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JARREAU
WOW!

LIVE AT
THE CHILDE
HAROLD

DSD

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Exterior photo of the Childe Harold, 1977.

Photo by Dave Nuttycombe / Nuttycombe Archives.



HOME
GROWN
RADIO

WHFS
STEREO 102.3 FM





Photo by Jean-Pierre Leloir

Original tape reel box of Al Jarreau's recording from the Childe Harold in Washington, D. C. on August 13, 1976. Courtesy of David Einstein.

BRAND
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AL JARREAU

"Live" @ Childe Harold

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for WHFS + Warner Bros. Records

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206

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AL JARREAU AND THE SOUNDTRACK OF MY YOUTH

Al Jarreau was an amazing and inspiring artist. When I was growing up, songs from his pop career helped form the soundtrack of my youth. I remember when the albums *Breaking Away* and *Jarreau* came out and were playing on the radio, so the opportunity to work for Al's record company was very exciting.

Al Jarreau was a legend. One of the biggest thrills in my career was representing him and his releases. I also got to spend time with him in the early 2000s when his GRP albums were released, as I was a sales and marketing rep for Verve Music Group/GRP. We hung out at numerous in-store events at Tower Records in Philadelphia,



L-R: Zev Feldman, Verve Music Group's Theodora Kuslan, Al Jarreau, Tony Pellegrino and J'ai St. Laurent-Smyth. Photo courtesy of Bob Zimmerman. Photo taken at the Tower Records Avenue of the Arts in Philadelphia around the release of Jarreau's 1999 GRP album *Tomorrow Today*.

Kemp Mill Music in Washington, DC and other places. At one promo event, we had dinner with executives from BET and we even hung out in a skybox at a Washington Wizards basketball game where Al sang the national anthem.

It was so fun being around him. He was the nicest guy and he lit up the room with his positive energy. He would speak with me and ask me questions about my family. I even had a chance to introduce him to my mom and dad who, like Al and both sets of my grandparents, were all from Milwaukee.

Al asked me one day, "Do you .
the first place I ever played in D.C.~
It was the Childe Harold. I grew up in
the D.C. area and I knew that the Childe
Harold's tiny stage was typically graced
by the likes of Bruce Springsteen,
Emmylou Harris, Bonnie Raitt and many
others as they were coming up.

Fast forward fifty years to 2023,
my dear friend of 25-plus years, Alex
Cortright, introduced me to David
Einstein, a program director and host
at WHFS radio station in Bethesda,
Maryland, which was an enormous
powerhouse station back in the '70s,
'80s and '90s. David's father, Jake,
owned the station and his brother
Damian was a radio personality there.

I was astounded to find that David
had a tape of Al's performance at the
Childe Harold from 1976. As soon as
the music started playing, I knew I'd
happened upon something special. As I

tened, it was a personal revelation;
had told me about this performance!

As I listened further, my first impression
was validated. It was clear that this was
an extraordinary document. Al is in
absolutely top form. He's swinging for
fences early in his career and he clearly
knows he has a lot to prove – and he
does it here.

I'm really grateful to David Einstein
for his generosity in allowing this project
to happen. I also want to thank the Al
Jarreau Estate led by Joe Gordon, plus
our friends at Warner Music Group,
who all came together to help us release
this wonderful recording officially for
the very first time. It's also been really
nice reconnecting with my longtime
friend J'ai St. Laurent-Smyth, who is the
publicist and associate producer on this
album. J'ai worked with Al going back
to the 1980s, so we've really kept this
one in the family.

As always, I also want to thank my co-president at Resonance, George Klabin, for making this release possible. From our very first conversation about this recording George showed his appreciation of Al Jarreau.

I'm very proud of how the album package turned out. It features a terrific lineup of voices starting with the acclaimed writer A. Scott Galloway, who wrote the main liner notes, as well as legendary Washington D.C. music journalist Richard Harrington, who wrote about the Childe Harold and the circumstances of the recording. We have many striking rare photos from photographers Tom Copi, Jean-Pierre Leloir, Rolf Ambor and others. I'm also happy that we were able to speak with a number of great artists who spoke from the heart about Al Jarreau, including Nile Rodgers, Dionne Warwick, Gerald Albright, Take 6, Philip Bailey,

Will Downing, Alan Paul, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Cheryl Bentyne and the wonderful keyboardist, Tom Canning, who performed and wrote with Al for decades and who plays beautifully on this album.

Al Jarreau's performances on these recordings are inspirational. They give you a great idea of what he sounded like back then, just after he burst upon the scene.

ZEV FELDMAN

May 2024

Montgomery Village, MD

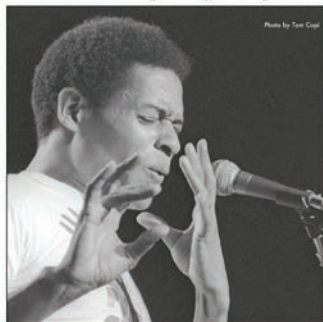


Photo by Tom Copi

**AL JARREAU LIVE AT THE CHILDE
HAROLD, WASHINGTON, DC,
AUGUST 13, 1976**

Once upon a time under an old Milwaukee moon, the Good Lord christened a gold-struck mold, casting and kindling one incandescent creation for the ages. Through the channel of fiercely God-fearing Earthly souls, Emile and Pearl, he was brought forth. And they named him Alwin Lopez Jarreau.

