



LENA HORNE: The Lady And The Musical Men In Her Life

After her family, there are two loves in Lena Horne's life: music and the men who create it.

Ms. Horne pays a loving tribute to the music-making men in her life on her new album, *The Men In My Life*. The album, released on the Three Cherries Records label, features the 71-year-old performer singing some of the best love songs this side of heaven, while accompanied by some of the finest musicians on earth.

Highlights of the LP are her duets with two of her favorite musical men, Sammy Davis Jr. and Joe Williams. She harmonizes with Davis on Johnny Mandel's *I Wish I'd Met You*, and blends with Williams on Rodney Jones' *I Won't Leave You Again*. In addition, she sings some standards of her favorite composers, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, Kurt Weill and Victor Young.

Explaining to **JET** why she named the album *The Men In My Life*, Ms. Horne humorously reveals: "I came up with the title myself, because I've been continu-

Lena Horne, who won the ESOBY 1986 Lifetime Achievement Award (above), pays tribute to the musical men in her life with new album The Men In My Life. She was influenced musically by her late husband MGM conductor-arranger Lennie Hayton.

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Ms. Horne is shown in the recording studio as she teams up with two of her favorite musical men, singers Sammy Davis Jr. and Joe Williams.



ally with musicians all my life. And I've been working the last 15 or 20 years with younger and younger ones and I've practically married all of them. So they've been men in my life."

She adds that she always has been romantically linked with men in the music business. Her late husband, Lennie Hayton, was a conductor-arranger for the MGM studios. "Let's put it this way, I never fell for a man from the real world. My loves, literally have been music men."

And throughout her illustrious career, she has been influenced musically by such legends as

Ms. Horne recalls that she was influenced musically early in her career by such legends as the late Count Basie and Duke Ellington.

Duke Ellington and many others. "I was taught by Billy Strayhorn and Luther Henderson," she points out. "And all the great groups I've worked with have really been my other half—Dizzy, Count Basie, I never sang with Duke Ellington, but of course he was a great influence in my life."

Ms. Horne says it was a real joy to work with two of her favorite men in show business, Sammy Davis Jr. and Joe Williams. "I love Sam. We love each other. I asked him and he surprised me and said he'd do it," she recalls. "Joe, of course, and I go way back. I've known him since my Billy Strayhorn days. We're close



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friends and I couldn't think of two finer. They are two of my favorite men in my life. The only other one I could think of was Billy Eckstine and he was out of the country at the time."

For the album, she surrounded herself with young, brilliant musicians. "I had all my gorgeous young men," she laughs. "Let's put it this way, there wasn't an ugly one in the bunch," she laughs again. She boasts that she got "all the best and youngest," including her Fender bass player Carl James who is about 19 years old. "He was so young to understand an old dame like me and the feeling I was having. He said, 'Your body language is telling me everything and I am following that.' Isn't that incredible? That's a real wise young man. Just think of what he's going to be when he is 50!"

Ms. Horne admits it was difficult to find songs that sounded right for a woman her age. "I think it's tough finding songs be-

Ms. Horne is surrounded by men who worked on her album (l-r) Sherman Sneed, her manager and LP's executive producer; musicians, Frank Owens and Rodney Jones; producer Ettore Stratta and musician Mike Renzi.



Ms. Horne does Nat King Cole standard When I Fall In Love on album. coming to one of my years," she admits. "It's boring for a 71-year-old broad to sing about how bad she wants a man, even though it frequently is true," she says.

Reflecting on her youthful energy and legendary good looks, at 71, she says: "People don't know what to do with an old broad like me. I have two grandchildren who are 23, one is 21, another 18. Someone called me the foxy grandma—I like that!"

—CLARENCE WALDRON



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