

Interest in studios spawned Easterling's music career

BY JILL ANDERSON

Chapel Hill is the hometown of Wyatt Easterling. Easterling, a young, ambitious musician, has just released his first album, *Both Sides of the Shore*. He had been interested in music since he was a child and

took the typical music lessons and sang along to tunes on the radio.

What is not so typical to Easterling's younger years is his interest in recording studios. His interest lead him to build a recording studio in the attic of his home, with the help of his twin brother Brian. That



Wyatt Easterling relaxes at home, plays guitar ... worked as carpenter to earn studio time

DTH/Jay Hyman

was in 1973; 8½ years later Easterling has built another studio, TGS Studio, located outside of Chapel Hill.

TGS Studio began in 1975 with an idea of Steve Gronback's, the owner of TGS. Gronback and Easterling eventually collaborated and in 1978 Easterling began building TGS with Gronback and other local musician friends. Easterling exchanged his carpentry time for studio time. He worked in construction TGS and in return used the studio free of charge. Easterling's recording was one of TGS's first projects. TGS has since recorded other local bands.

It took Easterling three years to plan and record *Both Sides of the Shore*. The album is on Moonlight Records, a local label. He worked at Spanky's restaurant while recording in order to make ends meet.

But before his album was released Easterling played in local bars. "I was only 18, a very young performer and scared to death of performing."

Besides being young, Easterling was a bit uneasy playing in his hometown. "It's not always easy. You don't always feel comfortable playing in your hometown. Your friends are out there and you'd hate to mess up."

Easterling was not always a musician — in the career sense. He graduated from Chapel Hill High School and went to UNC-CH for awhile. He had moved around the country and lived in Los Angeles, Nashville and Colorado. Now at 23 Easterling is back in Chapel Hill. Easterling said he believed growing up in Chapel Hill was a good experience and that it had contributed to his music.

"Chapel Hill is an incredible place to

grow up. I was exposed to a lot of different cultural activities and university input. Chapel Hill is a place to broaden a young person's mind."

Chapel Hill's WCHL has done a lot for his career also, he said. WCHL was the first station to play Easterling's album. He was also on Ron Stutts morning show. WCHL, a top-40 station, had made a concession to play Easterling's album and this had helped Easterling get public response.

With *Both Sides of the Shore* Easterling said he hoped to start building his career as a musician. He said his music was not the type that was "here today, gone tomorrow," like disco music was. Easterling wants to revitalize the music of groups such as America, ones that have good music, as well as understandable lyrics, he said.

Easterling said he was not in the music business to only make money. "I love to write. I want to develop my talent into a career. I am not in it strictly to please, I am a writer, a musician."

For Easterling to be accepted by the public, he must write songs that appeal to them, he said. "I want to share an emotion, write a song that means something to someone else. Yet, it is confusing. I hope to know more about my writing from response, know where to take things, songs that will please."

As far as his future is concerned, Easterling wants to work on his writing and eventually make a move to Nashville. He said he believed he had made a big step so far, in releasing his first album

Jill Anderson is a staff writer for *The Daily Tar Heel*.

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