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Al Perkins Biography

AL PERKINS today is equally at home in the studio adding his timeless pedal steel to albums by upcoming stars such as Julie Roberts, as he is adding white hot snarling lap steel to the dynamic live appearances of Kevin Montgomery, or complementing Chris Hillman's traditional bluegrass sound with his signature dobro playing.

Featuring 12 new recordings, Perkins' new album *Triple Play* demonstrates the full repertoire of skills from one of rock's pioneers. Not a self-indulgent exercise in technique, this collection is primarily about songs, delivered effortlessly in his warm, expressive, bluesy vocals.

This legend of popular music was born and raised in Texas, and learned to play Hawaiian steel guitar at the age of 9. Playing in West Texas bands throughout the sixties, it wasn't until his release from the US Army Reserves in the early seventies that his musical career took off with California Country Rockers Shiloh. Perkins found himself hired to play in the new incarnation of The Flying Burrito Brothers and recorded the seminal live album *The Last of the Red Hot Burritos* in 1972. The band splintered, and Perkins along with former Byrd Chris Hillman joined Manassas. Led by Stephen Stills, they were one of the most talented units in music at the time. Equally at home with Latin jams, rock, blues, country, folk, and bluegrass, they were one of the most versatile outfits in rock history.

As the second album was released and Stills was being drawn more towards his work with Crosby Stills and Nash, Perkins and Hillman found themselves joining up with Richie Furay (Buffalo Springfield and Poco founding member) and J.D. Souther in the Souther Hillman Furay band. Perkins moved into producing records in the mid 70s, but did tour again with Michael Nesmith and McGuinn & Hillman. He somehow managed to also continue working as a session player, and found himself contributing to many of the notable albums of that time, including the Eagles' *On The Border*. Continuing his production work into the 80s, Perkins also toured with Chris Hillman as a duo which later developed into the Desert Rose Band, before joining Dolly Parton in 1986, touring and recording with her for several years before moving to Nashville.

77 Fallowfield Way • Ashington • Northumberland • NE63 8LD • UK

Tel/Fax: +44(0)1670 856605 • Mobile: +44 (0)791 902 7281

e-mail: booking@fearnothingonline.com

It was in Nashville he reunited with Emmylou Harris on a new project, the Nash Ramblers, having previously worked with Emmylou and playing on the two solo albums of the late, great Gram Parsons. (It was his association with Parsons that led to Perkins being called in to play on the sessions for the Rolling Stones' *Exile on Main Street*). For the *Live at the Ryman* album, Emmylou and her band, obviously inspired by the history of the famous auditorium, responded by putting together a stunning live set spanning the history of country music. The album was to win a Grammy award in 1992.

Al Perkins continues to tour and record, and is well known for his work with Nashville's rising star Kevin Montgomery in his all-star band the Road Trippers. He has played and toured with artists as diverse as Bob Dylan, Cher, Rita Coolidge, Dan Fogelberg and Dwight Yoakham yet he manages to share around his time, appearing with long-time associate Chris Hillman (most recently at the Nashville Americana Awards Ceremony), with the recently reformed Mason Proffit, led by Terry Talbot, and with veteran country singer Michael Martin Murphey. A recent highlight of Perkins' long career was his appearance on stage alongside Keith Richards and a host of stars at the Gram Parsons tribute show in California in the summer of 2004.

Two years ago Perkins managed to find enough time to put together a collection of studio outtakes and rare recordings spanning the breadth of his career. *Snapshots* chronicled his associations with many of his previous musical buddies, and featured long lost or forgotten recordings by the Nash Ramblers and the Burritos amongst others for a fascinating album.

Triple Play is Perkins' first solo album of his own music, and features Al's sons Matt and Jess, along with friends such as Chris Eddy (Duane's son) from the latest incarnation of Mason Proffit. *Triple Play* effortlessly swings through blues, country, gospel bluegrass and even Cajun influences, and the enjoyment of being able to cut loose on his own self-penned material is clear, as Al Perkins comes up trumps with an infectious set of studio and live cuts. *Triple Play* is the term used for a particularly outstanding play in Baseball, and outstanding is certainly the description that should be applied to this collection.