Alwin evolved, obtusely, into a complex young man of great athletic import, non-denominational, judgement-free spirituality, compassionate psychiatry, optimistic philosophy, ravenous sexuality and — most divinely — wholehearted, full-throated omnidirectional musicality. The Sound he would make to shake the world to the core was primal, passionate, purposed, plaintive and pyrotechnic — fueled by every ounce of solar-powered love within. Via percussively melodic wordless

expression evoking all the musical instruments inside him wedded to lyrical offerings traversing the 360-degree spectrum of the human condition, "Al" tapped directly into hearts before the world stage, leaving singular indelible imprints for eternity.

Naturally . . . none of this happened immediately.

In the years prior to the concert memorialized here, Al had led a small band of friends using his last name, Jarreau, as their moniker and recording a couple of songs, one being the lovely, "The Fawn." Individually, Al was tapped by the legendary Quincy Jones to add his acrobatic vocal magic to two key selections for his 1974 LP, *Body Heat*: "If I Ever Lose This Heaven" (featuring Minnie Riperton and Leon Ware) and "Soul Saga (Song of The Buffalo Soldier)." The next year, following extended packed house Friday-Saturday residencies at fabled San Fernando

Valley nightspot Café Bla-Bla leading to a showcase at the Troubadour in West Hollywood, Al was signed to the Warner Bros. subsidiary, Reprise Records, by the legendary Mo Ostin. Mo sagely advised Jarreau's manager, Patrick Rains, "Al is one of a kind and has the potential to be an international star, but it's not going to happen right away. It will take three albums to achieve. But we are committed to presenting him as a class act to get him the exposure to reach his full greatness."

Engineer Al Schmitt produced Jarreau's debut LP, *We Got By*. Though that project, with all nine songs composed by Jarreau, did not make it onto any of the national R&B, pop or jazz charts, it garnered good press and FM radio play, earning savvy audiences in markets such as New York, Detroit and Washington, D.C.

It is from a hot August "Friday the 13th" night in D.C. inside a converted

house-into-concert stage called the Childe Harold, that we now bear rare audible witness to a poetic prophet in accelerated developmental mode. Al's sophomore album, *Glow*, had just been released and soon after, bowed on *Billboard* magazine's R&B Albums Chart on August 21, 1976. In tow is keyboardist/musical director Tom Canning who had been playing with Jarreau since the Café Bla-Bla days. Al discovered Tom when he saw him accompanying tenor sax shaman John Klemmer. Though he didn't introduce himself that fateful night, he filed Tom's name away in his memory bank. When Al later hired North Texas State Jazz alumnus Canning, their chemistry was clear. They are joined on this concert by bassist Ben Adkins and drummer Tom Drake.

The set opens cordially, yet tinged with irony in that the subject of the song "Letter Perfect" — a Jarreau original — is about a suitor jumping through hoops to

get this girl to give him a chance. "I'm before you with my glaring needs!" In concert, the bossa dually welcomes the audience into "Jarreau World." The lyrics of the first verse, mysteriously absent from the back cover of *We Got By* and, subsequently, the endless string of internet copies, reads:

*You've only just gotta wanna see somebody
Open your eyes to the need around you
Maybe we can begin to swing and get to lovin' today
So, take a look around, take another look around
You've only gotta want to see somebody
Only got to want to live and love
Gonna be livin' and a-lovin', girl
Do you know that
We can start it right now*

Next is the infectious "Rainbow in Your Eyes," a Leon Russell song that was one of four covers on *Glow* strategically included to broaden Al's audience. This take slips into a very percussive and interactive groove between Al — shakin' his ever-present cabasa — and the band.

James Taylor's fever dream, "Fire and Rain," catches the spirit as only Al could coax all the redemption from the lyric with allusion to the mountain singalong "Comin' 'Round the

Mountain . . . ” and a nod to his then-lady, Susan.

By now, Al clearly has the audience in the palms of his hands and this uncut offering leaves in all the spontaneous wit, charm and rapport that made you feel like you were invited to the sunset backyard barbecue. Stuttering Porky Pig as Mack Daddy-ism leads into a swingin'-for-the-rafters flight through “Take Five,” the instant instrumental jazz classic in 5/4 time penned by cool alto saxophonist Paul Desmond while in the Dave Brubeck Quartet. Singer Carmen McRae was the one who made the vocal version a hit and Jarreau attacks it like a man possessed. He had not recorded the song yet at this point, but we hear him here massaging it into the perfection that would make it a classic reborn on his two-LP set third album, *Look to the Rainbow: Live in Europe*. Cherry on top, McRae soon after covered one of Al’s songs: “Burst in with the Dawn.”

Al was a singer-songwriter with an often mystic-spiritual bent as evidenced in “Lock All the Gates” and, later, “Aladdin’s Lamp.” Easier felt and envisioned then clearly understood, they survive as sacred parables from the Book of Jarreau.

