



The Man from Muscle Shoals: My Journey from Shame to Fame

Rick Hall

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This is the story of legendary record producer Rick Hall and his historic role in the development of the world-famous “Muscle Shoals sound.”

Although virtually every major record producer, songwriter, artist, and musician is familiar with its musical power and influence, the recording industry of Muscle Shoals remains the music world’s most fascinating and untold story. In a tiny north Alabama town on the banks of the Tennessee River, a close-knit group of true music believers recorded hundreds of hit records for the rhythm-and-blues, rock ‘n’ roll, pop, Southern rock, teeny pop, and the country music markets. Many of these chart- topping hits went on to become timeless musical standards.

Rick Hall made music history when he founded FAME Recording Studios, which was the first professional recording studio not only in Muscle Shoals, but in the entire state of Alabama. After producing and engineering the area’s first national hit on Arthur Alexander’s Southern Soul classic “You Better Move On,” Rick went on to earn international fame and acclaim and eventually a Grammy for a lifetime of achievements in the music industry.

In the days when Martin Luther King Jr. was marching for freedom, and Alabama Gov. George Wallace was standing in the doorway of the University of Alabama, Rick proved to be a civil-rights pioneer in his own right, promoting racial harmony through the healing and uplifting power of his music. In the color-blind atmosphere of FAME and Muscle Shoals music, Rick produced hit records for black artists in those tense and trying days when black was black and white was white. His records helped introduce white audiences to the black music market and black audiences to the white music market.

From the moment “You Better Move On” hit the charts, record labels literally flocked to Muscle Shoals for Rick to produce and engineer a mind-boggling array of major artists, from Aretha Franklin to Bobbie Gentry, from the Osmonds to Alabama, from Wilson Pickett to Mac Davis, from Duane Allman to Paul Anka, from Etta James to Liza Minnelli, and from Clarence Carter to Andy Williams. His astonishing abilities as a record producer were matched only by the incredible range of his versatility.

Music fans, history buffs and others will be delighted to read the fascinating tales of just how Rick Hall managed to launch the music careers of so many famous artists.

Readers who enjoyed Every Night’s a Saturday Night: The Rock 'n' Roll Life of Legendary Sax Man Bobby Keys will greatly enjoy this book.

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