**TEDESCHI TRUCKS BAND**Biography

Go back to December 31, 2008 when guitarist Derek Trucks and his wife, singer/guitarist Susan Tedeschi, were preparing to ring in the New Year.Married since 1999, these two soulmates, equally steeped in the musical roots of blues, jazz, and gospel, had finally decided the time was right to set aside their successful solo careers and commit to a new band melding their vision and talent. It wasn’t the first time they had collaborated; they had shared a stage countless times and traded album guest appearances, all while starting a family together. But on that night, hitting the stage together with members of the Derek Trucks Band and a guest horn section they heard the future.

Two years later, the couple debuted Tedeschi Trucks Band. The nation’s economy was heading into recession. The popular music landscape was filled with technological theatrics and auto-tuned singers. And here were Tedeschi and Trucks along with their (then) 8-member band, loading up two tour buses and hitting the road with a sound that defied conventional genre boundaries or traditional labels; a gypsy caravan on the rock-and-roll highway. To call it ambitious was an understatement.

In pursuit of their ideal sound driven by world class musicianship, Tedeschi and Trucks put together a musical collaborative like no other, flying in the face of any practical or economic considerations. There have been evolutionary changes to the band along the way, but the freight-train force of veteran drummers J.J. Johnson and Tyler Greenwell were there from the start, along with two brilliant Trucks Band veterans to amplify the rhythm section: Kofi Burbridge with his prodigious talent on keys and flute, and Mike Mattison, with his dynamic vocals and songwriting skills. A 3-piece horn section brought on for studio work proved indispensable to the group’s sound and became a permanent addition – now composed of Kebbi Williams’ intergalactic saxophone, Ephraim Owens on trumpet and Elizabeth Lea on trombone. Industry-renowned bassist Tim Lefebvre (David Bowie, Elvis Costello, Sting) joined in 2013, and two years later a third incredible voice, Alecia Chakour, was added to the background vocals provided by Mark Rivers and Mattison; each more than capable of delivering a stirring turn as a lead vocalist.

On the road for upwards of 200 days a year, the TTB family has grown strong, bonding over backyard BBQs and long bus rides, all the while developing a growing repertoire of original material and paying homage to an extensive canon of influences ranging from Sly & the Family Stone, Miles Davis and George Jones to Joe Cocker, Nina Simone, and even Indian sarod master Ali Akbar Khan. Embracing improvisation over convention, and never repeating a set list, the collective is adept at exploring almost any musical territory. The genuine respect within its ranks is evident on stage. Trucks’ masterful guitar skills and Tedeschi’s soaring vocals and bluesy guitar shine but don’t overpower the breadth of talent, happily yielding the spotlight as needed in service of what the song deserves.

Trucks and Tedeschi’s uncompromising vision has paid off. Now 12-members strong, and with a catalog of five albums and nearly a decade of steady touring in the U.S. and abroad, Tedeschi Trucks Band carries a distinguished reputation earned from both audiences and critics as one of the premier live bands in the world. Sold-out multi-night runs at venerable venues like the Beacon Theatre in New York, Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, and Colorado’s Red Rocks Amphitheater are a testament to the can’t-miss concert experience fans have come to anticipate. The band’s own “Wheels of Soul” tour has become a sought-after summer experience from promoters across the country, bringing TTB’s unique stew of upbeat rock and soul together on stage with a slew of guests, sit ins, and supporting bands that have included the late Sharon Jones, Los Lobos and most recently The Wood Brothers and Hot Tuna. 2018 will also mark the sixth year for the TTB-curated Sunshine Music Festival, hosted each January in their home state of Florida.

TTB’s most recent CD/film release, *Live From The Fox Oakland* (2017) follows a quartet of critically-hailed and commercially successful albums, including the Grammy-winning debut, *Revelator* (2011) and *Let Me Get By* (2016), called “one of the great records of the year” by the Associated Press. The film documents the progress the band has made since its inception, while also showcasing its endless potential to bring out the best in each other every night in any musical direction they choose. It’s clear that the leaders have no intention of slowing down now. As Trucks remarked to Mark Maron on his *WTF* podcast featured in the film, “I haven’t found this band’s ceiling yet.” For Tedeschi Trucks Band, there may not be one.

