

Monday, September 24, 1990



Photo by Fredrick D. Joe

D.A. speaks on the air as the blue light blinks behind him, indicating calls coming in on the request line. He keeps the control room pretty dim while he does his show.

'It hits you at the emotional level.' DJ spins 60s, 70s classics

By ISSELLE MCALLISTER
Of The Battalion Staff

"It's only rock and roll, but I like it." — The Rolling Stones
D.A. McDowell is his name and the evolution of classic rock 'n' roll as it spans the decades is his game.

This self-proclaimed "rock philosopher" hosts "East of Midnight," playing oldies from the '60s and '70s on 1240 AM KTAM.

Although some say McDowell is merely a rock historian, he insists there is indeed a distinct philosophy behind this music.

McDowell tries to communicate the attitudes, ideas and ideals of that period in his show by not only sharing bits of history with his audience, but by showing how music and culture mirror each other.

The Jefferson Airplane song "Somebody to Love," for example, was a result of the 1967 Summer of Love in San Francisco, just as "Money for Nothing" by Dire Straits is a reaction to MTV, he explains.

Part of the appeal of classic rock is that "it hits you at the emotional level, at the gut level and at the intellectual level," he says.

The Beatles, McDowell's favorite band, did this better than any others, he says, and this reflects in many of the song choices on his show.

"They were ahead of the times as far as music reflecting culture," he says. "Through their evolution, they actually were dictating music trends and leading the music culture because they were on a deeper, more innovative, experimental level."

He says the powerful influence of John Lennon, his favorite member of the group, made The Beatles more experimental and innovative.

"John is my favorite because of his cultural leadership to a whole generation," McDowell says. "More so than Bob Dylan, Lennon transformed a generation's thoughts. He was the feel, guts and pulse of The Beatles. Their pulse came from the rhythm guitar, John's instrument, and that flavor runs through their music."

The evolution of The Beatles co-

incides with the evolution of the '60s.

"Initially, The Beatles were oriented toward teen-agers," he says. "Middle Beatles were laid back and acoustic, then there was the psychedelic phase with Sgt. Pepper's. Later Beatles was more segmented."

In his show, he tries to capture the spirit and emotion of the era by recreating the context in which music emerged for his listeners, many of whom were too young to experience it for themselves.

Among the rock philosopher's many fans are college students.

Citing author Timothy Leary, McDowell says many of today's students turn to classic rock because they feel they might be missing some of the excitement of the '60s and '70s.

But the times are different today, he explains.

"Protesting for the sake of protesting is unproductive," he says.

He believes this generation should focus on solving society's problems.

McDowell grew up in a musical family and is an accomplished musician himself.

His mother wanted him to become a concert pianist but McDowell rebelled and turned to rock 'n' roll.

McDowell was drawn to music because of the spirit of adventure and the freedom from conformity it offered, he says.

"It doesn't mean be self-destructive," he says. "It just means be yourself."

And he does just that.

The 6-foot-1 radio personality sports a sandy blond Beatles "mop top" hairstyle and has traveled around the country in an old black van that says "rock classic" in large, bright letters.

In that van he carries several books on music and philosophy that he reads to enhance his own knowledge to share with his listeners.

Rock 'n' roll and D. A. McDowell almost are synonymous. He was "at the hub of classic rock as this era was forming," he says.

The rock philosopher, who has a B.A. in philosophy, is a recording artist, a nightclub performer and a published songwriter before trying his hand at radio.

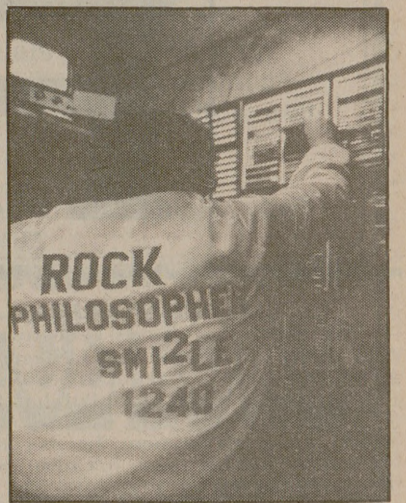


Photo by Fredrick D. Joe

McDowell browses through KTAM's CD library during his show "East of Midnight."

In the early 1970s, his song "Strawberry's Tuesday" was on the charts. He opened for groups like Chicago, Steppenwolf and the Turtles.

"I really was there," he says. "I can express that firsthand."

After a few years of working as a performer, he tried his luck in the business world, partly to appease his parents and partly to see what else life had to offer.

But his career as a stockbroker was short lived.

"I hated it," he says.

Turning back to music, his first love, McDowell went "on the road," playing various clubs and hotels that led him to College Station where he has lived for three years.

McDowell has been hosting "East of Midnight" for more than seven months, and says he enjoys it.

Radio broadcasting is something he always wanted to do, he says, but he still is experimenting.

"I've always been a player," he says. "This is the first job I've had in over 10 years."

JOHN LARROQUETTE KIRSTIE ALLEY

The bad news is you have houseguests.
There is no good news.

Madhouse

PG-13 CLOSSED CAPTIONED ORION HOME VIDEO © 1990 Orion Home Video. All Rights Reserved.

A BOY OF THE YEAR Production JOHN LARROQUETTE KIRSTIE ALLEY "MADHOUSE" ALISON LA PLACA JOHN DIEHL JESSICA LUNDY BRADLEY GREGG DENNIS MILLER and ROBERT GINTY in "DALE" Music by DAVID NEWMAN Film Editor MICHAEL JABLOW Production Designer DAN LEIGH Director of Photography DENIS LEWISTON Co-Produced by DONALD C. KLUNE Produced by LESLIE DIXON Written and Directed by TOM ROPELEWSKI

PG-13 SPECTRAL RECORDING ORION HOME VIDEO CLOSSED CAPTIONED PRINTS BY DeLuxe ORION HOME VIDEO © 1990 Orion Home Video. All Rights Reserved.

PARAMOUNT THEATRE
MOVIES, MUSIC, AND MORE!

693-5789

Located on the corner of Texas & SW Parkway
in the Winn Dixie Center, College Station

MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

M-Th 10-9
F&S 10-11
Sun. 1-9

Are you tired of the juggling act?

Are you tired of guessing what "normal" is?
Is your family governed by any of these rules?:

- Don't talk
- Don't feel
- Don't trust
- Must control

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Come Join the weekly informal meetings of
Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families.
Call the Center for Drug Prevention and Education
at 845-0280 for time and location.

SCOTT & WHITE CLINIC, COLLEGE STATION

Celebrate American Heart Association's Food Festival

Join Us For

"Trim the Fat and Cut Cholesterol for Life!"

featuring

Sammy Gammethaler, M.D., F.A.C.C.
Senior Staff Cardiologist
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Texas A&M University
College of Medicine

Wednesday, September 26
7:15 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Scott and White
Clinic Lobby

The lecture is FREE, and cholesterol screenings will be available from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. for \$5. For reservations, call the Health Education Department at (409) 268-3386.