

SHARON JONES AND THE DAP-KINGS BIO

Sharon Jones was born **Sheron Lafaye Jones** in **Augusta, Georgia** on **May 4th 1956**. Her mother moved to Brooklyn soon thereafter, however Jones was sent down south for a few months every year to stay with her family. As a child, she and her brothers would imitate the songs and dances of **James Brown**, who shared their hometown. Like many rhythm and blues entertainers, she began performing in church at a very young age where her voice would find a lifelong home and inspiration. As a teenager in the early nineteen seventies, she began singing outside of the church in talent shows and with local funk groups. Later she would make her living with a combination of sporadic session work as a mostly anonymous voice on various dance records (sometimes credited as Lafaye Jones), singing with wedding bands, and a handful of day jobs which included stints as both a prison guard at New York's notorious Riker's Island, and an armored car guard for Wells Fargo Bank. In 1996 she was called in to sing back-up at a **Desco Records** studio session for 70's soul legend **Lee Fields**.

Desco was a small independent specializing in traditional funk and soul pressed exclusively to wax. Co-owners and producers **Phillip Lehman** and **Bosco 'Bass' Mann** had called Jones in on a tip from a sax player who was seeing her at the time. As the other two girls never showed up for the session, Jones cut all the background parts for the session herself, and proceeded to cut the impromptu prison rap over *Switchblade*, which had originally been intended for a man. Ironically, that rant (slowed down to make it sound like a man) would be her first outing as a featured artist on a record. Though she was at first skeptical of the 21 year-old jewish kid egging her on from the other side of the glass, a common love and respect for Soul music soon created a trust and friendship between Jones and Mann which would lead them both to a fruitful career.

Over the next four years, Jones sang frequently alongside Lee Fields, **Joseph Henry**, and **Naomi Davis** as part of the **Desco Super Soul Revue** backed by Desco house band the **Soul Providers**. Desco would release a handful of singles in her name including *The Bump & Touch*, *Damn It's Hot*, and *You Better Think Twice* as well as versions of funk classics *I Got the Feelin'* and *Hook & Sling*. In the UK, a blossoming Deep Funk scene lead by DJ's **Keb Darge** and **Snowboy** among others showed support for these Desco releases and paved the way for Jones and the Soul Providers' first international tour in 1999, where her command of the stage earned her an overnight title as the *'Queen of Funk'*.

Unfortunately, just as the Jones and the band began to gain momentum and a reputation for a show that couldn't be missed, internal business conflicts caused the demise of Desco Records in the early part of 2000. Though the Soul Providers would not perform again, it wasn't long before Jones and Mann would regroup in another formation.

Guitarist **Binky Griptite**, would remain at Mann's side as well as organist **Earl Maxton**, percussionist **Fernando 'Boogaloo' Velez**, trumpeter **Anda 'Goodfoot' Szilagyi** and Baritone saxophonist **Jack Zapata** (AKA **Martin Perna**, who would go on to form Brooklyn afrobeat collective **Antibalas**) all from the original Soul Providers. From the

Mighty Imperials, a young instrumental organ funk group that recorded at Desco, Tenor saxophonist **Leon Michels** (who would later leave the group to form the **El Michels Affair** as well as his own label, **Truth & Soul**) and drummer **Homer 'Funkyfoot' Steinweiss** would fill out the line-up. Both were only 17 years-old at the time. Now for the first time, the group would be billed as **Sharon Jones & the Dap-Kings**.

In 2001, the group landed a summer residency at a club in **Barcelona**. Knowing that the trip would be a financial disaster without having a recording to sell, Mann penned a few new tunes and assembled the band to record. A rough eight track recording studio was rigged up in the basement beneath the **Afro-Spot**, a local kung-fu dojo which doubled as an afrobeat nightclub and headquarters for Antibalas' frontman **Duke Amayo**. After a few weeks of tracking and mixing, the band's debut album was completed. ***Dap Dippin' with Sharon Jones & the Dap-Kings*** would be Jones's first full length recording. Though few hundred copies were pressed to sell on the road, it would take several months and the birth of a new record label before Dap-Dippin' would be commercially released.

In late 2001, saxophonist **Neal Sugarman**, whose organ driven **Sugarman Three** combo had given Desco two of its most prominent releases, and **Gabriel Roth**, Desco's head recording engineer, joined together to form **Daptone Records**. With the intention of continuing on where Desco had left off, Daptone's debut release would be the Dap-Dippin' album.

Over the next three years, **Sharon Jones & the Dap-Kings** would tour extensively and build steadily upon a growing reputation as the unrivaled frontrunners of old-school Soul and Funk music. The band went through several changes in personnel before settling into what would be its permanent line-up. Sugarman joined the band to replace Michels on tenor saxophone. Michels would move to baritone where he would stay until 2005, when he eventually left to give Truth & Soul Records his full attention. He would be replaced on baritone by **Ian Hendrickson-Smith**, a well known and respected jazz saxophonist in his own right. The trumpet chair passed from Szilagyi to **Todd Simon**, and was eventually filled by **David Guy**. Maxton left the band in 2003 to play with Antibalas, leaving the band with no organ, and guitarist **Tommy 'TNT' Brenneck**, of the **Budos Band**, would take up the slack in the rhythm section.

