

The Battalion

Scorchin' Hot

Jason and The Scorchers bring 'alternative-country' sound to Shadow Canyon tonight

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Staff writer

Ever wonder how the members of Depeche Mode, Mighty Mighty Bosstones and The Roots sat down and decided their band's name. What determines a name can be anything from a competition of their musical personalities to a political statement. So how did Jason and the Scorchers arrive at their name? This can be summed up in an explanation. Watch the band and the reason for the choice of the name "scorchers" will be apparent.

In the early '80s country music was hanging on the hits of Johnny Rogers and Alabama, the Journey and Styx were making it big on the pop charts. Jason and the Scorchers arrived

on the scene and broke away from the softness of their predecessors and brought a new sound to the music business.

The alignment of the punk and honky-tonk country was not a familiar sound.

The band trail blazed the path for this music. Jason and the Scorchers were one of the first band to combine country music and punk.

It is now common place, but at the time they were charting unfamiliar territory.

They went beyond soft country with a slight edge to intense guitar driven rock 'n' roll with hardcore honky-tonk.

They were alternative country before it existed.

Mark McKenzie, program director for 103.9-FM KHLR, said the band cannot be classified into



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Above: Jason and The Scorchers will play at Shadow Canyon tonight with Bare, Jr. The country-punk band has been in the music business for 17 years and is known for its high energy performances.

Bottom left: Jason and The Scorchers are (from left to right) Kenny Ames (bass guitar), Jason Ringenberg (vocals), Perry Baggs (drums) and Warner E. Hodges (lead guitar).

one category because their music crosses many genres.

"If you are interested in a diversity of music then you should see this band," he said. "They take different aspects of music and they take many different influences and they bring them all together. The sound that they produce is the signature of the band."

Now 17 years and seven albums later, the band is back on the road promoting their new live album *Midnight Roads and Stages Seen*.

Willie Bennett, talent buyer for Shadow Canyon, said Jason and the Scorchers cater to a wide variety of audiences.

"They are not the standard

country band and do not require the standard country listener," he said. "This is not a two-stepping band. They are all over the stage. They are really rockers. They are alternative country to the largest extreme."

Bennett said they are a dynamic band and their sound and stage presence are hard to put into words.

"They are really fun to watch," he said. "It is going to be quite a show and one that you will not want to miss. It will be one of those shows that people will be talking about the next day."

Jason and the Scorchers are known for their outrageous and extremely energetic performances.

Ann Powers of *The New York Times* goes as far as to compare lead vocalist Jason Ringenberg to the energetic Jerry Lee Lewis.

Many fans have gone on to say a live performance of this band is what rock'n'roll legends are made of.

Warner Hodges, Jason and the Scorchers' guitarist, said in a press release that the band's roots are embedded in live performances and is what led them to record the *Midnight Roads* album.

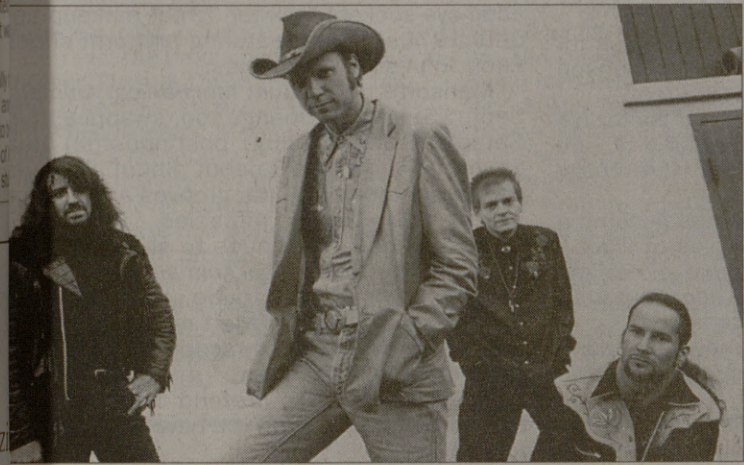
"The way we look at it was, this is the most important thing we've done, so, let's just go out and have fun," Hodges said. "That's how it had to happen, because that's how we've always

been as a live band. This record is who we are, with all the energy right there in front of you-and all the freckles and pimples, too."

Opening for Jason and the Scorchers will be Bare, Jr. another band with roots in the country music business.

Bennett said the whole night will be amazing and the combination of both bands will be very entertaining.

"I am looking forward to Jason and the Scorchers, but I am also looking forward to their opening act Bare, Jr.," he said. "Bare, Jr. is the son of Bobby Bare, one of country music's legends. Both of them together is what will make the show unforgettable."



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