

VENICE

PACIFIC STANDARD TIME

Kipp Lennon, lead vocals
Mark Lennon, lead vocals
Michael Lennon, producer, acoustic and
electric guitars, bass, keyboards, vocals
Pat Lennon, acoustic and electric guitars, vocals

“Venice is the best vocal group in America right now. They're better than anybody else I know. They're fantastic. I'm a student of harmony. That's my thing. I love all kinds of harmony. But I particularly love theirs, because it's so natural. It's not like anybody else's. Very unforced, very from their hearts. I've been telling people about them since the first night I heard them. I've told everybody I could find that they were the best. This is my favorite band in the world.”

--David Crosby

“Venice, one of my favorite bands, is quintessentially Californian, with soaring harmonies. It's such a pleasure to play with these guys, because they have that power.”

--Jackson Browne

THE ALBUM

Southern California band, Venice, is back with their ninth release, *Pacific Standard Time*. Produced by band member Michael Lennon, the album boasts 15 instant classics, brand new songs that were written and recorded over an impressive four-month marathon.

“I think all of us feel like this is our best album yet,” says Kipp Lennon. “It was very organic and really spontaneous and quick, and we had a lot of cool things to write about. We feel like there's some real deep stuff. It's peeling back layers of the onion now. Even more honesty, elaborating more on our lives.”

Pat Lennon concurs. “There's something about it that's so clear and clean. Every song.”

“Some of it was recorded sitting around in shorts and swim trunks,” Mark Lennon adds, “sitting in a beautiful living room looking outside at the sunset. And that really helped us get across this great feeling on this album.”

“I really feel like this album is the closest to how we envisioned it when we were writing it,” says Michael Lennon. “This one has come out the most like we wanted it to. I think it goes deep

emotionally, lyrically, into our own lives and how we feel about things. It's coming from a different place musically. It's definitely a lot more mature."

Pacific Standard Time marks Michael Lennon's return to his longtime seat in the producer's chair, after handing over the controls on the band's previous CD, *Welcome to the Rest of Your Life*.

"I have complete respect for Michael," says Pat, "because he was in this little studio probably 18 hours a day, just crazy. It's an amazing feat, what he did, especially in the time and in the budget that he had to do it. It's quite something."

"Michael has been producing us from our very first demo," Kipp adds. "And to work with other producers – like we worked with Danny Kortchmar on our first album, and we worked with Terry Manning on our last album – it's great to have input, it's great to have somebody else say, 'Let's change this vibe a little on that song,' or 'Let's redo that one,' but at the end of the day, we always find ourselves doing what we always do, which is all of us putting in our two cents and Michael weeding through all of our suggestions. It's a real collaboration. He brings out the best in the songs. We're finding that that works the best for us."

The CD was mixed by Grammy nominated Rob Jacobs, who began his career as head engineer with Venice's first album back in 1989. Since then, he's worked with U2, The Eagles, Kiss, Sheryl Crow, Jon Bon Jovi, John Fogerty, Cher, Elton John, Don Henley, Brooks & Dunn, and countless others. Kipp recalls, "We've been following his career, and we run into each other occasionally, and we're all big fans of each other, we just never hooked up. And now it was awesome to come full circle and see Rob again and realize what a great collaboration it was. It was like we never stopped working together. It was really cool."

On several of the tracks, Venice experimented with a wider range of musical instruments and atmosphere-enhancing audio effects. "I think people will be a little bit surprised," admits Michael. However, "the vocals are always Venice, the lyrics are always Venice, it's always about us, so why not stretch out and try some new sounds? Hopefully it'll be interesting for our fans and the public to hear some new colors. We didn't get too crazy, but there's little surprises here and there. We really hope people like that."

That experimentation extended beyond just the atmosphere, and into the very fabric of the songs themselves. "People tend to bunch us in together with Crosby, Stills & Nash or The Eagles," says Kipp. "Which is fine. We definitely grew up on the West Coast, and we have that sound. The harmony thing inevitably brings out those comparisons, and we're glad to be a part of the Southern California music tradition. But we're influenced by so many other kinds of music too, and we're trying to bring that out more and more. A song like 'I'll Keep My Fingers Crossed' is a hybrid of Steely Dan meets the Spinners. You get a little more of our Todd Rundgren-y stuff, a little more of our Beach Boys stuff, lots of different things on this album that we hadn't touched on before."