In an interview with Lee Underwood in 1976 for *DownBeat* magazine, Jarreau stated,

“Proper thought is prayer . . . prayer is proper thought. Thought and prayer are casual things. All the Source, God, wants from me is the highest good – peace, love, joy, and actualizing my highest potential. I believe we are all rooted in that central core – that creative source of the universe – which is good, and which creates beautiful things.”

Right about here, Cousin Al takes a pause for the cause by kickin’ a verse from Jon Hendricks’s vocalese classic “Gimme That Wine,” made famous as recorded by the trio Lambert, Hendricks

& Ross from an album that can be found in every jazz singer's arsenal: *The Hottest New Group in Jazz!* (Columbia – 1959).

After a toast for hot fun in the summertime and continued prosperity, Al slides into a warm, swingin' Rhodes-only accompanied glide thru the girl watcher's chestnut, "Shiny Stockings" – music penned by Count Basie Band tenor man Frank Foster and lyrics, again, by Jon Hendricks (note: Ella Fitzgerald also wrote a set of words . . . from a lady's point of view). Al is easy/breezy here as Christmas slippers.

This priceless peek into Al's live performance artistry segues into one of the most powerful songs for which he ever bled ink to paper, "You Don't See Me" – a stark reflection of the mind of a young Black man in America – then and ever – navigating the tightrope of doin' wrong when nobody wants to recognize him trying to do right. Al officially recorded this song three times.

This early concert presentation makes this urgent "message from the inner-city" smog-free. On the studio recording from *We Got By*, some lite chicken-scratchin' guitar was added by Blues man Arthur Adams. What it truly needed was the rattlesnake bite of Wah-Wah Watson to more accurately release the venom of Al's words. Live, "You Don't See Me" was always an attention-arrester, as Al made all the sound effects himself with a wicked bassline and vocal delivery that shook an audience to its core. "Ahem!!" Maybe you can hear it now.

For the encore, Al wraps the audience in the nostalgia-dipped comforter of his "We Got By," bittersweet reflections of the salad days of wine and butter beans.

Capturing the essence of what Al Jarreau felt like to behold circa '76, Tom Canning, who had the best seat in the house for decades, recalls his very first time.

"It was a life changer . . . his songs, his charisma, his poise — how unbelievably gorgeous he was. I was absolutely floored. Looking back, the only thing I could compare it to is when Miles came to Shelly's Manne Hole with the Live/Evil band featuring (keyboardist) Keith Jarrett and (drummer) Jack DeJohnette. That's how overwhelmed I was by what was going on with Al Jarreau."

Welcome to the heart-racing, spirit-cleansing experience of a man named Alwin.

— A. SCOTT GALLOWAY

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Special thanks to Tom Canning, Pat Rains and Joe Gordon. The writer dedicates this essay to the memory of Lyle McEachin.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH AL JARREAU:

LIVE AT THE CHILDE HAROLD

That Al Jarreau's 1976 Childe Harold s'

was broadcast live was something fluke. More so was his performing in an 85-seat-capacity venue occupying the parlor and dining room of a Victorian townhouse converted into a restaurant that, until four years after its opening in 1967, did not have music on its menu.

Jarreau's Washington debut, August 12 through 14 of '76, was the tail-end of a short series of showcases set up by Ted Cohen, Director of East Coast Artist Development for Warner Bros. Records, for which Jarreau had recorded two albums without gaining much traction in Washington.

There was some radio play on Felix Grant's jazz show on WMAL and notably on Melvin Lindsey's month-old

Quiet Storm show on WHUR, which focused on smooth, romantic, jazz-influenced music. This would quickly become a popular programming format nationwide in urban markets

The Cellar Door, Washington's premiere nightclub, was approached . . . and turned down the booking.

"They said 'we don't get it,'" Cohen recalls. This was Jarreau's most jazz-evident period and some folks apparently only heard "jazz," not cash registers ringing.

"They thought he was . . . not *strange* . . . but . . . *different*."

And so, Jarreau made his debut in a cozy little space situated on the second floor of a four-level townhouse just a block above Dupont Circle. The Childe Harold featured blues acts, rock bands (the Ramones made their Washington debut there a month after Jarreau, as Bruce Springsteen had three years earlier). The club also featured blues

and bluegrass, singer-songwriters and lots of local bands.

Carol Posnick, the club's booker from 1975 to October 1976, also built up an impressive jazz lineup. In 1976, she featured four-to-five-night stands by the likes of Tony Williams, Art Blakey, Elvin Jones, McCoy Tyner, Mose Allison, Stephane Grapelli, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Horace Silver, Ron Carter, Phil Woods and Anthony Braxton. Says Posnick, "I was into jazz, and Etcetera had recently closed [the M Street club, five blocks down Connecticut Avenue, which had been very competitive with Blues Alley at the time]."

Stylistically, Jarreau would seem to have fit as a jazz booking, given his frenetic scatting, vocal gymnastics and uncanny instrumental mimicking that led to his being dubbed "the human orchestra." That wasn't surprising given roots in small jazz clubs in Minneapolis, San Francisco and Los Angeles in the late '60s and early '70s.

