

## The Producers Biography

The Producers were a new wave and power pop band from Atlanta, Georgia in the 1980s. The original line up included Van Temple on guitar and vocals, former Whiteface member Kyle Henderson on bass and vocals, former Billy Joe Royal sideman Wayne Famous on keyboards, and Bryan Holmes on drums.

It wasn't too long ago that you could safely predict that any band hailing from Georgia would sport a trio of lead guitarists and a collection of songs devoted to women, whiskey and general hellraisin'. The Producers may call Atlanta home, but the music on The Producers, the quartet's debut Portrait album, is a striking blend of pop and rock that's far removed from standard southern boogie. "The Atlanta scene is absolutely influenced by modern music, what has gone on for the last two or three years, and that's definitely the scene we're from," says Kyle Henderson. "Atlanta has produced at least two major modern bands and that's proof in itself that it's not the southern boogie scene. The B-52s are from Athens but they played Atlanta constantly and the Brains, who didn't sell as well but met with great reviews, are from Atlanta."

The Producers -- Van Temple (guitar/vocals), Wayne Famous (keyboards/vocals), Bryan Holmes (drums/vocals) and Henderson (bass/vocals) -- learned their instruments in the usual assortment of original and cover bands in and around the Atlanta club circuit. The band formed when Henderson caught Temple, Famous, and Holmes playing at Uncle Tom's Tavern in Atlanta on New Year's Eve of 1979.

Struck by a personal affinity with their music, Henderson immediately asked them if he could join the band. After an introductory jam that night proved that the chemistry was there, The Producers officially became a band on New Year's Day, 1980.

They spent the next few months rehearsing and writing new material before returning to the club circuit, mixing dates featuring their own songs with cover jobs to keep the money flowing. "We played with the Pretenders at the Agora in Atlanta," Holmes remembers, "and the next night we went across the street and played cover songs at a fraternity party at Georgia Tech."

Originally formed as a Beatles cover band named Cartoon, they changed musical directions and began performing their own material in nightclubs around the Atlanta area. The response to their music was so good that they were quickly signed to CBS subsidiary Portrait Records by Cheap Trick, REO Speedwagon and Mother's Finest producer Tom Werman. They released two albums for the Portrait label, *The Producers* (1981) and *You Make the Heat* (1982). The Producers became a regional favorite in the southeastern United States, propelling "What She Does To Me" onto the national Billboard Magazine singles charts. "What's He Got" had some popularity as a music video but did not chart. They toured extensively opening for Cheap Trick, and The Motels. "She Sheila" from their second album was a popular MTV video. They headlined MTV's New Year's Rockin' Eve in 1982.

Despite this success, Portrait Records dropped the band after only two albums. Kyle Henderson became a born-again Christian and left the band shortly after they were dropped to record a solo album for Kerry Livgren's Christian rock label, Kerygma Records and was replaced by future Jellyfish, Umajets and Sheryl Crow bassist Tim Smith (not to be confused with another musician named Tim Smith--born 1961--of the Progressive Art Punk outfit Cardiacs). The next Producers album, *Run For Your Life*, was released in 1985 on a small Atlanta-based independent label. That album featured a collaboration between The Producers and Kansas, "Can't Cry Anymore," a song which appeared on both *Run For Your Life* and the 1986 Kansas album *Power*. The Producers regained a major label contract in the late 1980s with MCA Records and recorded what was to be their fourth album, *Coelacanth*, but the band was one of several dropped in a 1989 label purge at MCA before the album could be released. *Coelacanth* was finally released in 2001.

In the tradition of most great rock bands, the Producers have synthesized their individual influences into an imaginative, accessible style of their own. Werman's crisp, crackling production captures the assured power of the band's performance on material ranging from driving rock ("Sensations," "Who Do You Think You Are") to catchy pop ("Boys Say When," "What She Does To Me").

The lead vocals, shared by Temple and Henderson, are augmented by beautifully crafted and executed backing harmonies. The lyrics offer fresh twists and provocative insights into that most universal of themes, modern romance.

There's no sense in writing about something if no one's going to understand what you're talking about," Famous contends. "We really take pride in pushing the lyrics out so you can understand them. There is a meaning in the songs and we don't want to disguise it."

We feel, across the board as a band, that simplicity is a virtue, not a liability," Henderson sums up. "If there's a musical idea that's great in its simplest form, then keep it that way. To add too much to a simple, great idea is to take its greatness away."