

## Lani Hall



**S**weet *Bird*, Lani Hall's third solo album, comes to us as a bona fide revelation. The album marks the musical—and personal—maturation of a gifted singer who has just discovered the real voice within her . . . a voice so strong and tender and human, that you know you're hearing a *new* Lani Hall. And Lani has found the songs to put that new voice in full flight. These songs come from disparate sources — from "A Chorus Line" and "A Little Night Music" to Firefall and Joni Mitchell—but each clearly belongs to her now. Through the course of the nine songs on *Sweet Bird*, you'll hear the intensely told story of a woman's journey to a loving self-awareness. Make no mistake, this is a bold, finely drawn, revealing work—an album with a lifetime captured within it. Appropriately, it was husband and partner Herb Alpert who produced it for her.

"Every song on the album," she says, "means something to me—sends chills through me. I wanted to let my soul out on this album; I tried to be very uninhibited about vocals, singing like I never had before—except to myself. I wanted to give . . . everything. I worked on the vocals until the songs really gave me what I wanted . . . until I really gave *them* what I wanted. I tried not to be concerned about intonation or the other technicalities . . . I just wanted to be soulful.

"With 'Early Morning Strangers,' the Barry Manilow/Hal David song, I just couldn't sing it right—there was something about it that was stopping me. At one point, Herb was playing the tape when I was in the vocal booth, and I just started ooohing—just free-form ooohing, you know, through the track. And Herb said, 'Why don't you just *record* that?' So I did it on a take. And the next take, I sang the song with the ooohhs in the background, and it came to life for me—it was easy for me then. But I'm

(over please)

# Biography

reluctant to sing it in person," she says through a laugh, "because I can't sing it and ooohh at the same time . . . .

"I'm very proud of the album, and I'd like to take it as far as it can go. I'd like to get a reaction from an audience and see if I have the ability to move people. I'd never really had the desire before to really pursue something to the end. I recorded the last two albums with a very low-profile. But I feel much different about this one. While making it, I'd sit back and listen to the cuts and say to myself, 'Will it be enough for me to just record this album and say goodbye to it?' And I knew I didn't *want* to say goodbye to it. For me, obviously, it's an important album . . . I love it."

A lot of love comes through on *Sweet Bird*, from the playing of virtuosos such as Michel Colombier, who played keyboards and arranged, with Lani &

Herb; bassist Stanley Clarke, whose brilliant line sets the mood for an astounding interpretation of "Send in the Clowns"; and producer Alpert, who does a memorable slow dance with his trumpet to Lani's sensuous vocal on Michael Franks' "Mr. Blue (Misty Blue)." *Sweet Bird* sounds very much a labor of love for all who were involved in its making.

Lani has written two significant dedications for the cover of her album. The first is to Herb . . .

*This album is for my best friend, my husband, my lover. Thank you for your love and belief, and for always being "you."*

. . . and the second is written to their daughter . . .

*Thank you, "Aria," for new feelings and directions.*

And thanks to you, Lani, for discovering yourself and for so freely sharing that discovery with all of us.