Michael adds another example. "'Right Where We Left Off' is a song that is in 7/8 time mixed with 4/4 time, and the musical part of it is a little bit strange to some people. But when the vocals kick in and we start singing the verse, it's a very comfortable groove and something that people can hang their hat on."

"When we wrote 'Happiness is the Best Revenge,' " Kipp continues, "we wanted it to feel like a combination of a Steve Miller song mixed with War. We wanted it to have a little bit of a 'mariachi horns on the streets of Venice,' like it's some festival or something. And then Mark really wanted to have that crying muted trumpet on 'Fifteen Presents.' Like that sad kind of Chet Baker-ish sound. And I think we really accomplished that. I'm really excited about it."

There's no question that *Pacific Standard Time* represents a high-water-mark for the band. "We've evolved and we keep growing as songwriters," says Mark. "It expands the definition of

what Venice is. It shows how we can take the best of what we've already done and draw on that to write the latest stuff, but also still be fresh and new."

"I think it's a great album," Pat concludes simply. "And I can't wait for everyone to hear it."

SONGWRITING

One of the main strengths of Venice's albums has always been the construction of their original songs, which consist of hook-filled melodies that are immediately hum-able and stay in your head for weeks, and lyrics that are candid and emotionally specific, though never at the expense of being universally relatable. *Pacific Standard Time* continues that tradition.

"We always try and make our lyrics as personal as possible," says Kipp, "because we want to feel the song, and we want the song to last. The ones that last the longest on our set lists when we perform live, and the songs that are requested, are always the ones that are the most personal. The ones that are practically reading our diaries out loud are the ones that other people identify with."

"There is a lot of family folklore, and some very personal lyrics," Mark elaborates. "But we always try to make them universal for everybody to enjoy and to relate to."

"We don't want to be so specific in the lyrics that we exclude people who have never experienced, say, having a child," Kipp explains. "So instead, you write the song as if it's about a deep love. And that way people can identify it with everything from their wives to their kids to, you know – Pat can think about his Chihuahua! We still make the song hit home and feel good to us, but leave the lyrics just vague enough that people can identify with it in their own way."

THE LIVE SHOW

As much as Venice's fans treasure the band's albums, it's the live shows that create lifelong devotees.

"I think it's a surprise for a lot of people who come for the first time," Pat muses. "There's something there that is communal. Most people that show up go, 'Wow, that was really an experience, as opposed to just listening to music.' They become part of it."

"It's always interesting," adds Kipp, "because when we're up on stage, we can see who the new people are, because they're not just looking at us, they're looking at the audience too. They've got this half-open mouth, and they're going, 'Whoa! Whoa!' I guess people aren't expecting us to be as tight and as together, or have such a professional show. And yet the audience that comes to see us all the time, they're expecting that, and they're reveling in it, and they're part of it. New people are looking at us, and then they look at the audience, and they're looking around like, 'Check this out! You don't see this very often!'"

"I hear back from people," says Michael, "that there's a feeling that we give off on stage that makes people feel good when they leave. They have an 'up' feeling, or they're ready to face another hard day, if that's what they're facing. And it gives them hope or strength."

According to Kipp, it's a positive experience for the band as well. "It's a blast to go up onstage and have your music be appreciated. We always get that validation and that awesome energy. We feel like a lottery winner nearly every time. There are moments when we look at each other and we shake our heads like, 'Wow, we are so lucky to be a part of this kind of a thing!'"

"We have a pretty amazing fan base," Michael admits. "Venice has been together for over 20 years, and it's because of the loyal fans we have that keep us going. And they won't let us give up on this, because when we do those shows, we're connecting to them, and they get it, and they understand what we're trying to say. And it means the world to us."

Mark agrees wholeheartedly. "It's amazing how we can keep coming back and playing shows and selling out and playing bigger venues and meeting people after the shows and hearing their personal stories of what our songs mean to them and their families. That our songs are part of their personal soundtrack to their lives. It's really a wonderful, wonderful feeling."

