

= The Allman Brothers Band (album) =

The Allman Brothers Band is the debut studio album by American rock band the Allman Brothers Band . It was released in the United States by Atco Records and Capricorn Records on November 4 , 1969 and produced by Adrian Barber . Formed in 1969 , the Allman Brothers Band came together following various musical pursuits by each individual member . Following his session work in Muscle Shoals , Alabama , Duane Allman moved to Jacksonville , Florida where he led large jam sessions with his new band , one he had envisioned as having two guitarists and two drummers . After rounding out the lineup with the addition of his brother , Gregg Allman , the band played free shows in public parks and moved to Macon , Georgia , where they were to be one of the premiere acts on Capricorn .

The album was recorded and mixed in two weeks at Atlantic Studios in New York City . Much of the material presented was premiered live over the preceding months and combines blues , jazz and country music to varying degrees . It includes re @-@ workings of " Trouble No More " and " Don 't Want You No More , " as well as notable originals such as " Dreams " , which highlighted the band 's jazz influence , and " Whipping Post " , which soon became a crowd favorite . Although the group was arranged to work with producer Tom Dowd (whose credits included Cream and John Coltrane) , he was unavailable , and they instead recorded with house engineer Adrian Barber . The album 's artwork was photographed at various places in Macon and surrounding areas .

The record initially received a poor commercial response , charting in the lower levels of Billboard 's Top 200 Pop Albums chart . Despite this , the album received critical acclaim from publications such as Rolling Stone , who called it " consistently [...] subtle , and honest , and moving . " Following the release of the album , the band remained on the road for an extended period of time . They chose to remain in Macon , despite suggestions from label executives to move to larger cities for a better shot at commercial acceptance .

= = Background = =

The Allman Brothers Band was formed in March 1969 , during large jam sessions with various musicians in Jacksonville , Florida . Duane Allman and Jai Johanny Johanson (Jaimoe) had recently moved from Muscle Shoals , where Duane participated in session work at FAME Studios for artists such as Aretha Franklin , King Curtis , and Wilson Pickett , with whom he recorded a cover of the Beatles ' " Hey Jude " that went to number 23 on the national charts . Duane began to put together a new band , and invited bassist Berry Oakley to jam with the new group ; the pair had met in a Jacksonville , Florida club some time earlier , and became quick friends . The group had immediate chemistry , and Duane 's vision for a " different " band ? one with two lead guitarists and two drummers ? began evolving . Meanwhile , Phil Walden , the manager of the late Otis Redding and several other R & B acts , was looking to expand into rock acts . Rick Hall became frustrated with the group 's recording methods , and offered the tracks recorded and their contract to Walden and Jerry Wexler of Atlantic Records , who purchased them for \$ 10 @,@ 000 . Walden intended the upcoming group to be the centerpiece of his new Atlantic @-@ distributed label , Capricorn .

After the duo moved to Jacksonville , they began to put together large jam sessions . Dickey Betts had played in Oakley 's previous band , the Second Coming , and became the group 's second lead guitarist , while Butch Trucks , with whom Duane and Gregg had cut a demo less than a year prior , fulfilled the role of the second drummer . The Second Coming 's Reese Wynans played keyboards , and Duane , Oakley and Betts all shared vocal duties . The unnamed group began to perform free shows in Willow Branch Park in Jacksonville , with an ever @-@ changing , rotating cast of musicians . Duane felt strongly his brother should be the vocalist of the new group (which effectively eliminated Wynans ' position , as Gregg also played keyboards) . Gregg accepted the invitation and entered rehearsal on March 26 , 1969 , when the group was rehearsing " Trouble No More " by Muddy Waters . Although initially intimidated by the musicians , Duane pressured his brother " into singing [his] guts out . " Four days later , the group made their début at the Jacksonville Armory . Although many names were suggested including Beelzebub , the six @-@

piece eventually decided on the Allman Brothers Band .