Patrick Rains, who was Jarreau's manager from 1972 to 1997, points out that "in 1976 Al was still pretty much an experiment. He was a singer-songwriter but not a folk singer-songwriter and there weren't many *Black* singer-songwriters, particularly those with a jazz background. Nobody knew what to expect or what to do with him . . . He was indeed unique."

Jarreau's Warner Bros. debut, *We Got By*, released a year before his Washington visit, included nine originals but never broke *Billboard's* top 200 album chart. But it did generate some critical praise and even earned him an Echo Award (the German equivalent of a Grammy®) for Best New International Singer.

The follow-up, *Glow*, released just two months before the Childe Harold dates, included six originals as well as five covers, two of which are featured here: Leon Russell's "Rainbow in Your Eyes" and James Taylor's "Fire and Rain."

Most spectacular is Jarreau's take on the Paul Desmond classic "Take Five," a showcase for his tour-de-force vocalizations that would soon appear on his first live album, 1977's *Look to the Rainbow*.

"Every artist that breaks through and becomes bigger than life has that one song they just have to play wherever they go," Rains notes, "and 'Take Five' became that for Al."

Rains adds that "live is a real key to getting a fanbase. We gambled that that's what would happen and why we did the tour in Europe."

Look to the Rainbow, recorded just four months after the Childe Harold dates, would be Jarreau's most successful album of the '70s and generated a single of "Take Five." It captured Jarreau's initial breakthrough overseas and subsequently catapulted his wider acceptance stateside. It's a great album, having won the 1978 Grammy® Award

for Best Jazz Vocal Performance (the first of seven for Jarreau).

But the Childe Harold recording, from the house PA and mixing board manned by the club's regular sound man, Pete Dockendorf, feels more intimate, surely because the performance was so literally up close and personal, as if the audience was sitting at tables melded to the club's tiny stage.

Which they were.



Jarreau's producer, Tommy LiPuma, with engineer Al Schmitt, had just had his first multi-platinum success with George Benson's *Breezin'*. In fact, Jarreau opened for Benson at the 3,300 seat Westchester Premiere Theater in Tarrytown, New York three days before his Washington visit.

Talk about downsizing . . .

According to David Einstein, "LiPuma was hooked up politically with Mo Ostin, who ran Warner Bros., and if

Mo wanted to take an artist that he liked and make him a priority, you had to pay attention, so Ted called me about [supporting] the upcoming Childe Harold date and said, 'we can throw some money into this and take the financial pressure off of you.'

"And I said, 'Sure, we like the Childe Harold . . . and I know a guy who can record it and play it on the air.'"

WHFS played a wide spectrum of music without sinking into restrictive hit-focused playlists or succumbing to genre constrictions and its impact and influence in the area was enormous.

It was also one of a handful of East Coast stations regularly doing live concert broadcasts and was closely connected to Warner Bros. ("THE label at the time," Einstein notes). It was already playing the new Jarreau album when he came to WHFS's studios "high atop Triangle Towers" in Bethesda for an interview the day before the first show.

"He was a beautiful cat," Einstein recalls, "just wonderful, very informed and intelligent. He understood exactly what he was doing, understood that he was going to go live on the radio in a market that I'm sure his people told him was very necessary for the expansion of his career . . . This was his first gig here and he would have lit the candle, would have given the performance 150%, everything he had."

As it turns out . . .

To send the music out over the FM airwaves, Einstein turned to Rockville's Sonority Recording Company, a five-year-old venture that had one of the few mobile units in the market. Owner/engineer Roger Byrd recalls more than 30 live broadcasts for WHFS, a number of them featuring Warner Bros. artists, including a January 1976 concert from the newly reopened 2,000-seat Warner Theater featuring former Childe Harold regular Emmylou Harris just as she

was emerging as a country music star. Other Warner Bros./WHFS broadcasts handled by Sonority featured Little Feat and yet another Childe Harold regular, Root Boy Slim and the Sex Change Band, on the occasion of its one and only album for the label.

There'd been plenty of WHFS broadcasts from the Cellar Door, but this would be the first and only one from the Childe Harold.

Roger Byrd remembers a somewhat hurried, last-minute setup as he parked Sonority's 22-foot "recording control room on wheels" in front of the club.

"The only thing that was unusual for us at the time was having to park half on the street, half on the curb. "Byrd had to run his lines high over nearby trees to keep folks from tripping over them (and avoid potential lawsuits). He ran a mic snake with a dozen audio cables connected to the house PA to transmit signals from the stage to the mixing console.

Such live broadcasts were subcontracted through recording studios in the area. "We didn't own the multitrack tape machines," Byrd points out. "We owned the consoles [a modified SSL Console with 32 inputs and 21 outputs]," as well as equalizers, limiters. JBL Studio monitors, Shure and Neumann microphones and a pair of Ampex recorders.

Then the doors opened.

"Once it was set up and adjusted, we never went into the club, though we had closed circuit video to monitor what was going on stage."

Sadly, there was no video recording of the show.

Despite the jam-packed quarters (we'll get to that), Sonority also miked the crowd for ambience:

"It's what makes a live show live," Byrd notes, adding that capturing audience reaction was crucial, particularly in a first encounter with new potential fans. He counted himself among them.