VENICECENTRAL.COM

Chief among Venice's calling cards is their extensive webpage, Venicecentral.com, which the band takes an active role in helping to maintain and keep current. Almost 3 gigs in size, this mammoth public history of the band contains the latest news and tour dates, lyrics and audio clips from all of their albums, full concerts and radio interviews dating back over 20 years, and dozens of hours of video clips. But the site's biggest claim to fame is arguably its revolutionary VVTG, or Virtual Venetian Tour Guide, which is basically the internet equivalent of an audio commentary on a DVD. Anywhere you go on the site, you'll see spinning VVTG boxes, and when you click on any of them, an audio clip will play where members of the band tell you behind-the-scenes stories about whatever it is you're looking at. There are over 3 total hours of VVTG clips on the site, and new entries are regularly added as the site continues to expand.

"Our website, Venicecentral.com, is one of the largest sites I've ever seen," says Mark. "and I'm still finding new stuff on it every day. We joke about it. We say there's almost too much information."

"We have a really unique website," adds Michael, "because it can go so deep. As deep as you want to go to know the history of the band and where we've been and what we've done."

Kipp believes that a big part of the site's success is due to the band's involvement. "From the very beginning, we've been building it from the ground up. And we always pick each other's brains about, 'Should we add this? Should we take out that? When do we announce this?' It makes us feel way more in touch with our fan base."

The busiest section of Venicecentral.com is easily Venice Talk, the online posting board where fans converse with each other about every topic under the sun, and the band members often join in.

"It's amazing," says Kipp. "We'll be in the middle of doing a tour, and I'll come back to the hotel, and I'll think, 'I wonder if somebody already posted a review for tonight's show.' And sure enough, I'll check Venice Talk, and not only have they posted a review, but now there's a reaction, it's got the whole set list, it's got everybody saying, 'And then tonight Kipp said this and then Mark said that, and afterwards this happened,' and you see some guy in Portland, Maine saying, 'Oh, that sounds great, I wish I could be there!' and then somebody from Germany's saying, 'Oh, I can't wait to see them next week!' Cliché or not, it really makes the world a smaller place, and a friendlier place."

"It's a wonderful thing," adds Pat. "It's really exciting and fun to talk to the fans. It's really cool, so keep it up!"

THE LAST TWO YEARS

A lot has happened in the Venice world since the release of *Welcome to the Rest of Your Life* two years ago. For one thing, their success in The Netherlands has skyrocketed, which Kipp attributes to that country giving them the opportunity to prove themselves. "We were given breaks in Holland by DJ's and television personalities and people who really got us the exposure, that we literally jumped from 100 people a night, to within 6 months we were playing to 1000 people every night. Now we're playing for bigger and bigger crowds."

"We love it there," raves Michael. "We love our fans over there. They really welcome us, and it's pretty much our home away from home. Holland has been our gateway to the rest of Europe. It wouldn't be possible without the incredible Dutch fans that support us time and time again."

"Dutch fans are wonderful," Pat agrees. "I don't know what to say. They just keep showing up! Of course, we do too..."

In 2003, Venice won an Edison Award (the Dutch version of the Grammy) for Best International Artist, beating out superstars U2 and Coldplay. Says Kipp, "Sometimes you feel like you're in some weird dream. You get back to the hotel and it's like, 'Did we just do that?' But it was great. We were really flattered that the entertainment industry over there would acknowledge us."

Also in 2003, Venice released their very first concert DVD, *Venice Live at the Royal Carré Theater*. Michael explains, "Recording and releasing the live DVD was something that had been really missing in the Venice chronicles. We needed to capture that live show, put it in a quality recording, and make it something that the fans could get. We're very proud of how it came out."

VENICE HISTORY (THE EARLY YEARS)

We'll just let Kipp Lennon handle this one:

"When Michael and I were kids, in 7th grade, we had a little band together. We knew 3 songs. We did 'Born on the Bayou,' 'Let It Be' and 'Me and Julio.' Later on, he continued playing music and playing in a band, and I was doing other things. And then one day I was on the beach, body surfing with Mark. I was 17, Marky was 14. And Mark came up to me and said, 'Michael wants me to ask you if you want to come try out for his band. They need a lead singer.' And I was like, 'Why didn't *he* ask me?' And he goes, 'I don't know, I think he's embarrassed. He doesn't know if you think it's cool or not, or if you're more into folk music.' He didn't realize that yeah, I was into folk music, but I was also really into rock and roll too.

