

ALO
is
Steve Adams - Bass & Vocals
Dave Brogan - Drums & Vocals
Zach Gill - Keys, Accordion, Ukulele & Vocals
Lebo - Guitars & Vocals

ALO is not a band that dwells in the past. They are always moving forward. Always striving to discover new ideas. Always looking to go on new adventures. Their latest adventure, *Man of the World* (To be released February 9, 2010 on Brushfire Records), finds the Cali collective flexing their considerable creative powers to craft their finest album yet. Recorded almost entirely live, the 11-song collection is the sound of four players who have truly found their groove together. This is ALO at their most their most natural, their most organic and their most pure. *Man of the World* is the next level for ALO.

Man of the World was engineered by the band's longtime collaborator Dave Simon-Baker and produced by none other than Jack Johnson, who had previously helmed Donavon Frankenreiter's critically acclaimed eponymous Brushfire debut. The singer/songwriter-turned-producer was a natural fit with ALO. "It felt like he joined the band for the album," drummer Dave Brogan admits. "He was very hands on. If he thought he could add something to a track, he was willing to go for it. And we were more than happy to let him." Johnson brought a new element to the group's creative process. "In a really great way, Jack shook things up for us," guitarist Lebo adds. "Most of us in the band have been playing together since we were 13 and we've fallen into patterns. Jack got us to rethink how we do things."

For the recording, the quartet packed their bags, said goodbye to their friends and families, and headed off to Johnson's home studio on the North Shore of Oahu, Hawaii. The weather was perfect, the vibe was relaxed, and the locals laid back. It was the change in scenery they all needed. "It was everything I hoped for," bassist Steve Adams acknowledges. "It was a fresh environment, a change-up from our normal routine."

The fact that all this was happening in one of the most beautiful places on the planet definitely affected the sessions. "Hawaii feels very pure, natural, and laidback," Brogan proclaims. "That's how this record felt to make. It was smooth and fun." The place itself became transformative. "After a while you become part of Hawaii's nature, your music changes to match the landscape and the lifestyle," keyboardist Zach Gill declares. "You stop wearing shoes, you learn how to avoid the mosquitoes, you shower only to wipe off the humidity. Important things stop seeming important. It gives you time to ponder. For the young man who has spent hours indoors listening over and over again to a passage in a song, picking it a part, tearing it down and building in back up again only to find that he has lost its meaning, Hawaii says 'Go take a walk in the jungle. Go swim in the ocean. The sun will set, the night will come and tomorrow it will happen again. This is how it is and this is how it has always been; you should be enjoying yourself.'"

And that's exactly what ALO did. As they always have, they shared the songwriting and the vocal duties. A couple of songs – "Time and Heat" and "I Love Music" – have showed up

in the band's setlists sporadically over the last few years, but *Man of the World* is mostly completely new compositions. Though all four members came to the studio with arrangements and parts of songs fleshed out, everything got scrambled as soon as everyone was together. "There was a real workshop vibe," Lebo affirms. "Arrangements were being torn apart and put back together in ways nobody could have imagined. It was sort of a Humpty Dumpty vibe out there, but this time all the king's horses and all the king's men *did* put Humpty back together again. And he came out much better because of it."

The band had traditionally built their songs up track by track, but they abandoned that approach for a rawer, more organic, one. "In the days before digital recording and endless tracks – when musicians were confined to two or four tracks – this is how it was done," Gill explains. "Musicians had to play together at the same time and get it right. A great performance meant that everybody got it right at the same time. I've always felt that you can hear the difference in recordings made this way. You actually get to hear the sound of people in a room making something together. Not an artificial simulation. This was really amazing for all of us. At one point Steve turned to me and said, 'I think this is the most fun I have ever had!'"

Songs that sprang out of the band's new approach to recording span the sonic spectrum. "Big Appetite" is a warm-hearted feelgood anthem that centers around a slow-burning groove, while "I Love Music" is a disco-fied jam that has become the band's mantra. The title track is a piano-propelled, raw rock 'n' roll stomper, while "Country Electro" is a stripped down acoustic guitar and steel drum fueled number that deftly captures the band's mellow Hawaiian groove. Adams is a big fan of the title track, "It rocks in a great old school way," he declares. "It's got big guitars and some rockin' piano."

The epic late night ballad "Suspended" is a collective favorite. "We recorded it live in one take," Brogan remembers. "It's a perfect example of how simplicity can let what's already present really come into full being." For Gill, the song is pure solace. "It's about accepting – and even finding comfort in – the natural tensions of life," he reveals. "I was sad when I recorded the vocals – some intense things had just gone down and I was having a tough time – but the song is not a sad song. It's a homecoming, a release, a breathing out with the knowledge that in another second you will breath in again."

Collectively, the songs of *Man of the World* reveal the story of four friends taking an intensely personal journey together. It is the sound of a band living, creating, loving and losing together. It is the sound of ALO. "It represents where we are at right now," Adams declares. "It's a culmination of the trip so far; we couldn't have made it without everything that came before it."

The band plans to make the album live up to its namesake by touring extensively in the States and abroad, but they know it will transform *Man of the World* into a completely new experience. "We are the eternal tinkerers," Lebo declares. "There is no way that these songs will stay the same for long. I can't wait to see what these songs turn into once we get out on the road."