

# The Legendary Al Green Releases New Studio Album Lay It Down May 27 Featuring John Legend, Anthony Hamilton, Corinne Bailey Rae, Questlove And More



“If you are going to consider what you do as an artist real R&B, you have to consider the pioneers of it, and Al just happens to be one of 'em. I respect [Al Green] so so much and you've always been very honest; and that honesty has motivated me to make R&B music.” Usher

There's no shortage of Al Green fans. The R&B legend has helped shape the genre and continues to do so, as is evidenced by his new studio album Lay It Down, out May 27 on Blue Note Records. The project features the sophisticated R&B voices of singer-songwriters and Al Green fans John Legend, Anthony Hamilton and Corinne Bailey Rae, and it was co-produced with Green by two of hip-hop's most innovative players, drummer Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson from the Roots and keyboardist James Poyser, the go-to guy for high-profile artists ranging from Erykah Badu to Common.

The album has been a 2 ½ year labor of, as Al likes to put it, L-O-V-E. Born from a series of inspired sessions between

Green and Ahmir at the famed Electric Lady studios in Greenwich Village that yielded the most high-spirited, funky and often lushly romantic songs of Green's latter-day career, Lay It Down is a refreshingly old school jam, with everyone laying down the music together, face to face, heart to heart, soul to soul.

"The reason why we are doing this is because we all idolize Al Green," declares Questlove. "Even today, nobody has range like him."

The sound is purely Al Green, with the artist duets and Ahmir and James' deft touches bringing it into 2008. As Green explains: "They didn't want to get too far out from the foundation that [Hi Records producer] Willie Mitchell and I built—'Call Me,' 'I'm Still In Love With You,' 'Let's Stay Together.'" We want to keep all of the aura, but we would like to have freedom enough to spread our wings and express ourselves. The Roots, all the guys from Philly who came up to do this stuff with us—they were incredible. I could relax because I knew the people were capable."

Add in Brooklyn's celebrated Dap-King Horns (Sharon Jones, Amy Winehouse), guitarist Chalmers "Spanky" Alford (Mighty Clouds of Joy, Joss Stone) and bassist Adam Blackstone (Jill Scott, DJ Jazzy Jeff), among others, and you've got a modern soul-music dream team, fronted by the most expressive voice in the business.

"It's an honor to be able to work with Al Green, who I have always loved and respected," says John Legend, who duets with Green and Corinne Bailey Rae on the single "Stay With Me (by the sea)". "He has been an important part of black music history, and pop music history for that matter. Al really is a magical singer."