**About Derek Trucks and Susan Tedeschi**

 From their steady rise as solo artists to now being hailed as “two of the best roots rock musicians of their generation,” (NPR), Trucks and Tedeschi both began their careers in music at a young age. Born in Jacksonville, Florida and named after a much-loved Derek and the Dominoes album, Derek Trucks picked up his first guitar at age 8 when his dad bought it for him at a garage sale. His hands were too small to play it the way he wanted, so he took up playing with a slide and his prodigious skill was quickly evident. He was touring as a headliner with his own band by age 11, and opening for The Allman Brothers Band (Butch Trucks was his uncle) at 13.

By his late teens, Trucks was touring relentlessly, sometimes playing over 200 shows a year and completing school work on the road. It wasn’t long before his services were called on to tour with Eric Clapton, Carlos Santana, and at age 19 by The Allman Brothers, for whom he would fill the late Duane Allman’s shoes until their last shows in 2014. Trucks toured throughout with his own Grammy Award-winning Derek Trucks Band, sometimes splitting time between three bands in a single year.

Still in his 30s, Trucks has already earned two Grammy awards in addition to a lifetime achievement Grammy and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction for his tenure with the Allmans. He is the youngest person on *Rolling Stone*’s top 100 Rock Guitarists of all-time list – voted #16 by his peers and industry leaders. He’s had the fortunate opportunity of sharing the stage at one point with just about all of his musical influences and has amassed a who’s who of album credits on records by titans such as JJ Cale/Eric Clapton, B.B. King, Dr. John, McCoy Tyner and Roseanne Cash. With the torch of blues and rock legends now being passed to a new generation, Trucks has also been asked to pay tribute on stage to likes of Freddie King and Hubert Sumlin and, most personally, for Gregg Allman when he passed away in 2017.

Trucks’ tone on his guitar is instantly recognizable, and his mastery of the instrument is a product of years of musical curiosity and avid listening to a wide range of music – from early blues, to classic rock, jazz and Indian classical music. He approaches the guitar with a melodic perspective, drawing influence from singers as much as from guitarists. Less is more with Trucks, who uses no picks or sound-warping pedals, and often eschews showy playing when a single, well-played note will do. His is a pure form of musicianship not found frequently today.
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No stranger herself to the spotlight or life on the road, Susan Tedeschi was born in Boston into a musical family. Her talents were evident as a young child; at age 6 she was already on stage in musicals. With help from her great Aunt, an opera singer who showed her proper breathing techniques, Tedeschi developed her vocal power. She would be auditioning for Broadway before her teens. But it was her love of American roots music – especially blues, soul and gospel – that would call her to a life as a musician.

Tedeschi first began singing with local bands at 13, developing her dynamic stage presence. After high school, she studied at the prestigious Berklee College of Music. Drawn to the upbeat rhythms of local gospel churches, she joined a gospel choir while at Berklee, which had a profound influence on her singing and musical direction. Tedeschi’s focus on her guitar playing also increased, inspired by electric blues legends like Otis Rush and Magic Sam. With a determination to match her vocal prowess, Tedeschi continued to take local gigs and immerse herself in Boston’s fertile blues scene until starting her own band in 1992.

Success didn’t take long. Within a year, Tedeschi’s band was playing at major festivals across the country. Her professional debut album *Just Won’t Burn* (1999) achieved gold status, thrusting her into the national spotlight and earning her a Grammy nomination for Best New Artist in 2000. Throughout the 2000s she toured with a string of musical icons including members of the Grateful Dead, the Rolling Stones, and personal heroes like B.B. King, Buddy Guy and Taj Mahal. In the studio, Tedeschi continued to demonstrate her ability to handle an expanded canvas of rich R&B flavors and soul material, with all of her follow up albums earning Grammy nominations for Best Blues Album, plus a fifth nod for Best Female Rock Vocal Performance.

Few singers today can match Tedeschi’s power. Whether singing with fierceness and a spirit of defiance, or wrapping her voice around a gentle ballad, her vocal command can be awe-inspiring. And, like her husband, Tedeschi relies only on her natural talent; there are no computers in the wings correcting her pitch. Her six-string talents, steeped in the blues, can be equally incendiary at times, often rousing the audience into the loudest applause of the evening.

Also like Trucks, Tedeschi’s talents are in demand with an impressive list of guest album appearances to her credit, including Willie Nelson, Buddy Guy, the Blind Boys of Alabama, and duets on the latest releases from John Prine and Eric Church. As a duo, the couple have been invited to play at The White House, United Nations, and requested personally for tributes to B.B. King and Bob Dylan, among others – reflecting the respect they have earned from their heroes and peers in the industry.

*September 2017*