

20th Anniversary Season

Performing Arts Series

presents

Michael Bolton

One World One Love

**Wednesday, October 20, 2010
Yardley Hall
Johnson County Community College**

PROGRAM

One World, One Love will not have an intermission.
CDs will be available in the lobby.

Band and Vocalist

Andy Abad – Guitar

Brian Becvar – Keyboard

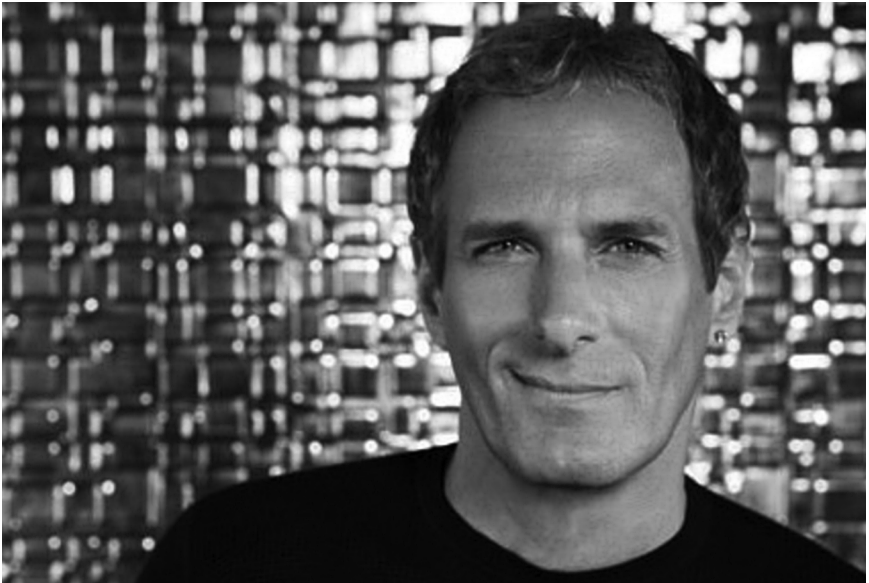
Keary Braxton – Bass

Cameron Handel – Trumpet

Michael Lington – Saxophone

Chad Wright – Drums

Tiffany Phillips – Background Vocals



BIOGRAPHY

Michael Bolton

If you made a list of performers who have sold more than 53 million records, won multiple Grammys for Best Male Vocalist and countless other honors, earned a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame and sold out arenas worldwide, Michael Bolton would be on that list.

But if you tallied all the artists who've sung with Luciano Pavarotti and Ray Charles, written songs with Bob Dylan, Ne-Yo and Lady Gaga, penned hits for Barbra Streisand and KISS, played guitar with B.B. King and had his music recorded on a track by hip-hop superstar Kanye West (featuring megastar Jay-Z), Michael Bolton would be the *only* name on that list.

Listening blind to Michael Bolton's extraordinary new album, *One World One Love*, you would hardly guess what a long and illustrious career has preceded it. Few artists ever get to make 18 studio albums. Those that do – especially ones who've sold 53m units worldwide, bagged a hatful of Grammys and earned a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame – often end up milking a successful formula. Not so the musically omnivorous Michael Bolton. "I never just put out a record," the singer and songwriter insists, "I'm always trying to keep one or two steps ahead of myself. I need to take risks."

He's been as good as his word over the past 22 years. In the late 1980s, Bolton emerged reinterpreting old soul classics by Ray Charles, Percy Sledge and Otis Redding, whose widow Zelma wrote to him praising his rendition of "Dock of the Bay" as "my favorite version of my husband's classic." Moving swiftly on, he played guitar with the blues legend B.B. King and in 1991 wrote a song with Bob Dylan entitled "Steel Bars." Another virtuosic detour in 1998 saw him wowing classical audiences with an album of Arias, which led to him to singing tenor alongside the late, great Pavarotti, Placido Domingo, Jose Carreras, Renee Fleming and other opera stars. All the while he was writing pop hits on his own account, as well as supplying material to a raft of other performers, including Barbra Streisand, KISS and Cher.

Bolton didn't slow down or shake off his growing legion of fans and collaborators. Around the time in 2006 that he conceived a project to record an album of Sinatra's swing classics, he was approached by the hip-hop maestro Kanye West, who sampled his vocals on "Maybe It's The Power Of Love" and "Never Let Me Down" for a track with Jay-Z. For a kid from Connecticut who set out singing lead in a 70s metal band, Bolton has covered an amazing amount of ground. And this is no accident. "One big idea I grew up with was this: Remain open to all genres and means of musical expression ... it's about accepting any type of music as the artist's right or freedom of exposition."