The group moved to Macon , Georgia by May 1 , where Walden was establishing Capricorn Records . The band performed locally , as well as eighty miles north in Atlanta 's Piedmont Park , and practiced at the newly minted Capricorn nearly each day . The group forged a strong brotherhood , spending countless hours rehearsing , consuming psychedelic drugs , and hanging out in Rose Hill Cemetery , where they would write songs . Their first performances outside the South came on May 30 and 31 in Boston , opening for the Velvet Underground . In need of more material , the group remade old blues numbers like " Trouble No More " and " One Way Out " , in addition to improvised jams such as " Mountain Jam " . Gregg , who had struggled to write in the past , became the band 's sole songwriter , composing songs such as " Whipping Post " and " Black Hearted Woman " . Much of the material collected on The Allman Brothers Band was written between the period of May to August 1969 and premiered live . According to Johanson , the group gauged crowd reaction to the numbers and adjusted the songs accordingly . " Before we went into the studio , we had a very clear idea of what we were all trying to do musically and that it was unique , totally different from anything else that anyone was playing , " said Betts . " From the earliest rehearsals , we all had the same mind set . "

= = Recording and production = =

The band set off from Macon for New York City in August 1969 , and faced setbacks along the way , such as their equipment truck breaking down in South Carolina . In addition , they had arranged to work with Cream producer Tom Dowd , who was unavailable ; Atlantic Records house engineer Adrian Barber recorded the sessions instead , and was credited as producer . Recalled Dowd , " I was supposed to have done the first album with the band up in New York , but some way or other I got detoured . Jerry Wexler made a deal to keep them in the studio for three or four days when they were supposed to be with me . " The band had no commercial success in mind , having had troublesome experiences individually in the past with producers and labels that pushed for radio hits . The band felt that with time they would develop a small , devoted following and be strong enough to collect \$ 3 ? 4 @ , @ 000 dollars per night .

The Allman Brothers Band was recorded and mixed in two weeks , and according to biographer Alan Paul , " virtually no outtakes exist from the sessions . " The band had performed their songs countless times in the preceding months and " [had] them down cold . " Numerous artists , including Ray Charles , had recorded on the studio 's house Hammond organ , but Gregg Allman set up his own instead , feeling unable to play on the same instrument as Charles . A red light on the recording board would go on when the band began recording , and it made Gregg Allman nervous ; in order to perform takes as needed , he unscrewed the light . The two @-@ week booking was initially designed for laying down basic tracks , with overdubs following later , but the group ended up cutting the entire record in six non @-@ consecutive days . They first entered Atlantic Studios that Sunday night (August 3) to " get sounds " ; the band laid down the album 's openers , " Don 't Want You No More " and " It 's Not My Cross to Bear " , as well as " Dreams , " which the band set aside . " Dreams " had previously been recorded as a demo at Macon 's new Capricorn Studios in April .

On August 5 , the band cut " Black Hearted Woman " and " Trouble No More " , and the group completed " Whipping Post " after another day off on August 7 (it took the entirety of that day 's session to complete the recording , despite the fact that they had performed the number countless times) . The next day , the band attempted to record " Statesboro Blues , " which was the song that influenced Duane Allman to begin slide playing . Unable to achieve the same energy as it would performed live , the band scrapped the recording and session for the day . " Every Hungry Woman " was recorded on August 11 , and their last day in the studio on Tuesday , August 12 produced a final version of " Dreams " . Johnson remembered the process as only taking four days ; " We went in there , played our asses off , and that was it ; we were done in four days and they spent the rest of the time mixing , " said Johnson .

Although Butch Trucks recalls the entire ensemble as comfortable with studio recording , another

source claims that Johnson , Betts and Oakley were unfamiliar with studio recording , but nevertheless not intimidated . " They were out of their element in New York , hustled by a chap with an English accent , " said Dowd of Barber . He spoke of Barber 's direction as " perhaps intimidating , or push @-@ push , shove @-@ shove . ' Do what the guy says and let ? s get out of here . ' " " Dreams " , which later gained regard among band members as the high point of the record , was the only song in which the group got stuck , due to Duane Allman 's displeasure with his guitar solo . The performance captured on record came when Duane instructed the other members to turn off all the lights in the studio after the day 's session , and sat in a corner beside his amp and baffle . Allman played slide guitar (which was not employed in previous attempts) and improvised the overdubbed performance , bringing all of the members to tears . " It was unbelievable , " recalled Trucks . " It was just magic . It ? s always been that the greatest music we played was from out of nowhere , that it wasn ? t practiced , planned , or discussed . "

During their tenure in New York , the group made their debut over three non @-@ consecutive nights at Ungano 's in Manhattan , a club that would eventually become regarded within the ensemble as their " second home . " Gregg Allman felt the band had rushed through their debut recording and was later unhappy with his vocal sound on the record ; " They were recorded with the regular old tape echo " Heartbreak Hotel " setting , " he recalled . Barber disagreed with this assessment , and , not wanting to cause any quarrels , Allman backed away .

