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# 'Desert Rose' blooming and booming

By Mark Marymont  
Gazette Staff

The members of the Desert Rose Band come from a rich country-rock tradition, but they don't rely on those musical roots anymore.

When they began in 1987, much was made of the roots of Chris Hillman — former Byrd and Flying Burrito Brother — and Herb Pederson's work with Linda Ronstadt.

"We really don't get into that much anymore," guitarist John Jorgenson said from Las Vegas. "At the beginning we did a couple of Byrds songs and a couple by the Burritos, but we didn't have a lot of material then. Finally, it got to be odd, jumping back to the '60s."

With three best-selling albums under their belts, they no longer rely on Byrds material on stage. Their current album, "Pages of Life," is No. 53 on the *Billboard* album charts this week. The recent single, "In Another Lifetime," peaked at No. 13 in early June.

Although they have never delved deeply into traditional country, the new album reflects an even harder edge than the first two.

"Maybe what happened is that we had a hand in mixing this album, so those [rock] elements came out a little more," Jorgenson explained. "We wanted this one to sound like we do on stage. It's a little more aggressive."

"The lines in country music are so stretched that it's difficult to say when something is country and something is rock," Jorgenson said of musical labels. "But people see we have some traditional country roots, even if it's not real obvious."

The Desert Rose Band will be on the road into the fall promoting the

## Showtime

The Desert Rose Band will play Magic Springs Park in Hot Springs at 4 and 8 p.m. Saturday. The concerts are included in the regular admission price. Call 624-5411 for more information.

new album. They are headlining many of the dates, but they also spent a recent week in Las Vegas opening for the Oak Ridge Boys.

"We've been playing Bally's Casino," Jorgenson said from a hotel that greets callers with a cheerful "Have a lucky day." "It's different to play here. People are here to gamble and maybe they like the music and maybe they don't. It's not like a club where they came to see you, so it's a challenge."

Their next challenge is to craft a follow-up to "Pages of Life." The studio release will follow an upcoming greatest hits album with No. 1 songs like "He's Back and I'm Blue," "I Still Believe in You," "She Don't Love Nobody" and two new works.

"The greatest hits set gives us time to work on a studio album. We'll tour all summer, so it will be next spring before we could get into the studio, because we need to write some more songs. We can write a little on the road but it's hard to do."

When they aren't on the road, most of the guys in the band work sessions and produce. Jorgenson



**TIRED OF OLDIES:** John Jorgenson (right) says he and fellow members Chris Hillman (center) and Herb Pederson got tired of playing tunes from the '60s.

has done a project with a new singer named Dale Watson and Pederson has produced the latest by the Dillards.

"I would like to do more producing," Jorgenson said. "It's enjoyable to take something from a raw form and turn it into something that people will, hopefully, want to buy. I also have a band of my own that plays rock, but I'm not home enough to do very much with that."

When they are on the road, and in the studio, there are six members in the Desert Rose Band,

including Hillman, Pederson and Jorgenson, plus Bill Bryson on bass, Steve Duncan on drums and Jay Dee Maness on steel guitar.

Laughing, Jorgenson acknowledged that he, Pederson and Hillman are the only players in their publicity pictures.

"That was some kind of marketing deal, done on the theory that the audience could recall the three of us easier than six guys. But then other guys are full-fledged members of the band and they all make a big contribution."