"So I went and auditioned that night, and we did a bunch of Stones songs and Frampton songs and Zeppelin, whatever was out at the time. And we became a cover band. We started playing colleges and high schools around the state of California. And parties and dances. And we were doing all cover tunes, but I swear that's the best way for us to get better and better and better was doing all these songs. And eventually Mark joined, so it was the three of us for a while. And then by 1980, Pat joined.

"We started calling it Venice pretty much right away. Because Venice is something we all have in common. Instead of being The Wallnuts or whatever we could think of, we all thought, 'Well, Venice. Our family's been here forever and it would be a great name for a band.'

"So we started playing up on Sunset Strip, Gazzarris and the Whiskey and the Roxy, for years and years and years, with different bass players and drummers and keyboard players and percussion. But always the four of us stayed together."

FUN FACTS ABOUT THE BAND

Kipp and Pat Lennon are brothers. Mark and Michael Lennon are brothers. Those two sets are cousins to each other.

Kipp and Pat have 11 brothers and sisters. Their four oldest sisters are The Lennon Sisters, who starred on Lawrence Welk's weekly television program from 1955 to 1967.

Mark and Michael have 13 brothers and sisters. Among them is their brother Kevin, who has been Venice's audio technician in the U.S. since the band's formation.

For almost 30 years, Kipp Lennon has been one of the top session singers in the music business. He's sung backup on albums by Elton John, Melissa Etheridge and Brian Wilson, and sung lead on TV shows like *Magnum, P.I.* and *Knight Rider*, and in films like *Ruthless People* and *Star Trek IV*. Probably Kipp's biggest "You-Heard-Him-But-You-Didn't-Know-It-Was-Him" moments were on *The Simpsons*, most famously when he sang "Happy Birthday, Lisa," in a Michael Jackson imitation on the third season episode, "Stark Raving Dad." Kipp remembers, "Michael Jackson knew that I could imitate him, and he asked me to come do his (singing) vocals. He stood right next to me. That was one surreal session, let me tell you." Nowadays, Kipp enjoys spending time at home with his wife and two sons.

Mark Lennon is also a successful session singer, and has toured as a backup singer with Phil Collins and Cher. When he isn't busy practicing his musical artistry, he spends his time creating art of a different kind. "I love painting," he reveals. "I do personalized artwork on people's clothes, bags, shoes, hats – whatever, I'll paint on it. I paint on canvass as well, and do large pieces." Fans can view or purchase Mark's artwork at his own website, markylennon.com.

As Venice's U.S. business liaison, or as he calls it, "the hamster on the wheel," it falls on Michael Lennon to keep the machine running. "When I'm not touring with the band or writing or producing, I'm in my office, running the business from behind the scenes. I'm the liaison between our European management company and the band here. There's probably not a day that goes by that I'm not answering e-mail, or putting together some package for someone, or doing something. I've always done that for the band. I'm always thinking of Venice, and I'm always trying to move forward." But he's never too busy to spend time with his wife and two young children. "I love my family and I love my kids, and I feel like I'm a good father and a good husband when I'm home. I have a very patient and understanding wife and kids. I love going camping, I love water skiing, I love taking off with my wife and kids and going somewhere and doing nothing."

Pat Lennon is an accomplished carpenter who designs and builds his own furniture. His work has been featured on the television program *Designer's Challenge*. In the past few years, he's built all of the woodwork for the home studios of clients such as producers Danny Kortchmar and Patrick Leonard, and artists like J.D. Souther, Jackson Browne, and most recently, Tom Petty. "I've been building this beautiful, almost looks like a 200-year-old Mexican barn, at Tom's guest house," Pat proclaims proudly. "There's four rooms, and it's such a beautiful project. I've been really fortunate to have worked for him. Placing guitars at his studio with him personally, and hanging out with him, has been really a blast. Really fun. That's a good project."

