

“ 18 STREET ACROSS FLORIDA TOO / 'GWAN U STREET TO GEORGIA AVENUE / NORTHEAST, SOUTHWEST, SOUTHEAST CREW / D.C., M STREET, THAT'S HOW WE DO. ”

seeing a straight up reggae band. They're unique musically and I think that's why people gravitate to them so much.”

See-I's band members reflect this diversity in music styles. In addition to the Steele brothers, the group features rhythm guitarist Rob Myers (also with local funk foursome Fort Knox Five), sax player Frank Mitchell, Zee's son Salem on keyboards and drummer Names Thompson (also with Brazilian bossa nova outfit Soul Brazil). Additional members include Javier Miranda on congas, Brad Clements on trumpet, bassist Steve Sachse, Bobby Thompson on rhythm guitar and vocalist Candice Mills.

“Our influences are so spread out, totally international,” says Rootz, who like his brother sports large dreadlocks. “It's not like we're a set format or genre, even if we sort of look like we're reggae, which we are, but everybody in this group has an influence and everyone is appreciated.”

See-I's reggae is tinged with various other genres, ranging from very mellow down tempo (“Mean Joe Green”), to faster paced dub beat with hints of electronica (“The King”), to heavy percussion-based (“Bulletproof”). But their most beloved track, and the one they usually close out shows with, is “Homegrown”—the band's ode to their adoptive hometown D.C., its soulful chorus taking listeners on a journey through the city's streets.

“18 Street across Florida too / 'gwan U Street to Georgia Avenue/ Northeast, Southwest, Southeast crew/D.C., M Street, that's how we do.”

“It's reminiscent of where we're at, who we are,” said Zee. “In D.C., we don't have that big of a music scene. We do, it's just more of an underground scene. That song gets people hyped up, because it's not a political song, it's a chant of the street, the vibe of the street. We have always tried to have our own D.C. slice of the pie, getting our own [music] fingerprint. It's kind of what we feel is D.C. style. It's homegrown.”

For more information on See-I, visit www.myspace.com/seei

Who: See-I, with special guests
When: Saturday, Feb. 14 at 9 p.m.
Where: IOTA Club & Cafe: 2832 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA; 703-522-8340; www.iotaclubandcafe.com
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