

US99 Radio

US99's John Howell helped to raise over \$40,000 for tornado victims



Tucker photo courtesy
Polygram Records
John Howell photo
courtesy U.S. 99



Big John Howell

by John Howell
DJ U.S. 99 radio
and Born to Boogie band

On Tuesday, August 28th, 1990, I was on the air at US99 as the first reports of incredible tornado destruction in Will County came in. That same afternoon in Texas, The Marshall Tucker Band was recording a video as they heard of the tragedy. A few days earlier, on August 25, we had said goodbye to our friends in the Marshall Tucker band. The US99 Born to Boogie Band had spent almost every weekend that summer as an opening act for The Marshall Tucker Band with KCM Producing the shows.

Doug Grey of MTB said what we were all feeling, "We had spent so much time over the past summer performing for our friends in Will County, they had given us so much, we thought this was the time to give something back."

By that evening, the lines of communication were open, and the wheels were turning to get help to the area. "Marshall Tucker and Friends, A Benefit Concert" had started to take shape.

Over the next three weeks, Joe Cantafio, Jim Killough and Scott McNally at KCM Productions, Bensenville, worked around the clock to put the event together. This was a huge undertaking requiring a lot of help from the municipal and business community. Bollingbrook Mayor Roger Claar and Trustee Bob Fagust paved the way.

The Marshall Tucker Band

"Marshall Tucker and Friends" The show was set for Friday, September 21 at the Arena Auction Center in Bollingbrook. The lineup of bands reflected many musical styles: The Marshall Tucker Band, Big John Howell and The US99 Born to Boogie Band, Mike Vondruska and Friends, Bill Archers Big Bear Band, The New Colony Six, The Shadows of Knight, Joe Cantafio & the Giant Killers. The eight hour, non-stop concert was televised on several cable systems and Super 66. The telethon was hosted by our friends at Y-108 Radio.

The Tucker band gave their all for over two hours, showing us all what the word "professional" means. If you attended or saw it on TV, you may have noticed a short, fat guy next to the tall, fat guy, trying desperately to harmonize vocals and play tenor sax. My personal thanks go to US99's John Katzbeck who brings a lot to the band (including cold beer, so you can see how valuable he is). And contrary to what many thought, Katzbeck did not have a heart attack on stage that evening. We were just trying a move we saw on Wrestlemania II.

I know you are wondering who the Born to Boogie Band is. It is the latest in a long line of such bands of mine. In fact, the players mostly stay the same, as the name changes from Big John and the Budget Brass—The Apologizers—The Bad Habits—The Junior Samples—and now the US99 Born to Boogie band. This is the best one I ever stood in front of and pretended to lead. Mike Arturi, Tommy Dizallo, Jack Jacklin, James Pastman, Jim Bromley, and Barney Floyd are all incredible musicians who, along with me, and all the other bands, donated their time. Yes, we could have had better weather and a bigger crowd. But, those who braved the cold were treated to a very special concert. Let's just hope that the next time we all get together, there's no tornado, so all the money can go for singing lessons for the US99 Born to Boogie band.