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Bobby Whitlock And Coco Carmel Set To Tour This Fall



Photo by Todd V. Wolfson

Eric Clapton deserves credit for many things, one of which is surrounding himself with the best people he can find. In one of Clapton's several short-lived groups, Derek & the Dominos, he teamed up with Memphis vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Bobby

Whitlock, and they made rock 'n' roll history.

Bobby Whitlock started his career in his mid-teens, hanging at Stax with Booker T. & the MGs, particularly members Steve Cropper and Duck Dunn, then joining Delany & Bonnie and Friends, playing on George Harrison's *All Things Must Pass* and teaming up with Clapton and Whitlock's other D&B friends to form Derek & the Dominos; he took a little detour to play on the Stones' *Exile On Main Street* album. Whew.

Derek & the Dominos released only one album, but it was a lulu. *Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs* was largely written by Clapton, Whitlock and another D&B friend, Jim Gordon, and features not only the titular Clapton/Gordon hit, "Layla," but Whitlock's own "Bell Bottom Blues," "Keep On Growing," "I Looked Away," "Tell The Truth," "Why Does Love Got To Be So Sad," "Thorn Tree In The Garden," and "Any Day." Whitlock told *Elmore*, "Eric and I, our songwriting teamwork was so natural, we didn't have to work at it at all. We were tapped into the source." C'mon, folks, the *session players* included Dave Mason, George Harrison and Duane Allman, who provided the unforgettable guitar licks on "Layla."

Fast forward to September, 2015, when Whitlock and his wife of 14 years will take their "Just Us" tour to 11 cities this fall. A multi-instrumentalist and producer herself, CoCo Carmel has performed with Dr. John, Phoebe Snow, **Jon Bon Jovi**, **Albert Lee** and Billy Preston. Their acoustic show will feature Whitlock's Derek & the Dominos hits as well as selections from the duo's new album, *Carnival*.

The couple has a compelling chemistry. Whitlock said, "CoCo and I on stage, we don't rehearse this stuff. We play at home and hone things in and make it right." They have chosen 10 different local guitarists to perform, one at each show, so it's really the "Just Us and A Sideman" tour, which suits Whitlock just fine.

"It's just really great. Every guitar player knows all of these songs I wrote all those years ago," Whitlock said. "Nothing is ever the same—that's what I'm really looking forward to doing. Each and

every one of them is phenomenal in his own right. So what they do is pretty amazing: it lifts us.”

Let’s see how far up they can go from here.