

SPOTLIGHT



WILSON PHILLIPS

Three members of classic pop royalty dedicate an album to the ones they love

Chynna Phillips, Carnie Wilson, Wendy Wilson

THE MEMBERS OF WILSON PHILLIPS first drew worldwide attention for their quintuple-platinum 1990 self-titled debut—and for their status as rock royalty. Sisters Wendy and Carnie Wilson were the daughters of Beach Boy Brian Wilson, while Chynna Phillips' parents were John and Michelle Phillips of the Mamas & the Papas. The group has always avoided leaning too much on its famous lineage—which may be why the three have only now recorded *Dedicated*, an album of songs associated with their famous forebears. “At first it seemed a bit too obvious,” says Wendy Wilson. “In retrospect, now that we’ve recorded it, it was a brilliant idea.”

Dedicated is even more of a family affair than its pedigree would at first indicate. The trio invited friend Owen Elliot, daughter of “Mama” Cass Elliot and an early member

of the group that became Wilson Phillips, to sing her late mother's part on the Mamas & the Papas' “Dedicated to the One I Love.” “Nobody can sound like Cass Elliot but Cass Elliot's daughter,” Wendy says. “We thought, what a beautiful thing to have Owen sing with us, because we worked with Owen early on. It didn't work out but we're still very close to her, and it was such a healing experience to sing with her again. We were honored to have her on the record.”

The album was produced by Carnie Wilson's husband, Rob Bonfiglio, who also did the arranging—including a complex a cappella version of the Beach Boys' daunting epic “Good Vibrations.” “First we were scared,” admits Carnie, a California native like her bandmates. “We were like, ‘How are we going to do that?’ But it was just layer by layer, vocal

by vocal, sound by sound. And after 101 tracks and probably two weeks' worth of recording, I think it's the best vocal work that we've ever done.”

Buoyed by a renewed wave of attention that included a scene-stealing turn in the blockbuster movie *Bridesmaids*, Wilson Phillips' next step could be recording its first album of new songs since 1992's *Shadows and Light*. “The weird thing about original material—I don't know about Wendy and Chynna—but I get very anxious about it because you're like, ‘Will people like it?’” says Carnie. “The three of us have to connect as writers, find the right collaborators and producer and go into the cocoon of creativity. Just forget everything else and go with what we feel is right. I'm hoping we get that chance.”

—Amanda Farah