"PACIFIC STANDARD TIME" SONG-BY-SONG DESCRIPTIONS

"I'LL KEEP MY FINGERS CROSSED" (LEAD VOCAL: KIPP)

Kipp: " 'I'll Keep My Fingers Crossed' is a song that Michael and I had been working on about four years ago and kind of put aside for awhile. We'd had a lot of the melody, but we didn't know what the song was going to be about. Sometimes we make up gibberish lines, so we can remember the song. Every time we got to the chorus, we were going, 'Hot dog and a cigarette! Hot dog and a cigarette!' I guess Freud would have a lovely time with that, wouldn't he? ... The song is about longing to rekindle an interrupted relationship in my life, and Mark came up with the perfect title for it."

"COTTON CANDY" (LEAD VOCAL: MARK)

Mark: " 'Cotton Candy' is about a friend of mine who's an eccentric local legend of the Venice soiree scene. And it was a very fun, easy song to write, because I thought of that person's daily life and how we interact whenever we're around town or at a party. The melody came to my mind, and the lyrics came very fast."

"ALIVE AGAIN" (LEAD VOCAL: MICHAEL)

Michael: " 'Alive Again' was a song that started with a guitar riff, and I had sung some fake lyrics over it. And I played it for Mark and Kipp, and they really dug it. Mark came up with this idea to write it about a friend of ours that had really turned his life around, and what a difference we had seen with him and what a new person he was. It's one of my favourite songs on the record. Not because I sing it, but because of what it's about. And I love the music in it."

"EVERYBODY'S OPIUM" (LEAD VOCAL: MARK)

Kipp: "I've read a lot about the history of opium and the type of high that it was. People really got addicted to how it made them feel – this strange mellow euphoria, which is different from any other drug. It has since become in the cultural vernacular to say, 'This is an opiate.' And I thought, 'Well, if that's the case, then a relationship with a person can be an opiate also.' And it became, 'She's everybody's opium.' "

"BACK TO THE WELL" (LEAD VOCAL: KIPP)

Kipp: " 'Back to the Well' is basically a song about having to write more songs. It's a song about having to write a new album, about having to get back on the horse again. Got to go back to the well, got to go find that inspiration again. And it all starts with that little glimmer of, 'Well, I hope I can do it.' But then you realize, 'Hey, *I hope I can do it!* That's something!' And then you go from there."

"YOU AND ME DOING NOTHING" (LEAD VOCAL: KIPP)

Kipp: "In our family, we have this expression where we say, 'A cancellation is always in order.' For instance, if you had two tickets to a Rolling Stones concert, or there's a huge party that your friends are going to, and it gets cancelled for some reason, there's somewhere inside you where you go, 'Yeah, let's go home. Let's just put on our pajamas and watch rotten TV and just hang out and do nothing.' Because yes, there's a place for partying and there's a place for going out to bars and a place for all that in everybody's life, but there's nothing like staying home with the person you love and just doing nothing."

"WHEN YOUR SHIP COMES IN" (LEAD VOCAL: MARK)

Mark: "It's kind of a feeling that – when your ship comes in, when you find that person to be in love with, when you make that career move, when it all happens, it's going to happen wonderfully, because you're ready and you deserve it."

"TIGHT WHERE WE LEFT OFF" (LEAD VOCALS: KIPP AND MARK)

Michael: "Being from very large families, there are times when you fall out of touch with a brother, sister, or even cousin. But when you get together, there's something that happens as soon as you hug and start to talk. You immediately fall back into that place that's so comfortable and so familiar. You pick up right where you left off. This song is about that feeling."

"TWO PLACES AT ONE TIME" (LEAD VOCAL: KIPP)

Kipp: " 'Two Places at One Time' is a particularly special song to Michael and me, because it's written about how we feel every time we go on the road and we have to leave our kids. And the night before, inevitably, they end up saying, 'Why do you have to go?' It's so hard. How do you possibly explain to kids exactly why it is that you're going? And so we decided to put those feelings into a song. And I think that song will always be special to me because it really captures the time for us, and how we feel about how much we love our kids."

