

BIOGRAPHY

STARLETT & BIG JOHN

It's been only three years since guitarist Big John Talley and singer Starlett Boswell happened to meet, but in that relatively short time, they have garnered praise from all corners of the bluegrass community.

Amelia Ricci of Bluegrass Roadtrip.com declares, "Starlett and Big John's harmonies and hard driving bluegrass take you on a musical journey you do not want to end. They show up ready to entertain and always deliver. Their audience leaves satisfied and looking forward to their next show!"

"Starlett and Big John have been crowd pleasers from the beginning – on and off the stage!" says Rodney Preddy, organizer and namesake of the PreddyFest Bluegrass Festival. "Great people and good, quality music!"

"Starlett and Big John have an incredible blend of love for traditional and contemporary bluegrass music which you will find within their vocal and delivery style," adds Michelle Lee of WOBL 107.7's Smoked Country Jam/Bluegrass Borderline. "Once you hear their note to the next, they will have you tapping your toes while you spend hours on your front porch swing."

Of course, those kinds of accolades are rarely given gratuitously. The duo's first album, *Till The End Of The Road*, helped solidify their standing, reaping widespread praise for both its impressive array of original material and its well-chosen covers. Indeed, it seemed certain that Starlett and Big John were well on their way to establishing a profound presence in today's fertile bluegrass environs.

Then again, both individuals arrive at this juncture with well-stocked credentials. Raised in a musical family, Starlett became acclimated to bluegrass early on, winning her first singing competition at age four and subsequently learning upright bass by the time she was eight. Her adolescent years were spent performing with her family's band, prior to venturing out on her own and performing with other artists and outfits as an adult.

For his part, Big John can claim a musical resume that extends back over 35 years. He too became acclimated to the sounds of bluegrass at a remarkably early age. He first picked up guitar at nine years old, and remarkably, by the time he was 16, he was cited with heady honors, the VFMA Male Vocalist of the Year Award. Barely a year later, he and his band New Dominion Bluegrass were guesting with Bill Monroe's at the Grand Ole Opry. He continued to perform with Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys, as well as other notables as well, among them, Jody Rainwater (Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs' bass player), Tater Tate (Bill Monroe's bass player and fiddle player) Jackie Phelps (one of Bill Monroe's guitar players and a star of the hit TV show "Hee Haw"), The Virginia Squires, Wyatt Rice, and plenty of others as well.

The two met by chance in January 2019 while they were filling in with a band in North Carolina. There was an immediate chemistry between them, which became apparent as they began working together with other ensembles. Things really began clicking both personally and

professionally when they found themselves attending the Bluegrass First Class gathering in Asheville, North Carolina. It offered them a chance to share a few tunes and get better acquainted. It quickly became apparent that they had many similar musical interests that drew from the same set of influences, among them, Bill Monroe, The Osborne Brothers, Jimmy Martin, Larry Sparks, Del McCoury, The Stanley Brothers, Johnson Mountain Boys, Tony Rice, Lester & Earl, Peter Rowan, among them.

“Starlett is absolutely the most talented person I have ever seen,” Talley said. “Her singing, playing and songwriting is only second to the size of her heart and her delivery of the music. She truly feels every note she sings, and plays every note she feels. When it comes to putting it all in there, she’s right there punching. A true Virginia Songbird.”

For her part, Scarlett makes no secret of her own enthusiasm. “Making music with Big John has been a once-in-a-lifetime find,” she maintains. “When you meet that person you musically click with, everything seems to fall into place. The sky’s the limit.”

On June 1, 2019, they made their bow as "Starlett and Big John" in Iron Gate, Virginia, and they’ve been going strong ever since. An upcoming album on Rebel Records, *Living in the South*, is due out early next year and features Starlett on bass and vocals, Big John on guitar and vocals, along with the solid support of Warren Blair on fiddle, David Carroll on banjo, Johnathan Dillon on Mandolin, and Ron Stewart, who also produced and engineered the project at Big John Talley’s home studio in Southampton, Virginia, adding dobro to the title track.

The upcoming album also leaves little doubt that the kudos will continue. From the rousing sounds of the cautionary “Back Away Little Heart” and the heartfelt strains of the first single “Straight 58,” to the evocative expression and idyllic imagery of “Living in the South” and the down-home designs of “Makin’ Tracks to Macon,” *Living in the South* promises to fulfill all the expectation that’s been shared so far.

“I’ve known Starlett for quite a while and have always been amazed by her true bluegrass vocals, said Buddy Michaels, host of The Hometown Festival Bluegrass Show on WLHC 103.1 FM. “She’s also a great heartfelt songwriter. Now teamed up with a seasoned bluegrass boy like Big John, the sky is totally the limit!”

Annette Grady of the Bluegrass Jamboree.com, adds her encouragement, calling them “A powerhouse duet: combining talent, experience and beauty. Starlet and Big John know how to bring it!”

That they do, and with more great music to come, those prophecies will certainly prove true.

“As children, we dreamed of one day being remembered among the greats in Bluegrass history,” Talley reflects. “I can’t wait to see what the good Lord has in store for us.”

Here again, Scarlett concurs. “Signing with Rebel Records is a dream we’ve both had since childhood,” she insists. “I hope our music will one day land us on the famous circle at the Grand Ole Opry. Plus, we can’t wait to tour all these beautiful United States and to take our music to other countries as well.”