"I'd never heard of him before," he says of Jarreau, "and he was *fabulous!*"

Einstein points out "I was in the truck with Roger, and I was always more concerned with what was going on in the truck than what was going on in the venue. To me the audio could be off in the venue and Roger would adjust the sound in the truck and that's what I would get and that's what would be going over the air."

Byrd had the benefit of professional training as a musician—he was a classical violinist—and says, "[Y]ou use your ears to get the right balance. Otherwise, you get chaos."

"He was very intuitive," adds Einstein. "I did a bunch of things with him, and he was a visceral guy who would react to the performance. I didn't realize how good [Jarreau's *Childe Harold* recording] was until I heard the resurrected version. I just went, *Damn*, listen to this!!!! I'm grateful that it survived."

Fortunately, McCollum was clearly dazzled by Jarreau's performance, acknowledging that "some critics [are] going so far as to proclaim him the greatest new jazz singer in years. . . . With a powerful presence that is reminiscent [sic] of a good, downhome Baptist preacher, he can move [an] audience to his side quickly and easily. . . . By set's end the singer had nearly the entire house in his control."

Including an already committed Ted Cohen, who recalls extreme crowding and feeling "verklempt like a marshmallow."

He also remembers Al Jarreau spotting him in the back of the room and shouting from the stage, "Ted, is this cool or what?"

In fact, it was.
And it still is.

— RICHARD HARRINGTON

BREATHTAKING:

TOM CANNING ON PLAYING
WITH AL JARREAU AT THE
CHILDE HAROLD

In 1970, I moved to Los Angeles after attending North Texas State University, and started hanging out, playing in clubs and doing a few sessions. I eventually connected with John Klemmer, and began playing and recording with him locally, as well as at the 1973 Montreux Jazz Festival.

From time to time in L.A., my musician buddies would say to me, "Hey man, have you ever heard of this guy, Al Jarreau? You should check him out. He's gigging in little clubs out in the Valley. He's kind of jazzy, but he also covers pop and R&B songs. He does these amazing imitations of a flute, a cello, and vocal percussion and he scatsings like Jon Hendricks from Lambert, Hendricks & Ross." I thought, "Well,

that sounds kind of interesting. Maybe I'll go hear him," but I never got around to it.

Then, in early 1974, out of nowhere, Al called me. He said, "Hey man, I've heard a lot about you. I've got a little thing I'm doing in a club called the Café Bla-Bla over in Studio City that holds about 75 people. It's just me and my keyboard player. He's got a Rhodes, but he's leaving to go back east. Maybe you'd like to come hear the show, and we could talk about it and see if it's something you might want to do. We're just playing weekends there." I found out later that Al had heard me with John Klemmer, but he never told me until years later. Anyway, that's how he came to call me.

I went to hear him not knowing what to expect. It was a tiny club and it was filled to capacity. It was so crowded you could barely move. Al parked me right in front of the mini-stage, three feet away

from him, dead-center. First, I was struck with his charisma. I was thinking, "My God, this guy is stunningly handsome, and he's got a whole lot of light coming off of him!" Then they started. It was just Al — he had a cabasa he played to keep the rhythm popping — and his keyboard player. After three or four songs, I was in a serious state of shock. "Al Jarreau. How come nobody knows about him? He's unbelievable!"

I was so overwhelmed, I felt as if I was nailed to my seat. And there I was three feet in front of him, looking up at him on this little stage which was maybe 18 inches high. As soon as the set ended, he hopped down, looked at me with that big smile and sparkling eyes and asked "So what do you think, man?" I responded, "Al Jarreau, you are incredible!" Then he asked, "So, do you want to do this? Would you like to start next weekend?" and I said, "Absolutely!"

While we were there (Friday and Saturday nights at the Café Bla-Bla, which paid 35, maybe 40 dollars a night), the music was always amazing. We played all Al's original songs (most of which ended up on *We Got By*, his first album), as well as a couple other things that eventually took shape later on. What we played at the Childe Harold was the material, the arrangements and the vibe we had developed while working as a duo.

Once Al got signed by Warner Brothers, we started touring with a trio. I was unofficially the musical director. In rehearsing, running the pre-production and playing live, our relationship began to evolve. Also, he was digging how I began stepping into that role.

To form the trio, we held some auditions for bass players and drummers. We chose Ben Adkins, who plays bass on this album, from an audition. Lovely cat. He was young, he had the depth

and the pocket we liked, and a cool personality. I had known Tom Drake from a couple of one-off gigs here and there. He was a really good straight-ahead drummer, and he also came to us through an audition.

When both Tom and Ben came in, they had done their homework. That allowed Al and me to say to each other, "Okay, they took the time, they learned the material, the pocket's really good and they're not showing off. They're here to support." They were very, very solid night after night.

Al was irresistibly funny, very upbeat all the time, and a force of nature on stage. Above all, he was totally confident being Al Jarreau. He loved to talk to the audience and his audiences were never shy at all. They would call out to him, "We love you Al," and he would shout right back "And I LOVE YOU TOO!"

From the very first song at the Childe Harold, the audience was with him

always made me happy. All of the people who were participating in the work with him felt good too.