By the time they returned to the studio in 2004, the Dap-Kings roster read like a veritable who's who of the day's Soul and Funk scene, most of whom were bandleaders in their own right. Countless gigs had molded the rhythm section into a redoubtable juggernaut on the bandstand, and the combination of Sugarman, Guy, and Michels in the horn section was fierce. Behind the ever-increasing power and stage presence of Jones, the band was becoming a force to be reckoned with.

In 2003, Daptone Records had relocated to a dilapidated two family house in Bushwick, Brooklyn. Upstairs became the offices, and with some amount of work, the first floor had been converted to a recording studio. By the time the Dap-Kings came to record their second record in March of 2004, the studio had been outfitted with a sixteen track

tape machine. (Originally, the plan was to record the second and third albums back to back. Unfortunately, on the last day of tracking the second record, a car accident on the way home from the studio landed Mann in the hospital with serious eye injuries. From then on he would have to wear protective sunglasses. It was over a month and a half before work could be resumed on the album and it was decided to scrap the third album for the time being.)

In January of 2005, *Naturally* hit the streets and set Jones and the Dap-Kings loose on a relentless touring schedule. Fueled by rave reviews of both their new record and the blistering live show, record sales and concert attendance began rising across the country, and as the band began to tour more frequently overseas, international markets soon followed suit. By 2006, audiences in Europe, Canada, and Australia were packing venues to see Sharon Jones & the Dap-Kings.

A high point came when Daptone Records presented a Soul Revue at New York's Irving Plaza (Fillmore East?) to honor Jones' 50th birthday. The sold out extravaganza featured The Mighty Imperials, The Budos Band, **Charles Bradley**, Binky Griptite, **Naomi Davis & the Gospel Queens**, the **Bushwick Philharmonic**, Antibalas, and was of course headlined by the Dap-Kings and Sharon Jones herself.

In the winter of 2006, the band slowed its touring schedule to make time for a return to the studio. The resulting *100 Days, 100 Nights*, slated for a much anticipated release in September of this year, is arguably their greatest achievement to date. With much more extensive songwriting and arranging contributions from the members of the band, the songs take more distinct and well-crafted forms, enabling a deeper more soulful return to traditional Rhythm and Blues roots. However, it is the raw fire and Soul which Sharon Jones & the Dap-Kings consistently pour into their music that will make this record an irreplaceable part of many people's lives.

If you missed other things the Daptone gang's been up to, check this:

- **267 Shows, 21 Tours, 14 countries on 3 Continents** since the 2005 release of *Naturally*.
- Festival appearances including **Monterey Jazz, Umbria Jazz, Bumbershoot, Telluride Bluegrass**, and **Womad** Festivals in the UK and the Canary Islands.
- Sharon Jones and The Dap-Kings' music has been sampled by **Jurassic 5, Gostface Killah, Kanye West** and **Rhymefest**.
- Sold over **50,000 full length records** and **20,000 vinyl 45's**.
- Sold Out **Sharon Jones' 50th Birthday Celebration** at New York's Irving Plaza
- Appeared on **Late Night with Conan O'Brien**

- National TV Campaign for “**I Love NY**” featured Sharon Jones & the Dap-Kings performing their version of “*This Land is your Land*”.
- Sharon Jones has been part of the cast touring with **Lou Reed** in Australia, Europe, and the US as part of the live production of “**Berlin**”
- The Dap-Kings recorded half of the music on **Amy Winehouse**’s album *Back to Black*. Including the hit singles “*Rehab*”and “*I’m No Good*”, and played as her backing band for her first ever US tour, including performances on **David Letterman** and **The Tonight Show with Jay Leno**.
- After being featured on Verve Records’ “*Baby Loves Jazz*” album, Sharon had her own “Ella the Elephant” children’s book and CD published by Penguin Books.
- **Mark Ronson** worked closely with the Dap-Kings at **Daptone Studios** recording his new album “*Versions*” as well as other re mix projects including **Lilly Allen**’s hit single “*Smile*”.
- **Rufus Wainwright** and **They Might Be Giants** featured Sharon on their recent recordings.
- **Robbie Williams** hired the **Dap-Kings** horns to play on his album “**Rudebox**”.

TRACK LISTING FOR 100 DAYS, 100 NIGHTS

- 1, 100 days, 100 nights
2. Nobody’s Baby
3. Tell Me
4. Be Easy
5. When the Other Foot Drops, Uncle
6. Let Them Knock
7. Something’s Changed
8. Humble Me
9. Keep on Looking
10. Answer Me

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