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A gentler god of thunder

Jennie Thompson, Special to Go Triad

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Sometimes you are born into a bigger destiny. For instance, if you're a Kennedy or a Bush, or perhaps if your name is Thor. The irony is that singer-songwriter Thor Rasmussen is more soft-spoken than one would expect from his misnomer.

"I want to offer hope but also the reality of the world we live in and a sense of sympathy," Rasmussen says of his music.

Not exactly the sensitivity one would expect from someone who shares the same name with the Norse god of thunder.

On Aug. 12, Rasmussen visits Tate Street Coffee House for an evening concert that promises not only music but storytelling and exchange. And perhaps a thunderclap or two.

"Performing in front of people brings more gusto to the music," Rasmussen says. "I appreciate live performance vs. recording now that I've done it."

With the release of one EP and one full-length album ("Hope Is the Future Tense"), Rasmussen, who recently relocated to Greensboro from Detroit, is ready to connect with his listeners in any way he can.

"I would like my music to cheer people up, but ironically I don't write really cheery songs," he says with a chuckle.

To rectify this mood, he hands out "star stickers" and "I Know Thor" cards to friends and fans.

Rasmussen draws most of his music from personal experience, bringing a thoughtful and invested tone to each song. The tune "Nothing Rhymes With Orange" explores the acceptance of an unresolved relationship with humor and painful poignancy. He tells a former lover, "You don't rhyme with me ... and that's how it's got to be."

The words are simple and incredibly straightforward as well as noticeably from the heart.

"I don't think I could write a song in third person," he says, "though it would expand my horizons."

His horizons are pretty broad already. His move to the South has largely to do with attending UNCG to study speech pathology to "help people communicate in a direct and real way."

"I've never been interested in making music my career," he says. "I came to that decision pretty deliberately."

However, music has always been a huge part of his life: "I listened to a lot of Cat Stevens growing up and Tracy Chapman, Tom Waits and Bob Dylan. My dad was more into sort of bizarre and obscure people."

In addition to the guitar, he has experimented with the clarinet and cello but admits that he's "a bit of a slacker when it comes to actually practicing."

However, he has been playing with electronic noises on the computer and keyboard regularly.

Maybe this newfound technology will give a mythic name a modern way of talking.

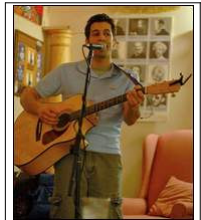
Jennie Thompson hosts "Double Dose" 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday on WUAG (103.1 FM).

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Thor Rasmussen is a singer-songwriter who recently relocated to Greensboro from Detroit. [View a larger version.](#)

GO! SEE! DO!

Thor Rasmussen

When: 8 p.m. Aug. 12

Where: Tate Street Coffee House, 334 Tate St., Greensboro