Now one other little quirk I always come back to when I think about Al, was his love of white wine. Don't get me wrong, it's not like I wasn't a massive drinker then, but Al's consumption of white wine was an everyday thing with me. The way he pronounced his favorite, was a bastardized American pronunciation of Mouton Cadet. He called it Motown Cadette. At the start of every session he'd say, "Break out the Motown Cadets!" He pluralized it because he knew we were going to drink more than a few bottles.

Excerpted from an interview conducted by Zev Feldman on August 8, 2024

AN ABSOLUTE INSTRUMENT: DIONNE WARWICK REMEMBERS AL JARREAU

I remember vividly my first encounter with Al Jarreau. I'll never forget it. Al opened my show in Detroit, Michigan. I had not heard of him before.

I was in my dressing room while he was on and I started hearing all these instruments and strings and horns and drums, and I kept asking myself, "Well, where did all these people come from? I know that they're not here for me," and I said to myself, "Well, let me go out there and see what's going on on this stage," and I saw that all of those magnificent sounds were coming out of this young man called Al Jarreau. That was my very first experience not only meeting him, hearing him, and subsequently became an enormous fan from that point on.

Al's legacy is his music and his musical ability. I've never met or heard anyone like

Al before. He's a consummate instrument above everything else, and vocally, a wonderful voice, an absolute instrument.

I certainly miss him. I'm sorry that we no longer have him physically with us, but we certainly have his music with us, so I still have my Al.

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Excerpted from an interview conducted by Zev Feldman on July 29, 2024

TOTALLY FREE:

DEE DEE BRIDGEWATER REMINISCES ABOUT AL JARREAU

In around 1978, a friend asked me if I knew Al Jarreau and if I'd heard anything about him. At the time, I was only aware of his name. Then I heard Al on the radio and I remember going, "Wow. This guy is cool. This guy is really interesting." The word on the street when

I first heard about him was that there was this amazing Black singer who had lived in Europe; he's done this album, his scatting was amazing, he sounded like instruments and he was really energetic as a performer.

A few years later, we did the Saratoga Jazz Festival together, and we were picked up in the same car and rode together. He was just really sweet. He was so, so wonderful with me. By that time, he was established. He'd gotten a name for himself, but he was really kind — no ego — and really warm. We scatted in the car on the way to the festival.

Al was really free and very comfortable on stage. He had amazing stage presence. He was electrifying. In the early days, he was doing jazz, but it always had a poppy kind of thing to it. Right away, he was taken more as a jazz-pop singer than strictly a jazz singer. He didn't get pigeonholed as being strictly in the jazz medium. I was wondering,

"How did he do that?" Maybe it was because he could make these sounds with his voice. When I was listening to this recording, I was like, "Wow." He could really just do these amazing sounds with his voice and his voice was really, really like an instrument and he has such a wide scat vocabulary.

I think of Al as unique. I can see him having been influenced maybe by Jon Hendricks, but in listening to this live recording, it's clear that he had such a fluidity with the way he scatted and his ability to sing fast and do a lot of lyrics fast. That's a talent. Jon Hendricks had that talent, but Al created something unique, the way he scatted. What I was really struck by with this recording was how much scatting he did and how he would take the melodies of songs and the lyrics and turn them into kind of scatting. This was interesting to me particularly because it was from early in his career. He smoothed his stylings out in later years and he became more polished, but

this is young Al, and it's fabulous and it's free, totally free.

He was an amazing, amazing musician and human being, huge talent. Huge. We had some wonderful moments together. I unearthed a television show that we did together in Paris in 1994. It was an amazing musical show that ran for years called *Taratata*. The man who hosted the show, Nagui, had a beautiful knack of pairing artists together to do duets. He paired Al and me on "Since I Fell for You." Even then, I just remember being so mesmerized by him.

He was extraordinary and just a beautiful, beautiful human being, very open, very giving, very caring, very gentle. And with all of his stardom, when he really, really blew up, he never changed in the way he was. I always loved that about him.

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Excerpted from an interview conducted with Zak Shelby-Szyszkowski on July 17, 2024

AL JARREAU WASN'T LIKE ANYBODY ELSE:

WILL DOWNING LOOKS BACK ON AL JARREAU

My sister had an Al Jarreau album. This was probably '76, '77, somewhere around there. I hadn't heard anyone like him before. I was just about to go into high school, an arts high school in Brooklyn. When I got to school the conversation of music came up—who you liked or was listening to. I said “Al Jarreau.” All I saw were blank stares; they had no clue who he was. At the time, musically what Al was doing wasn't exactly in step with what students my age were into. They weren't hip to him. I'd say, “Al Jarreau, man, this dude is incredible.” If you invited someone over and you played a record for them, they'd laugh because they just didn't get it. At the time, funk was really big—groups like the Ohio Players,

Earth, Wind and Fire or Slave. To hear Al do what he did threw everyone a little off. But for me, I fell in love with it.

Al Jarreau wasn't like everyone else. He used his voice for what it was . . . the First Instrument. I've never seen him play an instrument like a guitar or piano. It seemed like his writing or arrangement process was to demonstrate vocally what he wanted from each instrumentalist he was working with. He might say, “I need some drums” and he'd start vocalizing the drum part. Then he'd say, “Okay, I need the percussion.” Although he played a cabasa live when he was performing, in the studio, he'd demonstrate it vocally. He'd say, “Hey, I want the percussion to go like this” and he'd demonstrate that. Then he'd say, “Hey, I want the trumpet part to go like this,” and so on.