"BLUE OCEAN PARK WALTZ" (LEAD VOCAL: PAT)

Pat: "Usually when I bring ideas to the guys, they're such consummate writers, they grab it really quickly and run with it, and I don't get a chance to get my ideas down. I thought, 'This time I'm going to do something different.' I bought this little 4-track cassette recorder, put down my guitar part, and then I was able to sit with it and go, 'I'm going to put another guitar part to it.' And I wrote almost every bass part. And then I put a vocal to it. I sang fake words. I was really nervous when I brought it to the guys the first day. I played it for them, I put my head down, I closed my eyes, and at the end of the song, I looked up like, 'Oh God.' And they were almost crying. And I went, 'Oh, it worked.' ... It evolved into 'Blue Ocean Park Waltz.' Our family grew up on the ocean. Our parents used to always walk down on the boardwalks and hang out at the beaches and the piers. That was the idea of the song, kind of a tip of the hat to them."

"DON'T WORRY WORRY" (LEAD VOCAL: MARK)

Mark: " 'Don't Worry Worry' was a song written by me and my friend Kellie Flanagan. Kellie was a child actress in the late 60's, 70's. She was in the television series *Ghost & Mrs. Muir*. She was also in an episode of *Star Trek* and she was in *Wild in the Streets*. We wrote the song in, I want to say, 1994 maybe? It's about wanting a lost friend to explain what's going on in their head that led to an unnecessary breakup. ... I played it for the band, we had it in our demos, and it almost made a couple of albums. And this album, it made it! It really fit with the whole vibe of the album. I'm really, really excited about that one."

"ALL OR NOTHING AT ALL" (LEAD VOCAL: MICHAEL)

Michael: " 'All or Nothing at All' is about, 'Can I be this hard working great musician that travels the world and works hard and puts all my energy into that, while I still want to be this great father that spends time with his kids and does their homework with them and takes them to school? Can I do both of those things at the same time? Is it all or nothing?' That's something that is very personal to me, especially during the making of the record, spending 14 hours a day down at the studio, away from my wife and kids."

"FIFTEEN PRESENTS" (LEAD VOCAL: MARK)

Mark: " 'Fifteen Presents' is a really personal family song about my thirteen brothers and sisters, and my parents. There were 'fifteen presences' living at the house, back in a time where we used to have a lot more fog, rain and Santa Ana winds. There was a white owl that lived in our neighborhood, and we'd chase it from palm tree to palm tree every night, and play hide-and-go-seek and freeze tag and capture the flag, and the smell of cookies and chocolate cake, and all the birthdays. It's a walk down memory lane. Kind of a mysterious, soothing song."

"PEBBLE IN A POND" (LEAD VOCAL: KIPP)

Kipp: " 'Pebble in a Pond' is a way of saying thank you to various friends of ours who did some great stuff for us. All it takes is one gesture or one little bit of help from somebody, which is like dropping a pebble in a pond, and the ripples go out and it affects so many lives. And I thought, 'These people need to know that even though they think that they just barely did something, it really helped.' "

"HAPPINESS IS THE BEST REVENGE" (LEAD VOCAL: KIPP)

Kipp: "If some jerky guy's hassling me and I feel like socking him in the chops, the best way to win this game is to just turn around and go home. I get to go home and be with my wife and have a happy house and wake up in the morning and be a relatively happy guy, whereas this guy is obviously a jerk and he's going to go home and be miserable. And I win. That's the best revenge, is to go and be happy somewhere else and not deal with it. If you see some jerk driving crazy, just turn left. Go on a different street and let him be Crazy Driver on his own. Let him stir up whatever he's going to stir up, and go home and have happiness be your best revenge."

DISCOGRAPHY

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PACIFIC STANDARD TIME
Flow Records, 2004

WELCOME TO THE REST OF YOUR LIFE
Sony Records, 2002

2 METER SESSIES
Universal Records, 2000

SPIN ART
Vanguard Records / ZYX Records, 1999

CHRISTMAS WITH VENICE
Venetian Records, 1999

BORN AND RAISED
Vanguard Records / ZYX Records, 1997

GARAGE DEMOS, PART 1: SLOW STUFF
Venetian Records, 1995

GARAGE DEMOS, PART 2: FAST STUFF
Venetian Records, 1995

VENICE
Modern Atlantic, 1990

DVD'S:

2 METER SESSIES
Double 2, 2004

VENICE LIVE AT THE ROYAL CARRÉ THEATER
Idol Media BV, 2003

"BLUE PAINT" MUSIC VIDEO
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