
Allman Family Revival



The Allman Family Revival

On December 8, 2017, Devon Allman invited a couple dozen of his closest musical compadres onto the hallowed stage of The Fillmore to perform a three-hour, multi-set monster of a concert for the sold-out crowd that filled the historic San Francisco venue in tribute to Allman's late father, Gregg. The date was bittersweet; what would've been Gregg's 70th birthday. For Allman, in a year when the award-winning musician lost both parents within a few months of each other, what started as a simple idea of music as medicine had given birth to The Allman Family Revival: a happy and healing cosmic experience celebrating the life, spirit, and indelible musical legacy of Gregg Allman.

The format for this ambitious undertaking, Allman says, was inspired by one of rock's most famous concerts (and film). "I had recently re-fallen in love with The Band's *The Last Waltz* and thought that would be perfect: let our band come out and serve as the appetizer; then one-by-one welcome our special guests; have them do a song they are known for and also do an Allman-centric song."

Year one, the newly-formed Devon Allman Project with Duane Betts indeed welcomed a slew of heavyweights to the tribute: G. Love; Robert Randolph; Luther and Cody Dickinson; Alex Orbison; and Samantha Fish, to name a few. In 2018, The Allman Betts Band acted as the Revival's house band, adding wunderkind Marcus King to the already-impressive guest list for another sold-out affair at The Fillmore. By 2019, Allman extended the scope of the now-annual event, and the invites (including Cheap Trick's legendary singer, Robin Zander), slating Allman Family Revival shows in San Francisco, Denver's Mission Ballroom, and New York City's Beacon Theatre. In 2020, the global pandemic forced Allman to pivot to a February 2021 date, adapting the Revival to a single, socially-distanced performance at Nashville's famed Ryman Auditorium and included Jimmy Hall (Wet Willie) and JD Simo among the now-familiar faces of Allman's ever-expanding musical family.

"I like having artists that knew Dad, played with him, maybe were an opening act, or were really influenced and inspired by him," Allman says. "As for a venue, I prefer those turn-of-the-century to mid-20th century, old-school theatres. They are just gorgeous inside, sculpted for sound, and provide the perfect location for these very special shows. I love for this concert to feel like a night at the theatre for our audience."

Once envisioned as a single celebration in San Francisco, the Allman Family Revival, in its sixth year, it will again be a full-fledged, coast-to-coast tour. As curator, host, and performer, Allman remains true to the painstaking mission of providing an epic event

worthy of its inspiration. "I really enjoy working with the guests individually on setlists to make each show a very special night. It's a daunting task, for sure, but a labor of love every time."

The 2021 coast to coast Revival Tour was a one for the ages. It included eighteen shows and debut appearances by Ivan Neville, George Porter, Kenny Aronoff, Kenny Wayne Shepherd and Karl Denson to name a few but was admittedly and understandably a complicated adventure as waves of Covid were still reeking havoc on the live music business.

Among the marquee names scheduled for 2022's Revival are The Devon Allman Project, Duane Betts, Donavon Frankenreiter, Maggie Rose, Jimmy Hall, Larry McCray, Alex Orbison and The River Kittens, plus, of course, more surprises to come.

"My favorite part is just the joy of the audience. I can tell they are touched and getting every penny's worth," Allman says. "Knowing Dad is looking down saying, 'Damn, son, all that hot jammin' for me?!' I know he's tickled that we celebrate him. Because none of us has to do this. We all have busy careers. This is a 'want to' situation; absolutely, 100% about music and celebration and tribute."

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