



1. **Statesboro Blues**
(Blind Willie McTell)
2. **Trouble No More**
(Jimi Hendrix / Stephen Stills)
3. **Don't Keep Me Wonderin'**
(Gregory L. Adams)
4. **Done Somebody Wrong**
(Chambers L., Lewis Elmore / James Brown / Leroy)
5. **One Way Out**
(Meredith Willson/Elmore James)
6. **In Memory of Elizabeth Reed**
(Dickie Betts)
7. **Sturmy Monday**
(Elmore James)
8. **You Don't Love Me / Soul Screamer**
(Walter Dinkels / Elmore James / Chuck Berry / Albert King)
9. **Hot Yunitz**
(Gregory L. Adams / Elmore James / Dickie Betts / Mark Taper / Steve Gaddy / Joe Albany / Adams)

The Allman Brothers Band

Live from A&R Studios, New York, August 26, 1971



The Allman Brothers Band
 Duane Allman: lead, slide guitar
 Gregg Allman: Hammond B3 organ, piano & vocals
 Dickie Betts: lead guitar
 Berry Gordy: bass guitar
 Mark Taper: drums, congas
 Adams: drums, percussion

Recorded by Phil Westcott at A&R Studios for a live WMA broadcast August 26, 1971

Produced by The Allman Brothers Band
 Executive Producer: Bob Weinstock
 Project supervisor: Bill Lawrence
 Mixed from the original A&R 16 tracks & multitrack tapes by Mike Gar
 Live Shows: John Corbett
 Package Design: Terry Dunphy
 Photos courtesy of: Steve Wilman (all page spreads), W. Robert Johnson (album photos), Wayne Kuylenstierna (photos)

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 The Allman Brothers Band Museum at the Big House
 2071 Woodville Road, Macon, GA 31204

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The Allman Brothers Band: Live from A&R Studios

By the summer of 1967, the Allman Brothers Band was reaping a harvest of benefits from two years of relentless touring. Their live album, *At Fillmore East*, had been recorded in March at Bill Graham's legendary East Village theatre and released in July to overwhelming critical acclaim and quickly climbed the charts. The group was now recognized as the best live performance act in the country, solidifying the vision Duane Allman had when the gifted guitarist assembled the band in the spring of 1969. Joined by his brother Gregg on vocals and keyboards, drummers Butch Trucks and Jai Johanny Johnson (now known as Jabo), bassist Berry Oakley and guitarist Dickie Betts, the Allman Brothers Band was, quite simply, unique in its sound and approach to music. With individually beautiful guitar harmony lines, dual drumming patterns, a bassist who played like a third lead guitarist and a vocalist who sang with the soulful, yearning intensity of someone twice his age, the group was greater than the considerable sum of its individual parts. By blending elements of rock, jazz and R&B and adding a dash of country, the band redefined the term "improvisational" every time it hit the stage. Although their first two studio albums had received strong reviews, they had initially underperformed; yet, the Allman Brothers Band eventually made its mark through relentless touring, constant releases and a work ethic that was unshakable — the Brothers spent 200 days on the road in 1970, missing only one show at a time. *At Fillmore East* was the perfect album for the perfect group. *Mo'Nads* — LP captured the Brothers at their best, and validated the maxim "The people's band" that had been applied by critics and fans alike.

On August 26, 1971, the *live* combination of New York City's burgeoning FM radio scene and the music of the Allman Brothers Band made for one of the best live broadcasts of the decade, and for those lucky enough to have heard it, inspiration that has endured for a lifetime. So long has *The Allman Brothers Band: Live from A&R Studios* given aspiring guitarists to experience that magical night when the AMB set up at A&R in Manhattan and went through performances over the airwaves of New York City, courtesy of WPLJ (95.3 on the FM dial), that the group's 100th birthday party with Duane Allman, and it certainly was one for the ages. Filled with passion and love, *At Fillmore East*, a legend in the annals of FM radio, served as the M.C. for WPLJ's broadcast of that show, and in the final interview he granted before his death on May 29, 2014, Duane remembered those with great fondness.

"This was the explosion of FM radio, starting in the very late '60s and spilling over to the early '70s, rock music on FM radio was like the Wild West," Duane stated. "Companies that owned those stations had no idea to lose that they just turned them over to their underwriting, alternative hip-hop rock and folk lifestyle that was so culturally prominent at the time. For instance, WPLJ was an ABC-owned station, and you have to look at that in the context of its time. There were basically three terrestrial ABC, CBS and NBC. There was no cable, for all practical purposes, they owned the entire terrestrial industry. For a company like A&R — at a time of such political upheaval, with the Vietnam War, companies exploring and making money — to turn over their M. station in a city like New York to a bunch of upstarts was truly remarkable. I arrived at WABC in February of 1970, and I did the opening show; I was on here a 100th that day, the evening show was the main show, as opposed to today, where the morning drive-time show is featured."