= = Composition = =

The songs on the album were largely arranged after Gregg Allman joined the band in Jacksonville , Florida in March 1969 . Most of the songs were devised from longer , impromptu jam sessions . The group 's style evolved from a mix of jazz , country music , blues and rock , which was the result of each individual member turning the others onto their particular interests . Trucks introduced Johnson to the Grateful Dead and the Rolling Stones ; Johnson likewise introduced the group to jazz musicians such as Miles Davis and John Coltrane , and Betts did the same with country music and Chuck Berry . Duane Allman had previously listened to Davis and Coltrane before Johnson 's suggestion , and his two favorite songs ? Coltrane 's version of " My Favorite Things " and Miles Davis ' " All Blues " ? were the basis for the majority of the band 's modal jamming , " without a lot of chord changes . "

The album opens with an instrumental , a cover of Spencer Davis ' " Don 't Want You No More , " which had previously been employed on set lists of the Second Coming , Oakley and Betts ' former band . Allman and Betts ' guitars perform in unison on a five @-@ note melody while Johnson concentrates on his hi @-@ hat , and the song includes an organ solo . The song contains two guitar solos , with the latter " [coming] in behind the first one for a darting buildup that sound [s] like something taken from Brahms . " It segues into a " lazy blues shuffle " titled " It 's Not My Cross to Bear , " which Allman had written in Los Angeles for a former lover . " Black Hearted Woman , " also penned on the same subject , follows , and the album returns to a blues @-@ based sound with a cover of " Trouble No More , " featuring Duane 's debut bottleneck guitar performance . Songs such as " Black Hearted Woman " and " Every Hungry Woman " were written about Allman 's experiences with a girl named Stacy in Los Angeles .

Among the most changed were two songs that would become the basis for two of the Allman Brothers ' most famed epic concert numbers : " Dreams " and " Whipping Post " . Oakley " played a huge role in the band 's arrangements , " changing numbers such as " Whipping Post " from a ballad structure to a more hard @-@ rocking song . " Dreams " developed from a jam in which the band toyed with the theme to the film 2001 : A Space Odyssey , and has been referred to by Johnson as Coltrane 's " My Favorite Things " with lyrics . Johnson 's drum fills were pulled from Jimmy Cobb 's performance on " All Blues " ; he later commented that he " did a lot of copying , but only from the best . " " Dreams " begins with " intricate , subdued drums playing under a soft organ with only the hint of guitars before Gregg begins singing about disillusionment and broken dreams . "

The final song on the record , " Whipping Post , " was written shortly after Allman returned to

Jacksonville . The song came to him shortly before bed , but he was unable to acquire a pencil and paper to write down his ideas , as there was a child asleep in the room and he could not turn on the lights . Turning to his next best alternative , he struck two kitchen matches (one for light and one , later blown out , as a charcoal writing utensil) and wrote down his lyrics on a bedside ironing board . " Whipping Post " was similar in composition to " Dreams " in its first incarnation , with Oakley later creating the heavy bassline that starts off the track . Duane and Betts take quick solos before the track builds to an " anguished climax , " leading to Gregg Allman 's solo voice , singing the song 's refrain : " Good Lord , I feel like I 'm dyin ' " . Allman had no idea the intro was written in 11 / 4 time ? " I just saw it as three sets of three , and then two to jump on the next three sets with " ? until his brother pointed it out for him . " My brother told me ? I guess the day I wrote it ? he said , ' That 's good , man . I didn 't know you understood 11 / 4 . ' Of course I said something intelligent like , ' What 's 11 / 4 ? ' Duane just said , ' Okay , dumbass , I 'll try to draw it up on paper for you . ' "

Gregg Allman 's lyrical contributions to the band 's debut album have been called " remarkably mature lyrical conceptions for such a young man , expertly executed in a minimalist , almost haiku style . " Allman 's inspiration came from his time in Los Angeles as a part of Hour Glass , " getting fucked by different land sharks in the business , " experiencing great frustration among fierce competition . The traditional blues songs were , likewise , regarded as " songs that were so good they couldn 't be left off the album . " On the writing of the record , Allman wrote in his memoir *My Cross to Bear* , " I wrote most of that whole first record in that one week . I had total peace of mind . L.A. and all its changes didn 't even cross my mind . I felt like I was starting all over , which I was . " Most of the songs on the album were written at Rose Hill Cemetery .

