

Delaney Bramlett learned the guitar in his youth, and migrated to Los Angeles in 1959. He became a session musician; his most notable early work was as a member of the Shindogs, the house band for the ABC-TV series *Shindig!* (1964-66), which also featured guitarist/keyboardist Leon Russell. Bonnie Bramlett was an accomplished singer at an early age, performing with blues guitarist Albert King at age 14 and in the Ike & Tina Turner Revue at 15 - the first-ever white Ikette "for three days in a black wig and Man Tan skin darkener." She moved to Los Angeles in 1967, and met and married Delaney later that year.

Delaney Bramlett and Leon Russell had many connections in the music business through their work in the Shindogs, and were able to quickly form a band of solid, if transient, musicians around Delaney and Bonnie. The band became known as "Delaney & Bonnie and Friends" due to its regular changes of personnel. They secured a recording contract with Stax Records, and completed work on their first album, *Home*, in early 1969. Despite production and session assistance from Donald "Duck" Dunn, Isaac Hayes, and other Stax mainstays of the era, the album was not successful- perhaps due to poor promotion, as it was one of 27 albums simultaneously released by Stax in that label's initial attempt to establish itself in the album market.

Delaney and Bonnie moved to Elektra Records for their second album, *Accept No Substitute* (1969). While not a big seller either, *Accept No Substitute* created a buzz in music industry circles when, upon hearing pre-release mixes of the album, George Harrison offered Delaney and Bonnie a contract with the Beatles' Apple Records label - which Delaney and Bonnie signed despite their prior contractual commitment to Elektra. Although the Apple contract was subsequently voided, this incident began a falling-out between Delaney and Elektra, culminating in the band's release from their Elektra contract in late 1969.

On the strength of *Accept No Substitute*, and at his friend Harrison's suggestion, Eric Clapton took Delaney & Bonnie and Friends on the road in mid-1969 as the opening act for his band Blind Faith. Clapton became fast friends with Delaney, Bonnie and their band, preferring their music to Blind Faith's; he would often appear on stage with Delaney & Bonnie and Friends during this period, and continued to record and tour with them following Blind Faith's August 1969 breakup. Clapton helped broker a new record deal for Delaney and Bonnie with his then-US label, Atco (Atlantic) Records, and appears (with Harrison, Dave Mason, and others) on Delaney and Bonnie's third album, the live *On Tour with Eric Clapton* (Atco; recorded in the UK 7 December 1969, released June 1970). This album would be their most successful, reaching #29 on the Billboard album charts and achieving RIAA Gold Record status. Clapton also recruited Delaney and Bonnie and their band to back him on his debut solo album, recorded in late 1969/early 1970 and produced by Delaney.

Delaney and Bonnie continued to make well-regarded, if modestly-selling, albums over the rest of their career. Their next two Atco albums, *To Bonnie from Delaney* (1970) and the largely acoustic *Motel Shot* (1971) charted, and "Never Ending Song of Love," a single taken from *Motel Shot*, was Billboard's #67 single of 1971. The band's other notable activities during this period include participation (with the Grateful Dead, the Band and Janis Joplin) on the 1970 Festival Express tour of Canada, with an appearance at the Strawberry Fields Festival; an appearance in Richard C. Sarafian's 1971 film *Vanishing Point*, contributing the song "You Got to Believe" to its soundtrack; and a July 1971 live show broadcast by New York's WABC-FM (now WPLJ), backed by Duane Allman, Gregg Allman and (in one of his last performances) King Curtis. (Recordings of this broadcast, while never officially released on album as Elton John's 11-17-70 show from the same concert series was, have been heavily bootlegged over the years and remain readily available.) By late 1971, however, Delaney and Bonnie's often-tempestuous relationship began to show signs of strain. Their next album *Country Life* was rejected by Atco on grounds of poor quality, with Atco/Atlantic electing to sell Delaney and Bonnie's recording contract - including this album's master tapes - to CBS as a result. Columbia/CBS released this album, in a different track sequence from that submitted to Atco, as *D&B Together* in March 1972. It would be Delaney and Bonnie's last album of new material, as the couple divorced in 1973.

Delaney and Bonnie continued to work in the music business - and, in Bonnie's case, in Hollywood as an actress - after their breakup. Delaney's final solo album, *A New Kind of Blues*, was released in early 2008. He died in December 2008 (as detailed below).

Bonnie enjoyed success during the 1970s and early 1980s as a backing singer with Elvin Bishop, Stephen Stills and The Allman Brothers Band; she subsequently turned to acting, appearing (using her later married name, Bonnie Sheridan) in a recurring role on the TV series *Roseanne* (1991–95). Her most recent album is 2008's *Beautiful*.

Delaney and Bonnie are generally best remembered for their albums *On Tour* with Eric Clapton and *Motel Shot*. *On Tour* was their best-selling album by far, and is the only official document of their live work. Delaney and Bonnie were considered by many to be at their best on stage. In his autobiography, Atlantic Records executive Jerry Wexler stated that the studio album he produced for the band, *To Bonnie from Delaney* "didn't quite catch the fire of their live performances." Clapton makes an even stronger statement in his autobiography: "For me, going on [with Blind Faith] after Delaney and Bonnie was really, really tough, because I thought they were miles better than us." *Motel Shot*, although technically a studio album, was largely recorded "live in the studio" with acoustic instruments - a rarity for rock bands at the time, foreshadowing the "Unplugged" phenomenon by nearly twenty years.

Besides their recorded legacy, Delaney and Bonnie influenced many fellow musicians of their era. Most notably, Eric Clapton has said that "Delaney taught me everything I know about singing," and Delaney has been cited as the person who taught George Harrison how to play slide guitar, a technique Harrison used to great effect throughout his solo recording career. Bonnie, for her part, is credited as the co-author of many popular songs, including "Groupie (Superstar)" (a Top 10 hit for The Carpenters in 1971; also covered by ex-Delaney and Bonnie backing vocalist Rita Coolidge, Bette Midler, Sonic Youth and many others) and Clapton's "Let It Rain." (Bonnie's song authorship became a matter of dispute in the last years of Delaney's life, with Delaney claiming that he wrote many of these songs but assigned ownership to Bonnie to dodge an onerous publishing contract - an assertion supported, indirectly, through statements made by Clapton. Many songs that Bonnie Bramlett contributed to during the band's tenure, but for which Delaney Bramlett was not originally credited, now list both Bramletts as co-authors in BMI's Repertoire database.)

Delaney and Bonnie's "friends" of the band's 1969-70 heyday also had considerable impact. After the early 1970 breakup of this version of the band, Leon Russell recruited many of its ex-members to join Joe Cocker's band, participating on Cocker's Mad Dogs and Englishmen recording sessions and North American tour (March-May 1970; Rita Coolidge's version of "Groupie (Superstar)" was recorded with this band while on tour). Following this, these same musicians, joined by Eric Clapton and Dave Mason, also comprised the core-backing band on George Harrison's vocal debut album All Things Must Pass (1970). Clapton subsequently recorded his landmark album Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs (1970) with this band's bassist Carl Radle and drummer Jim Gordon, (with assistance on many tracks from Allman Brothers Band guitarist Duane Allman), as Derek and the Dominos.