He'd set it up so everyone could understand. Even with the audience at the Childe Harold, when you listen to

this album, he's setting it up. The band is playing a groove on the opening song he comes in and goes into this trumpet thing, then he goes into a sax thing, then he goes into a percussion thing and he's on an instrument.

He set up stories, like with "Take Five," he'd tell a little story, set the scene and through that, make you visualize what he was singing about. Something like, "I met this young lady. I'd been trying to talk to her, so I went up to her and scatted a little story for her in her ear. Then she was smiling." That story of how he got to talk to her was his setup to "Take Five." You just don't get kind of thing today. He was a free spirit. There was no rigidness or regiment to what he was doing. There was no "This is 16 measures and then we start the verse" kind of attitude. He was thinking, "Let me get the vibe right." That's what he was after. The audience would go with him. He'd bring them along and bring them in.

I was in the studio with him when he was working with Paul Brown, the producer, late in his career. Being there was a treat in itself, seeing first-hand how he'd put a song together. He'd start with basically nothing and make it take shape incorporating all the elements piece-by-piece. To see a live performance is one thing, but to see someone behind the scenes, to see the way they create, that's any fan's dream come true. To sit in a room with an Al Jarreau or an Aretha Franklin, Luther Vandross, Anita Baker or whoever it is that you love, and watch them do their thing after listening to their records for 30-some odd years is a real blessing.

Al represented something we don't get these days because of the industry pressure to let yourself be shaped by the cookie cutter. You don't get that when you listen to an Al. You get Al, who might be thinking in the back of his mind, "I've always wanted to do that,

but maybe people would laugh if I did," but he did it anyway and it was great and the people responded. That's what he represents. That's why he's important to music.

If you're not an Al Jarreau fan, this album will make you one. This is this dude at his very best, the youthful Al, the energetic Al. He's in amazing voice. It's so good It's hard to believe this is live. This dude technically didn't make a mistake. I've always admired people who were in complete control of their instrument and Al is just that on a whole other level.

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Excerpted from an interview conducted by Zev Feldman on July 16, 2024

AN EXTRAORDINARY RENAISSANCE MAN:

PHILIPPE SAISSE ON
WORKING WITH AL JARREAU

I've loved Al Jarreau since before I moved to the States in the '70s. When I finally got to meet him when Nile Rodgers called me to play on *L is for Lover*, it was a dream come true.

Al was unique. I loved Ella Fitzgerald when I was younger even though back then, I was more interested in instrumental music than singing. For me, Al was an extension of Ella. He could sing, he could scat amazingly, he could create these really interesting percussive sounds with his mouth.

Al was extremely erudite. He had a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation. He was deep. When we toured, after the gig, we'd get back to the hotel. He'd have his favorite wine — he loved his wine — and we'd get into some

serious conversation. He would delve deep into the psychology of things. He was an extraordinary renaissance man. He was smart and he had this genius of connecting with people. With him, it was always fun.

Late in Al's life, Jasmine Roy had been working on a TV show in France that Al was on. That's when he was sitting down for his concerts; he couldn't walk anymore. When she saw him this way, she said, "Oh my God. I didn't realize. This does not bode well." She thought he wouldn't have any vocal power, but as soon as the band kicked in, she said he became a youth again, he was mesmerizing and it was incredible.

I used to call him when I was on the road. Then, I didn't hear from him for a while. I was backstage at a gig with Al Di Meola after the soundcheck. I checked my machine and got a message

from Al: "Philippe, you got to cut that shit out, man. We got some work to do. You hear me?" He was calling me from the hospital. It was the day before he passed.

Larry Williams, Al's music director, said Al was working hard on some tracks and was super-excited. He just couldn't wait to get the hell out of the hospital and start putting down the vocals.

He was the nicest person. He'd always give you time. Whenever I'd go see him perform, I'd go backstage and he'd say, "Philippe, Introduce me to the band." It was like spending time with your family, your parents. He was one of a kind. I've never met anybody else like him.

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*Excerpted from an interview conducted
by Zev Feldman on August 9, 2024*

It was in the early '90s that I went to a concert at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium in California to see Grover Washington, Jr. headline a show.

There was an opening act that I had never heard of before, but he had a team of legendary musicians, including Abe Laboriel on bass and Alex Acuna on drums. The opening act was introduced, and out comes this slender guy with a genuine smile and a percussion instrument in his hand. He started to sing and he immediately got my attention. His vocals were so unique, spiritual, clear and melodic! This man was Al Jarreau!

By the time he finished his set, I was a new fan and I have continued to enjoy his music throughout the years, and in later years, I was blessed to perform both shows and recordings with him — a dream come true!

There are several things that I remember about this great man, both musically and non-musically. Whenever he would enter a room, the energy always lifted and he brought people to a happier place! His smile, his genuine nature and his brotherhood were second to none. You can tell he was full of love; he was well-loved by everybody around him!

I truly miss Al Jarreau . . . but I know he's in a better place and surely singing in the Heavenly Choir.

