

# ROLLING STONE



The Marshall Tucker Band  
*Capricorn CP 0112*

BY LESTER BANGS

One of the most encouraging developments of the past few years has been the rise of a whole raft of fine new young white rock bands from the South. With the Allman Brothers leading the way, such groups as Wet Willie and Hydra draw heavily on their blues and country roots, playing a music that has the drive and volume of the best heavy metal, that's "authentic" enough to satisfy even the most niggling purists, and that's keynoted by unusually high standards of musicianship.

The Marshall Tucker Band comes straight from this new tradition, and their debut album is a moving piece of work that bids to put them in the same league as the Allmans damn fast. It's tight, smoking music, with sharp, ringing lead guitar work and sure vocals

that are grittily felt but never strained. Music from the Carolina soil, full of blues and gospel influences, but so full of ideas that they never have to fall back on such space-fillers as slow blues jams. Each cut is a real *song*—some, like "Hillbilly Band," sound from first hearing like AM hits. The lead guitar lines by Toy Caldwell (who also wrote all the songs) are looping and fluid, in the grand Allman style, and Doug Gray's lead vocals range from the utterly convincing black gospel style of "My Jesus Told Me So" to the barge-in city blues shout of "Ramblin'." Jerry Eubanks' flute is featured prominently in much of the material and his strong, funky style suggests that somebody has finally found a way out of the Ian Anderson impasse.

This constitutes one of the most impressive debuts so far this year, by a band that's more than promising—they've already delivered so much in this album that all that remains is for the public to pick up on what they're doing and sail away on their slow train down-home to glory. It's refreshing to hear such honest, cooking, no-frills American music for a change, and if they're anywhere near as good live as on this record, they could become very big indeed. Don't lose 'em in the shuffle.