On December 9, 1970, a high-speed and increasing Duane Allman crashed the studio for an eye-to-eye conversation with Herman that turned into something enlightening. As Duane recalled, "That interview with

Duane was very special to me; I remember the night vividly. Duane was remarkable that night with me. The energy, drive and life force of Duane Allman was palpable, and can't be overstated. What I mean about the world being brought to the world if he had lived a full life? I suppose you can say the same thing about Jimi Hendrix. Duane was so young, and what he was able to do in such a short time is almost other worldly, so maybe he wasn't meant to be around for very long — Duane's knew, but Duane Allman was something special, the idea of which will never see again.

"You see, the Allman Brothers Band had built a special rapport with New York City through radio play, and their backing it up with live performances," Herman continued. "New York had two major, big-time, all-time rock radio stations: WPLJ and WNBC, both of which played the air out of the Allman Brothers. The Brothers got major play on both stations and got a ton of records in New York, and with Bill Graham being the master promoter that he was, he saw how much radio play the band was getting, so he booked them for the Fillmore at such as he could. They became a hot ticket, and that is how the Allman Brothers became so popular in New York."

Almost a month before Duane's memorable night on the radio, the first broadcast of a live concert over the FM airwaves of New York City had come to fruition, and Duane Allman played a pivotal role in this groundbreaking event. "The first concert we broadcast from A&R studios was the Elton John show from November 17, 1970, which was later released as a live album, *11.17.70*," said Herman. "The station was still known as WABC-FM (radio) then show, the call letters were changed to WPLJ in February, 1971. It was a short-lived series, but I remember great performances by R.E. King, Oakley and Berry and Friends, which included Duane Allman and King Curtis, and of course, the AMB show. I was the M.C. for all the broadcasts, and remember them tremendously. Especially recall the Delaney and Bonnie show from July of '71, like hearing Duane play some incredible slide on 'Come On Up My Children.' Since the concert was done playing my own set, I fell on the ice and broke my arm and introduced them."

As Herman stated, the timing of the AMB's appearance on WPLJ came at exactly the right moment for the group. "The Allman Brothers were not regulars yet, they were a well-known, high-profile band. They instantly sang on their way up, however, the Fillmore East album had just been released, and they received a lot of attention when Bill Graham chose them to close down the Fillmore in June. I really believe closing out the Fillmore catapulted them to stardom in New York, and earned them on their way nationally as well. Duane loved them for being a working band, a band of his people, but with remarkable talent. So we caught them at the A&R show just on the cusp of breaking out into the sphere of *At Fillmore East*."

According to Herman, the choice of the Allman Brothers to play live on WPLJ was a very easy one. "The Allman Brothers Band was every musician's favorite music-rock band, because Duane just was remarkable and — was Gregg. When kids didn't sing like Gregg Allman, they will die." In my opinion, Gregg Allman was the greatest white blues singer I've ever heard, and I'm not alone in that. All these years later, he sings just as well as he did back then. So to have the Allman Brothers Band for a concert on WPLJ was a perfect fit, we obviously played their music a lot, because their songs fit our format so well. We really loved some Duane's guitar work as well, I remember playing 'Love Me a Dime' by Eric Slicker just to hear Duane's playing on the radio, it is some of the most incredible guitar work ever."

"What I also loved about the Allman Brothers is that there was no age specified at the time whatsoever," Herman said. "These guys were playing music, and they sound like unique. Almost every song they played just stretched me vibrantly whenever they performed live — there was no one else like the Allman Brothers Band."

When a title to the location from which to host the live performance broadcasts, Herman agreed that

there was only logical place. "Phil Ramone's A&R Studios was one of the three top recording studios in New York City. The list of albums recorded in that studio is legendary, and so when we were looking for place to broadcast our first concert — the Elton John show — we wanted a room that held less than one hundred people, and awarded great at the same time, and A&R fit that bill. The acoustics were perfect, and the party was so comfortable for the band and the audience as well. I remember people sitting on chairs and on the floor, it was a very informal setting, and just perfect for the vibe of the Allman Brothers."

By mid-'71, the AMB had settled on a fairly tight set list, and that was the case for their performance at A&R Studios. That did not mean, however, their shows were rote or monotonous, given the group's propensity to improvise, the Allman Brothers Band may have played the same songs, but they were never performed the same way twice. *Live from A&R Studios* kicks off with Herman's live key introduction — "There's some brothers from Macon, GA, I believe, the Allman Brothers Band" — and then Duane's slide led the group into a dueling "Santitas Blues," the AMB's traditional show opener. The band quickly found the groove, Oakley and Duane delivered vibrant solos and the show was off and running.