— GERALD ALBRIGHT



Photo by Tom Coppi

I distinctly remember the first time I heard Al Jarreau. I had never heard a voice like his — a unique voice who sang from the depths of his soul floating over the chord changes like a phoenix never landing. Al Jarreau took any song and made it his own like no other singer then or since. I would hesitate even to call him just a jazz singer . . . he was far beyond that. Undefined. And his joy was palpable. He embraced everyone he met and every note he sang. He was a beacon of light while also embodying complicated, yet very nuanced phrasing. He will always remain a singer in his own universe.

— CHERYL BENTYNE,
The Manhattan Transfer

Al Jarreau was a remarkable jazz: **singer** and a master of improvisation. I first heard Al sing at the Baked Potato in Los Angeles. I never heard anyone improvise like him and I was spellbound.

Al Jarreau's free-form style to me was reminiscent of Charlie Parker that transcended beyond thought.

Al Jarreau most definitely had an influence on the Manhattan Transfer in terms of improvisation by setting a standard that we strived to reach.

This live recording at the Childe Harold is a rare gem, giving people the opportunity to hear Al Jarreau when he started.

Al Jarreau bridged the gap as a jazz singer expanding the art of improvisation that singers like Jon Hendricks and Ella Fitzgerald established.

— ALAN PAUL,
The Manhattan Transfer

Al was our musical mentor and hero; the first artist to take us out on a full U.S. tour. We remember warmly that first magical summer. After we bowed, we'd race to our seats preparing to be transfixed. This new collection of music is that Jarreau, the Al Jarreau at the top of his game and peak of his powers. It's all there – the live amphitheater vibe, his signature laugh, incredible voice and endless love. Prepare to be teleported. Thank you for releasing this lost treasure.

— ALVIN CHEA,
on behalf of Take 6

In my opinion, Al Jarreau was the quintessential, all-around purest and most truly original male singer extraordinaire of several generations.

— PHILIP BAILEY

Special thanks to **Gerald Albright, Philip Bailey, Cheryl Bentyne, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Alvin Chea, Alex Cortright, Fran Defeo, Will Downing, Eric Facon and Marion Leloir** (Archives Leloir), **A. Scott Galloway, Kevin Goins, Richard Harrington, Michael Kurtz and Carrie Colliton** (Record Store Day), **Alan Paul, Pat Rains, Nile Rodgers, Dionne Warwick, Philippe Saisse, Cynthia Sesso/CTS IMAGES and Bob Zimmerman.**

Extra Special thanks to **The Jarreau Family, Joe Gordon and Tom Canning**



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THE 2xHD MASTERING PROCESS



The 2xHD Fusion Mastering System: In the constant evolution of its proprietary mastering process, 2xHD has progressed to a new phase called 2xHD FUSION, integrating the finest analog, with state-of-the-art digital technology.

The mastering chain consists of a selection of high-end vacuum tube equipment. For the recordings on this album, the original 1/4" 15 ips Nagra Master curve, NAB or CCIR master tapes were played on a Nagra-T tape recorder, modified with high-end tube playback electronics, wired with OCC silver cable from the playback head direct to a Nick Doshi tube head preamplifier. The Nagra T, with its four direct drive motors, two pinch rollers and a tape tension head, has one of the best transports ever made. A custom-built carbon fiber head block and a head damping electronic system permit 2xHD FUSION to obtain a better resolution and 3D imaging.

The resulting signal is then transferred into high resolution formats by recording it in DXD using a custom 2xHD Technologies A to D converter. All analog and digital cables that are used are state-of-the-art Siltech. The 2xHD FUSION mastering system is powered by a super capacitor power supply, using a new technology that lowers the digital noise found in the lowest level of the spectrum. A vacuum tube NAGRA REF DAC is used as a reference digital playback converter to A and B with the original analog master tape, permitting the fusion of the warmth of analog with the refinement of digital.

www.2xhd.com
Pure Emotion

Recorded live at the Childe Harold in Washington, D.C., August 13, 1976

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|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. LETTER PERFECT (5:42) | 4. INTRO TO TAKE FIVE (2:32) | 7. GIMME THAT WINE (1:13) | 10. YOU DON'T SEE ME (8:32) |
| 2. RAINBOW IN YOUR EYES (5:32) - L. RUSSELL | 5. TAKE FIVE (6:49) - D. BRUBECK | 8. SHINY STOCKINGS (5:29) - F. FOSTER | 11. WE GOT BY (7:22)

ALL SONGS COMPOSED
BY AL JARREAU EXCEPT
WHERE NOTED |
| 3. FIRE AND RAIN (6:36) - J. TAYLOR | 6. LOCK ALL THE GATES (6:02) | 9. ALADDIN'S LAMP (5:16) | |

AL JARREAU WOW!

LIVE AT
THE CHILDE
HAROLD

AL JARREAU - VOCALS

TOM CANNING - FENDER RHODES

ELECTRIC PIANO, ARP STRING ENSEMBLE

BEN ATKINS - BASS

TOM DRAKE - DRUMS

Produced for release by Zev Feldman

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and David Einstein

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and J'ai St. Laurent-Smyth

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