

arts / entertainment

KFMQ's 'Homegrown Album' sales doing well

By Bob Crisler

After eight months in preparation, KFMQ's **Homegrown Album** finally hit local record racks in mid-December.

According to Bruce Wheeler, the station's program director, "We're doing pretty well. The first couple of days that the record was on sale, we were just knockin' 'em out. We sold 700 of the 2,000 we had pressed in the first few days."

Demand has slackened for the 11-song l.p. since then, but Wheeler looks to the return of the university students to "move the rest of them (a few hundred) out."

The record is a high-quality pressing from the people who brought you Fleetwood Mac's *Tusk* album, Wakefield Manufacturing. The station sells the records at cost, or \$4 each, exclusively through the two Pickles record stores in town.



Cover courtesy of KFMQ
Cover art by Jeff Jahn

The idea for the album first came to Wheeler as he was leafing through a broadcasting trade magazine.

"It just kind of seemed like a neat thing to do, so we decided to give it a shot," Wheeler said. "We wanted to create some talk about the radio station, and at the same do something positive for local musicians."

"You don't necessarily want to play every promo record that comes through the door—some are good and some are terrible, and we felt that this was a way to support the talent in the area and to do it in a creative way," he said.

Planning for the album began in April, when KFMQ contacted Wakefield and Spectrum Sound, where the songs were recorded.

Selection process

Wheeler describes the song-selection process as "not real scientific."

"I had 160 tapes, and probably twice as many titles, and so I listened to all of the tapes and narrowed it down to about 40."

Next he gathered the KFMQ staff, people from outside the broadcasting industry, and a Warner Brothers representative from Kansas City in his living room for the final judging.

"Then we'd just go around the room and say 'Well, did you like it?' and just try to get a consensus. It was pretty obvious the first time you heard some of them that they'd make it," said Wheeler.

The station has been playing three or four songs from the album each day to give listeners a chance to hear their "buddies" on the radio, Wheeler said.

"I like everything on it, but I think there are some things on it that really hold their own against some of the other stuff that we play," he said.

"All of these bands have their following, so you get people lobbying for certain songs. They've all gotten response, but there hasn't been so much that you could say 'This is a more popular record than that one.'"

To strengthen the possibility, however remote, that one of these groups might be solicited by a record company, KFMQ has mailed copies to 40 label representatives and trade publications, among them the influential **Radio and Records** and **Billboard**.

We just said 'take a listen and see what you think,' so who knows—we'd like to see something happen, but we don't know how realistic that is.

"I think we surprised some people with the caliber of talent that is on the record. Some of these guys are just killers," Wheeler said.

Might be repeated

Will there be another **Homegrown Album**?

I really think that if we can sell all of the records this time that we'll do it again," said Wheeler. "I don't know

if we could do it every year, because of the size of the community, but maybe every other year we could do it.

"We feel like it's a success already though, because we've gotten some publicity out of it and generated some talk and just created a pretty positive promotion."

To Wheeler, one of the most satisfying things was the volume of entries received.

"The fact that we got 160 tapes was really gratifying, especially when you consider that for someone to sit down and send their song in to some unknown, unseen person who's going to critically analyze their piece, which may be a very personal thing, it takes quite a bit of courage," he said.

If any of the groups ever become popular, it won't be a by-product of any further KFMQ support.

"As far as us, we're out of the record business after the last **Homegrown** is sold. If a group wants to put out one of these songs as a single, that's fine. The songs belong to the artists, not us—they'll have to take it from here," Wheeler said.

KFMQ is now currently involved in getting its new Sunday oldies program, *Rock Archives*, off to a good start. Also the station has another promotion planned with the upcoming Kansas City concert by Bruce Springsteen. Until then, Wheeler is content to sit back and reflect on his latest public relations coup.

"We haven't heard any kind of negative reactions," he said. "People say 'Hey, I like that one,' or 'That's a really neat idea,' and that leaves me feeling pretty satisfied."

'Homegrown' displays local talent

By Casey McCabe

It's easy to get a little carried away with the compliments when you are talking about local folks who do well. In the case of our local musical talent, perhaps a pat on the back has been long overdue.