"Double No Blues" was powerful and light, with Gregg's earthy vocals ably supported by Oakley's thumping bass and Duane's steady slide licks. "Don't Keep Me Wonderin'" was turned into an incendiary display of slide guitar mastery by Duane, his piercing notes resonating right through the roof of A&R Studios.

The momentum continued on "Don't Scramble Wrong," with Gregg growling his way through the vocals as the rhythm section of Johnson, Butch and Berry established a rock-solid foundation underneath the Duane James chord.

Oakley's strident guitar pattern initiated "One Way Out," and the rest of the band picked up on his energy. Duane and Oakley emphasized Duane's licks, the drummer drove the song forward relentlessly and Gregg's wacky vocals were on point.

The haunting melody line of "In Memory of Elton John" set up the band's 17-minute musical odyssey through this beautiful Oakley/Betts instrumental. Oakley's powerful bass line wrapped itself in, out and around the soaring notes of Oakley and Duane. Gregg provided understating 8-3 work, while Butch and Jabo anchored everything down and then provided a snappy break before the group returned to the melody theme and wrapped it up with a flourish. It was vintage AMB virtuosity, and, as Duane Herman said, "Elton John clearly displayed the same sense of melodic talent of Duane Duane." Oakley Betts was a tremendous player in his own right — so one could compare instruments like he could. Herman stated, "The thing is, Duane can teach a large student that I don't think people discovered the true genius of Duane Duane and that band. He's a true brother and a true artist. That being said, he was the perfect fit for Duane — they were brilliant together."

The AMB was at its most soulful on the "Double Mendocino," a 7-8 bluesy song they had made their own. It allowed Gregg to showcase the depth and soul of his voice, and Duane delivered a home with some scorching guitar riffs.

What came next certainly is the focal point of *Live from A&R* and one of the high watermarks in the history of the Allman Brothers Band. A member Duane Allman stepped up to the mic to deliver a spontaneous eulogy for King Curtis, McNeill's friend and musical collaborator who had been murdered in June of his New York hometown on August 19th. "What about King Curtis man? Man, that was one of the great cats that ever was," Duane stated. "He was just right on top of getting next to the young people, you know? It's a shame." Continuing, Duane said, "It's unbelievable the way and the emotional nature that man had. He was an incredible human being, he, to the general, heroic song and Steve Wonder

played, and man, they played 'Soul Scramble.'" As he quoted the first notes of the song that Curtis made famous in 1964, Duane inquired, "You ever hear that?" "I all are probably a bit too young to know it, it's fantastic." The crowd responded with enthusiastic applause, prompting Duane to remark, "Yeah, we'll do a little bit of that." After asking the band, "You wanna do some of that?" Duane answered his own question by saying "I know where we'll do it." With that, he guided the group into "You Don't Love Me," and after Gregg sang the third verse, Duane stepped up for one of the monumental solos of his career. Following a long, sustained note, Duane watched the firebrand before settling into the opening line of "Soul Scramble," and then he poured out his soul — anger, grief and sorrow were all expressed through six strings. One after another, the rest of the band fell in behind him, bringing what started out as a simple melody line to explosive surroundings. It was a three-minute masterpiece of improvisation, something only the Allman Brothers Band could have created, and it still echoes with power 40 years later.

Looking back on how Duane honored his fallen friend so touchingly that night, Duane Herman commented, "Some people were their heart on their sleeve; well, Duane Allman was his in his Los Paul. I've never heard another musician put such passion into their playing — only Duane could deliver something that poignant."

The AMB manager's follow up the seventeen-minute majority of "You Don't Love Me" with the joyful "Don't Leave," a group-composed instrumental that grew out of a rehearsal held at the Big House, the band's rehearsal space in Macon. Duane, Oakley and Berry were cooking, while the drummer created a glorified 12 music and rhythm. As Gregg sang into a single note, the rest of the group built the song up to a stunning climax that left the crowd breathless. It was the perfect way to wrap up the show, and as Duane Herman remembers each member of the group, *Live from A&R Studios* every perfectly.

In conclusion, Duane Herman summed up the Allman Brothers Band's appearance at A&R Studios thus, "The *Soul Scramble* is and they were totally in case, and they played for a little over an hour or so, their set was intense and focused." In other words, they were the Allman Brothers Band. Of course, back then nobody would have ever dreamed that they would go on to do three legendary rounds at the Beacon Theatre every spring. In fact, I have to say that the Allman's appearance at the Beacon is probably the number one highlight in the world of rock music in New York City; I can't think of anything else that would overshadow it."

August 26, 1971 was truly a night to remember, and thanks to *Live from A&R Studios*, one can now relive it over and over. Enjoy every note.

John Lyndley
Writes the New magazine

