

# Country band finds audience growing in the '90s

By Kaly Soto  
Oregon Daily Emerald

With the emergence in the past four years of country music as a popular and viable listening option, The Marshall Tucker Band's audience is expanding to a new generation — a generation unfortunately who thinks that country music's roots begin with Randy Travis and Garth Brooks.

When The Marshall Tucker Band began making records 21 years ago, they were considered a southern rock band. Their status as country music forefathers has been a recent phenomenon, and one that has not failed to surprise lead singer Doug Gray.

"In the beginning we were a rock 'n' roll band, country music has come around to us," Gray said in a telephone interview from Los Angeles. "We're still playing the same songs, but now they are considered country and not rock 'n' roll."

The Marshall Tucker Band will play at the Mill Camp Annex in Springfield Thursday at 7 p.m.

The group (whose name is borrowed from a piano tuner in their hometown of Spartanburg, S.C.) is touring in support of their 17th album. The album — titled *Walk Outside the Lines* — is an attempt to return to their southern rock (country) roots.

Country music superstar Garth Brooks, who wrote the title track, said that "having a single, especially the title



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cut performed by The Marshall Tucker Band, is a milestone in my career."

*Walk Outside the Lines* is the first album that The Marshall Tucker band has recorded "from start to finish in Nashville."

"Eight of the 10 songs were written within the band, and I think we really captured not only the 'Nashville feel,' but also the heart of The Marshall Tucker Band," Gray said.

Even though *Walk Outside the Lines* is considered a country album by today's standards, the influences of The Marshall Tucker band are not at all country. Gray said his original influences were Billy Holiday, B.B. King and Elvis.

Like these legends of rock 'n' roll, Gray dreamed of becoming a professional musician not only for personal fame and glory, but because he "saw all the women" that came with the profession.

"I remember when my mother took me to a concert put on by a local band in 1955," he said. "I saw all these men standing up imitating Elvis, and I saw all the women swooning. Right then and there I knew I could imitate Elvis just as well as they could."

On a more serious note, Gray believes he has been blessed with the gift of music, and he wants very much to share that gift with the public at large, which is why The Marshall Tucker Band maintains a rigorous tour schedule that includes up to 300 shows a year.

For Gray, going on tour "is getting rest."

"I have been given the gift of entertainment," he said. "What I do is take people away from their everyday jobs and lives."

## Eugene CD a nice mix



Coming Aug. 2 to local record stores is a new compilation compact disc with tracks by Pacific Northwest rock bands, including tracks from several Eugene bands.

*Fieldburn* contains a total of 23 songs from 11 different bands.

The producers of *Fieldburn*, which is being released by Eugene's Pro-Arts Productions here in Eugene, got the title of the CD from a practice commonly used by agriculturalists.

The burning of fields is done by farmers to prepare the soil for new crops. It rids the terrain of the debris from past crops. "In its versatility," say producers Tony Proveaux and Ron Kleim, "this compilation represents a new crop in the Northwest independent music scene."

To continue with this metaphor, a non-farmer like myself knows a variety of basic crops can be cultivated for harvest. On a single farm, one can plant wheat, corn, peas or tomatoes, or some combination of these.

On this CD, many styles of music are reproduced. They range from alternative and

By John Fleischli

1960s pop (e.g. surf music), to punk and rockabilly — the hybrid you get when you cross rock and country and western.

The ground broken here is not really new, with the possible exception of the music contributed by Two Minutes Hate. The bands follow the conventions of the musical styles they have specialized in.

For instance, one can hear an authentic-sounding organ on several of the tracks that are done in the tradition of 1960s-era garage band. What is new are the people playing the music and the bands they are in. They are keeping these styles alive and making them fresh.

## Store grills Garth over CD flap

By Kaly Soto  
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Well-done Brooks burger, heavy on the sauce, was the order of the day at Face the Music last Thursday as the Music Millennium brought its "Bar-B-Q Garth Brooks" tour to Eugene.

In spite of the rain, Bob Lee, Face the Music owner, Terry Currier of Music Millennium and a crowd of about 30 people lined the sidewalk in front of the store and grilled Face the Music's entire stock of Garth Brooks cassette tapes and compact discs.

Why on earth would anyone want to take such deplorable action against poor old Garth?

In recent months Brooks has come out in support of a controversial policy adopted by four (WEA, Sony, UNI and CEMA) of the six largest record distributors. This policy states simply that any record store that chooses to stock used CDs along with their new CDs will not be given any advertising support.

As a store that carries used CDs, Face the Music is directly affected by this policy. Lee said the policy that went into effect in April of this year will cost his store \$15,000 in revenue in the coming year and expressed concern for his colleagues who own larger stores and may find themselves out of more money.

Lee said he had experienced a myriad of reactions from his customers concerning the policy.

"Their reactions range from mild irritation to out-and-out rage," he said.

These same reactions were echoed throughout the crowd. Chandra Foote was outraged by the policy because she contends that the sale of used CDs boosts the sale of new CDs by providing the artist with more exposure that he or she would get if stores only carried new CDs.

"Garth Brooks is shooting himself in the foot by supporting this policy," she said. "Used CDs boost new CDs, and the artist gets more exposure in the process."

Currier, who has taken the "Bar-B-Q Garth Brooks" tour on the road, agreed with Foote and said he was frightened by the amount of power that the record distributors seemed to have in this case. He sees the whole policy as not only bad business, but an affront to the idea of freedom of speech and expression promised by the First Amendment.

"If it can happen here it can happen anywhere," he said. "What would Powell's Book Store look like if the publishing industry decided to institute a similar policy?"

Currier said there was absolutely no question of the legality of selling used CDs.

"Once you buy it you own it; that's the way free enterprise works," he said. "The question of legality should be put to the policy. It's unfair and illegal."

Wherehouse Entertainment is taking the record distributors to court to challenge the legality of the policy. The case is being argued under the pretense illegal according to antitrust laws.

According to a *Los Angeles Times* article, Wherehouse Entertainment, which is a 340-store record retailer, charges that the record distributors are "unreasonably" restraining trade "by withholding advertising and promotional allowances from retailers who traffic in used CDs."

Opponents of the policy argue that when the record distributors believed that only small record stores were dealing in used CDs, there was not a problem. But it was when the larger stores such as Music Millennium and Wherehouse began to buy and sell used CDs that they got concerned.

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