For their **Homegrown Album** project, Lincoln station KFMQ has put together what may be a surprising l.p. for some. Given good direction and mixing in the studio, the band you just enjoyed dancing to in the smoke-filled local bar can sound amazingly professional when captured on vinyl.

review

The "homegrown" concept is not a new one, but KFMQ's effort is a first for Lincoln, a town generally recognized as necessary to get out of if you want your music to get any air play. For promotional purposes, the radio station understandably chose to limit audition tapes to those who could fit KFMQ's format. Unfortunately, that alone removed some very fine local talent from consideration.

Refreshingly diverse

But even under the limitations of an album-oriented rock format, the music on the **Homegrown Album** is refreshingly diverse: jumpy New Wave from Beebe Runyan

and "The Furniture," synthesized punk from "The Group," danceable funk from "Keystone," well-driven rock from "The Specs," crafty instrumentals from "J.J. Buxton" and Doug Dickeson, jazzy vocals from "Main Street," easy-paced melodic pieces from Sean Benjamin and the "Star City Players," some Southern-flavored rock from "Footloose," and a bit of uncomplicated fun from "Black Rose."

Some of the groups are doubtlessly patterning their music after a more famous counterpart. But after listening to a radio all day, what self-respecting musician couldn't say to himself: "I could whip up something that good if given the chance?"

Once given the chance, the 11 chosen for the **Homegrown Album** responded admirably. I imagine the runners-up, as well as some local musicians who never supplied an audition tape, have a wealth of original material lurking in basements all over Lincoln. Thus this album certainly is not the last word in local rock and pseudo-rock composers, but it is a good place to start encouraging some appreciation.

There really isn't a single blatantly weak song on the album, a phenomenon that tends to happen when you have entirely different bands each giving it their best shot. Some, however, do require a bit more attention.

Sean Benjamin is better known in this community as the guitarist for "The Heart Murmur." He stretches out of the blues boundaries for a pleasant ballad about apathy called "It Ain't Right." Those familiar with his torrid blues capabilities may be surprised by Benjamin's subdued guitar work and the excellence of his lead vocals.

"She's There" by Black Rose seems initially to be the most played **Homegrown** song on the radio. This catchy little ditty is marked by strong vocals and a simplistic, 1960s-style background organ. Black Rose knows a good musical hook when they see it.

Youngest band

The Specs probably are the youngest band on the album, and they provide good, terse rock'n'roll with a sense of immediacy on "Look Out Girl (You Need a Direction)," which is perhaps the album's best. Main Street's "Hazards of the Business" is another strong offering and contains a nice aura of professionalism. Its excellent vocal work hovers somewhere between Leon Russel and "The Guess Who," and the over-all arrangement is of high quality.

In general, there is some fine instrumental and vocal work throughout the album. For instance, Footloose's guitar interplay on "Misguided Player" stands out, and the vocals of Bev Jester and Joyce Nelson, as well as some outstanding guitar leads from Woody Nelson, make the Star City Players' "On To You" a highlight.

The **Homegrown Album** is a nice package from the cover art work by Jeff Jahn, to the creative efforts of the local musicians, and to the quality of production work by Spectrum and Rainbow Studios. It may be a bit too eclectic to stand on its own as an album, but it should appeal to anyone with an open mind, and, well yes, a little bit of local pride.

Classic Wood furniture

WE ONLY LOOK EXPENSIVE!!

We now have waterbeds.

LOVESEAT
COFFEE TABLE

Hand Finished Solid Wood Butcher Block Set
Completely knocked down, over 50 fabrics

Poof and Walrus Pillow
Chairs \$39.95 to \$79

Decorator Pillows \$1.99 — Floor Pillows \$6.99

1325 "O" St. M-F 10-7:30; Th. 10-9
474-4501 Sat. 10-5

VISA master charge

NOW SHOWING:

"Sugar Britches"

2nd Feature:

"Easy"

must be 18 - have I.D.

EMBASSY
1730 O ST 476 6042