

# Music That Matters

By Jeff O'Kelley

After three decades of touring and over two-dozen albums, The Marshall Tucker Band has definitely earned their place in southern rock history alongside The Allman Brothers, Lynyrd Skynyrd, The Charlie Daniels Band and many others. The good ole boys from Spartanburg, South Carolina started out from humble beginnings and worked their way into the hearts and record collections of an entire generation. Even people who don't know what southern rock is can sing along to hits like "Fire On The Mountain" or "Can't You See".

Today, original front man Doug Gray continues to carry the MTB torch into the new millennium and to a new generation of fans. Playing over 150 shows per year, the boys in MTB keep up a schedule that would kill most musicians their age, as well as some younger ones. The current lineup includes Doug (vocals), Chris Hicks (guitar), B.B. Borden (drums), David Muse (horns, keyboards), Clay Cook (guitar, vocals), and Pat Elwood (bass).

Currently on tour in support of their 28th album *The Next Adventure*, I caught up with Doug prior to the MTB show at the Cotee River Bike Fest in New Port Richey.

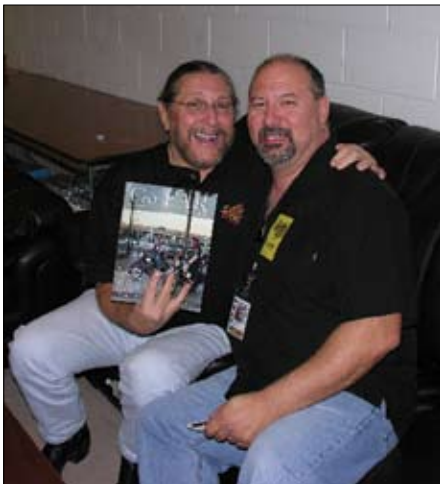
**You've basically been on the road for over three decades. What keeps you going?**

*"Well, the same thing that made me start a long time ago. We started out just wanting to drink a beer on the weekend and wanted somebody else to pay for it. So that's how we did it. [Laughing] No really, I've become part of a lot of people's families and so has the band. What keeps us together now is very simple; you get up there and have a good time and make those people happy and as long as you satisfy yourself first, you're going to satisfy them."*

**Did you ever think that the boys from Spartanburg would become the icons that you are today?**

*"I don't even still see it, you know, I don't put it all together. I put tonight is one thing and then tomorrow at three o'clock in Houston is another. I never would have thought it because*

*I never put them all together. If you put them all together in one then it's really big and I don't know that I wouldn't get scared if I done it that way."*



**So you've never had a moment where you realized that you'd made it?**

*"No, never. My kids don't treat me that way. I go to the grocery store and I'll be shopping or something and someone will say 'Hey man, how you doing? When's that next record?' But most of the time, nobody knows us. Funny though, we can go to New York City and be walking down the street when someone will say, 'Man, I gotta have your autograph'. I mean that's pretty neat."*

**Any favorite moments from your career?**

*"Yeah, the minute we stepped up on the stage at Madison Square Garden. We had been playing a place in New York called Kenny's Castaway and it only held sixty people. That was about 1973. Then two month's later we were opening for The Allman Brothers at Madison Square Garden in front of 23,000 people. I realized the moment and the tears flowed. It was girly moment. You know when you bust loose and you don't know what to do, but you better be strong and get back out there and finish the job."*



**What do you see in the future for MTB?**

*"I don't think that I'll ever get enough because I don't know what else to do. I know how to pump gas like I used to, but I don't see a reason to quit. I don't know anything else and I learned a lot of years ago from my daddy who said "If you got a gift and you don't put it out there, then you're letting yourself down. And that's what keeps me going."*

For more information on The Marshall Tucker Band tour schedule, new releases, band news or fan club information, go to [www.marshalltuckerband.com](http://www.marshalltuckerband.com).

The new CD *The Next Adventure* is available through the website, as well as Amazon.com and numerous other Internet outlets.

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