= = Artwork = =

The cover for the album was taken by photographer Stephen Paley . Paley had gotten to know Duane Allman during photo shoots for Atlantic . Paley stayed for " about a week " in Macon with the band , partying with the group . They approached any areas about the town that appeared photogenic , such as " fields , old houses , railroad tracks , [and] the cemetery . " The front album cover photo was taken at the entrance of the College House (now owned by Mercer University) next door at 315 College Street . The back cover photo of the album was taken at the Bond Tomb at Rose Hill Cemetery , located at 1091 Riverside Drive in Macon .

The gatefold cover of the vinyl LP features the band posing nude in a brook . The shot was original manager Phil Walden 's idea , and the brook was on his brother Alan 's property . Alan later recalled , " The [inner sleeve] photo was taken in Round Oak , Georgia , down behind my log cabin there , which is also the back of Otis Redding 's Big O Ranch " . Rolling Stone editor Jann Wenner was present with Boz Scaggs , whom he was producing at the time . They brought bubbles to cover themselves up , but the bubbles were washed away by the stream . Trucks had sliced his leg open earlier that day , requiring thirteen stitches , and was unable to get in the water ; he is standing behind Oakley in the shot . Walden suggested the band take a few shots standing full @-@ frontal ; the band was reluctant but he assured them they would never see the light of day . At their first performance at the Fillmore East that December , Trucks discovered the full @-@ frontal shots were printed in a broadsheet alternative newspaper .

Paley later said of the cover shoot , " I never liked a band more . I was one of them . It was like being a rock star . I hung out with a lot of rock stars but no one ever did that to the same extent . There was just an ease to the whole thing . They really were the kindest , most fun band I ever worked with . "

= = Release and reception = =

The Allman Brothers Band was released in November 1969 through Atco and Capricorn Records . Atco was a subsidiary label of Atlantic Records , and Walden had not even created a logo for Capricorn Records ; instead , the LP featured an Atco label with a " barely noticeable " line reading " Capricorn Records Series . " The record received a poor commercial response , selling fewer than

35 @, @ 000 copies upon initial release . Executives suggested to Walden that he relocate the band to New York or Los Angeles to " acclimate " them to the industry . " They wanted us to act " like a rock band " and we just told them to fuck themselves , " remembered Trucks . For their part , the members of the band remained optimistic , electing to stay in the South . " Everyone told us we ? d fall by the wayside down there , " said Gregg Allman , but the collaboration between the band and Capricorn Records " transformed Macon from this sleepy little town into a very hip , wild , and crazy place filled with bikers and rockers . "

The band played shows along the East Coast in December 1969 , attempting to kick @-@ start the record onto Billboard 's Top 200 Pop Albums chart . In January , the band performed at the Electric Factory in Philadelphia and the Fillmore West in San Francisco before debuting at the Whisky a Go Go in Los Angeles , representing the Allmans ' first engagement there since their days in the Hour Glass . On the third day of their Whisky residency , the album logged at number 188 on the top 200 , " enough to prove that the ABB was more than a regional outfit . " Capricorn issued " Black Hearted Woman " as the album ? s single , edited down to nearly two minutes shorter in an effort to place on top 40 radio . Despite Ed Och 's rave review in Billboard , the single failed to register on pop radio . Rather than employing the standard cover shot for the advertising campaign , marketing rather emphasized the nude group shot , alongside a quote from Och 's Billboard review , describing the group as a " bad bunch of electric Southern longhairs . "

Rolling Stone 's Lester Bangs called the album " consistently [...] subtle , and honest , and moving , " describing the band as " a white group who 've transcended their schooling to produce a volatile blues @-@ rock sound of pure energy , inspiration and love . " A retrospective review from Bruce Eder at Allmusic stated it " might be the best debut album ever delivered by an American blues band , a bold , powerful , hard @-@ edged , soulful essay in electric blues with a native Southern ambience . "

= = Track listing = =

All songs written by Gregg Allman , except where noted .

Side one

" Don 't Want You No More " (Spencer Davis , Edward Hardin) ? 2 : 25

" It 's Not My Cross to Bear " ? 5 : 02

" Black Hearted Woman " ? 5 : 08

" Trouble No More " (McKinley Morganfield aka Muddy Waters) ? 3 : 45

Side two

" Every Hungry Woman " ? 4 : 13

" Dreams " ? 7 : 18

" Whipping Post " ? 5 : 17

= = Personnel = =

All credits adapted from liner notes .

= = Charts = =

= = = Weekly charts = = =