**Royal Thunder Bio 2017**

“*WICK* is different, a bigger jump as far as our sound goes, but it’s still us, it’s just the sound of Royal Thunder’s evolution…” – Josh Weaver, Royal Thunder

“Out of all of the albums, *WICK* was the hardest one to make. It was a fight, but to hear it now, to see it finished, is so gratifying. Finally it’s over, it’s amazing to be done with it. I’m looking at it, going you’re done, it’s over, go away…” – Mlny Parsonz – Royal Thunder

It’s 2017 and after making perhaps the toughest album of their career, Royal Thunder are coming out swinging. The Atlanta based four-piece (Mlny Parsonz – bass/vocals, Josh Weaver – guitar, Evan Diprima – drums, Will Fiore – guitar), once memorably described as playing, ‘a revved-up Southern hard rock that howls like Led Zeppelin astride a psychedelic unicorn’, are, with *WICK*, reaching their tipping point. Following 2007’s self-titled EP (reissued four years later by Relapse Records), 2012’s *CVI* and 2015’s critically acclaimed *Crooked Doors*, Royal Thunder’s fourth release is an accumulation of shared experience, musical and otherwise, making art out of adversity and imbued with a new melodic succinctness that’s borne out of a band who’ve spent the last few years growing up together.

“There is no way we could have made this album even three years ago,” says Josh Weaver, “We’re all going through so many changes in our lives. We had people who had passed away during this album, that was a catalyst for how this record turned out. It wasn’t easy to record, but it was absolutely worth it. Thank god that we had this vehicle to make an album, and to put our soul in to.”

“It was a very cathartic experience,” agrees Mlny Parsonz, “There were times where I’d be dancing in the vocal booth and there were times when I’d have my hands in my pockets, shoved in as far as they could go, so angry or frustrated with the song, or just frustrated generally.”

In 2005, Josh’s vision for a fledging Royal Thunder (a version of the band that played exclusively instrumental material) was shared only with a best friend and his brother. A mere two years later they’d have eclipsed that notion, revamped the line-up, and created their warmly received *Royal Thunder* EP. “When we were in the studio this time”, says Mlny, “We went back and listened to that stuff and we laughed and made fun of ourselves pretty good.”

The 2011 reissue of their EP would be quickly followed a year later by the startling *CVI*, though no one would have expected the genre-defying *Crooked Doors* that appeared in 2015. Impossible to pin down, it was the sound of a band finding not just their feet, but their voice. Beautifully uplifting yet mired in heartache, it showcased the band’s ever evolving (that word again) song-writing skills as well as what sounded like notes from Mlny’s personal diary. Tempestuous and down at heel, it was the most complete record the band had made to date.

“I decided to just pour my heart out on that record”, says Mlny with a rueful laugh, “And there were suddenly all these interpretations of that record. I was like, what? That’s not really quite right… So I guess I didn’t really trust how this one would get interpreted.”

Which brings us to this year’s *WICK*, more allegorical and metaphorical it might be, but it retains *Crooked Doors* yearning and majesty while offering a more succinct and melodic version of the band. Though no one’s lead them here, production and recording processes remain the tried and trusted routes close to home that Royal Thunder have always favoured, this is the sound of a band that have grown and are growing together,

“It did just happen, it was very natural”, says Josh, “We’ve never wanted to sound like anyone else. We’ve grown a lot since the last record. We’ve experienced life, we’ve experienced loss. It all goes in the pot and makes it what it is.

“Listen to a song like *Plans*, where it’s mainly vocals with some guitar and drums. It’s a beautiful song, we’re very proud of it and I think it fits on what is our most diverse album hands down, which I love. It is a beautiful thing for us to be comfortable to do anything we want at any point.”

“I remember us thinking that song was not so great at first,” says Mlny, “But we pushed ahead with it, this idea of being in your own head and in doing so you’re getting in the way of things, being your own worst enemy, destroying something for no good reason.”

The haunting *April Showers* is a paean to “watching someone struggle through life and kind of understanding what their demons are”, while the undulating *The Sinking Chair* “encompasses all that frustration I was talking about. Get your ass up, quit sinking in that chair! I sang that one with my hands up on the wall of the vocal booth, clawing the foam in there!”

For now, *WICK* will carry the band’s ambition and imprint out into the world.

“Whatever we do, it still has our fingerprint on it.” says Josh. “Music has become our lives. We’re pretty much all chips in. We just love music so much - it’s a part of us. We want to make music that moves people.”

Prepare to be moved.