

Q&amp;A



## GLENN FREY

### The Eagles' co-leader takes a solo flight through classic love songs

"THE EAGLES IS THE MOTHERSHIP," says Glenn Frey. "We venture to and from that." For his first solo album in 20 years, the 63-year-old Detroit native ventured far indeed: *After Hours* is a collection of love songs dating from the '40s to the present. Producing with Richard F.W. Davis and Michael Thompson, Frey gives candlelit treatment to such gems as Johnny Mercer's "I Wanna Be Around" and Brian Wilson's "Caroline, No." Meanwhile, the Eagles mothership hovers—the group is playing a handful of shows this year, as well as working with Oscar-winning director Alex Gibney on a documentary about its storied history.

#### What sparked the idea for this?

It goes back to the early '90s. I was a partner in an Aspen restaurant called Andiamo. The owner wanted the restaurant to be a bit upscale and asked me to put together music that would play well in that environment. I compiled all the great hits by Ray Charles, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Billie Holiday ... the list goes on. The restaurant didn't last long, but I was left with eight hours of great music that I continued to listen to and always carried around with me.

#### How did you approach it?

We really wanted it to be a piano-and-voice album. That's how things always started out. We would go into the control room and talk about a song. Michael would go to the piano, we would pick a key, get a lyric sheet and start messing around. Things would evolve from there. If we liked what we were hearing, we would go out into the studio and cut a demo with piano and voice—maybe put a couple of rough overdubs on, just to see what it might sound like if it were more fleshed out. Lastly we would bring in the musicians to cut the track. We also had a terrific arranger in Alan Broadbent. He really understood what we were doing and wrote some beautiful charts.

#### Did you sing differently?

No question. Singing contemporary songs and uptempo songs—like I do in the Eagles—is sort of a guitar-piano-harmonica style of singing. For these songs, it's as if you're singing like a trumpet or a flute or a clarinet. Your voice is another instrument in the ensemble. It required an adjustment, but it was a challenge I wanted to embrace. I tried to learn the songs well before going into the studio so that I

could do them with confidence. It definitely increased my appreciation for everyone who's sung these songs.

#### Did you have trepidations?

I felt I was approaching things in the right way. You have to follow your instincts and try to please yourself first. If you do that, chances are you will please others, too. In fact, I think I've just scratched the surface. I'll probably make another album similar to this one. There were so many songs I wanted to sing that I didn't get to do. Most of the time we were right on the money, but there were a couple that I couldn't quite nail. We tried "Rainy Night in Georgia"—the beautiful Tony Joe White song that Brook Benton recorded—but it didn't seem right for me. It's all about picking songs that fit your voice.

#### How's the Eagles documentary?

We're right in the middle of that. We feel very fortunate to have gotten Alex Gibney as the director. He has a great ability to tell a story. That's what I want for the Eagles—someone who understands what we were about, and who's able to portray that accurately and in an interesting way.

—Russell Hall

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