The plan for the new album had two main objectives. First was to craft a collection of memorably uplifting pop songs that sounded fresh without losing the classic Bolton vocal signature. “The question was how to create something current without sounding vocally or musically like I was attempting to pass myself off as contemporary.”

Equally important, in Bolton’s eyes, was to make a record that would supply an antidote to the mood of gloom engulfing the planet. “Every song had to make you feel good, because people have enough hardships to think about right now. They need to feel good. ‘No heartbreak’ songs became our mantra.”

Key to the project was to assemble the right team. Having discarded the idea of focusing on covers of soul classics, Bolton went looking for “young guns who had been teenagers while my early records were being played. I needed to work with writers and producers who have a firm grasp of contemporary music but at the same time are knowledgeable and educated in the world of music I come from.”

With the help of the album coordinator Jolene Cherry, Bolton soon came up trumps. He began writing and recording with a couple of guys from Toronto Nasri Atwah and Adam Messinger – whose credits included Brandy and the *High School Musical* crew, as well as another pair – Mike Mani and Jordan Omley, known as “The Jam” – who had worked with Leona Lewis.

While working with Mani, Bolton met a young fan and budding artist who was excited to write with one of her vocal heroes. “I was taking a break when my manager teamed me on the phone with a young artist named Lady Gaga. This was August of 2008. No one I knew had heard of her... yet.”

As soon as he listened to Gaga’s tunes, “Just Dance” and “Poker Face,” Bolton was smitten. “She reminded me of a young Madonna with more exuberance and emphasis on the art rather than the marketing. Her spontaneity and authenticity were beyond refreshing.” When they got together in a studio in L.A., Bolton told her, “If this is gonna work it has to slay people.” And she immediately shot back, “You murder my heart!” Cue the track, “Murder My Heart,” one of the standouts on the new album, co-written with Gaga, who also sings back up.

Another integral contributor was the American R&B star Ne-Yo, whose work ethic impressed Bolton as much as his talent. “This guy shows up to work! He’s musically so well versed and possesses such a wide range, I’m not sure an audience can always process it all! He has an endless flow of great notes in his head. He hears harmonics that are definitely beyond the pop vernacular. I’ve seen him lay 20 tracks down in 10 minutes, in perfect time with four-part harmonies and counterparts beneath.” Ne-Yo’s great moment comes in the exquisitely layered mid-tempo track called “The Best,” on which he is featured.

It's at this midway point on the album that the feel-good energy truly culminates and segues into the more mellow aspects of its mood.

Bolton co-wrote most of the 12 songs in fluctuating combinations with his various producers, writers and guests. The three exceptions were a stunning, Latin tinged version of the Terence Trent D'Arby hit from 1987, "Sign Your Name" – a song that Bolton heard a lot on the radio while he was enjoying his first chart success with "That's What Love Is All About." The album closer "Crazy Love" is a beautifully spare cover of an old soul track by Van Morrison from his 1970 album *Moondance*. "Van is a genius at delivering a verse that speaks soulfully before the big release on the chorus." The other non-Bolton composition is the hauntingly romantic "Invisible Tattoo," written by Leonard Cohen's sometime collaborator, Sharon Robinson.

With the album done and mixed, the challenge now is to get out and perform the songs. In concert, Bolton sets himself standards as high as those he aims for in the studio. "Working with Pavarotti, I developed a new respect for the vocal cords and muscle groups that serve the voice and which determine whether you can perform "When a Man Loves a Woman" and "Nessun Dorma" in the same show. Party time is nowhere near my tour schedule. Everything I do is paced and disciplined to get through 70 to 80 shows per year."

Feeding his ears as he tours will be his iPod, a mindboggling collection of what he calls "musical nutrients culled from the giants who came before." In Bolton's case this consists of everything from the earliest recordings of Caruso to Robert Johnson compilations. From Billy Holiday to Lady Gaga, Marvin Gaye to Ne-Yo, and John Mayer to Jimi Hendrix.

To say that Michael Bolton is a driven man would be an understatement. He has never lost the hunger that, as a young songwriter, kept him struggling onwards until, in his mid 30s, he finally enjoyed solo success. "There's something about waiting 18 years for your first hit that makes you not wanna go back," he says, with a wry smile. And he's definitely not looking back. "Each recording for me is a kind of ascent to another plateau, a journey of further exploration of myself as an artist."

Another side to Michael Bolton is his desire to give back. Sixteen years ago Bolton established the Michael Bolton Foundation, now Michael Bolton Charities Inc. (MBC), to provide assistance, education and shelter to children and women at risk from poverty, as well as physical, emotional and sexual abuse.