smith, who wowed them at karaoke. In 2007, James, a childhood friend of Sanders’, joined the band on bass. Occasionally Sanders’ father, Randy, sits in with his harmonica.

Set lists don’t go in obvious directions, keeping shows refreshingly diverse and clear of the one-note tribute band territory. With nearly 50 songs mastered, they tend to cover Red Hot Chili Peppers, the Rolling Stones, Aerosmith, James, the Cure, Radiohead and AC/DC.

“We try to stay away from a lot of the stuff you hear when you see a cover band,” said Smith, an attorney at Atlanta’s Arnall Golden Gregory firm. “No ‘Brown Eyed Girl.’”

“We play music that girls will dance to but guys will respect,” added Sanders, who practices real estate and bankruptcy law at Phillips & Phillips in Macon.

The guys are fully aware of the irony of being button-down types by day, and by night performing music that made its original mark on the world as anti-authority anthems. This contradiction is a source of delight and subtle self-deprecating jokes.

“I hate the man except when I am the man, which is 12 hours a day,” Smith said.

Most band members started playing instruments when they were boys. Their creative urges remained over the years, undampened by sensible career choices. Having the best of both worlds, they will tell you, is what makes all this worthwhile.

“I just wanted a job that would allow me to afford a new drum set,” Sanders said.

Tron Jackson’s next show:

10 p.m. March 26. The Hummingbird Stage and Taproom, 430 Cherry St., Macon.

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