

## YANNI

With his latest release, Truth of Touch, YANNI returns to the contemporary instrumental form that made him an international superstar and one of the world's most successful and beloved performers and composers. The album—his 19th overall and 16th studio release—is the Greek-born YANNI's first collection of primarily instrumental music since 2003. It grew organically out of a six-month break from touring and recording that YANNI had in 2010—an interlude that proved to be an immensely fruitful time of experimentation and creativity.

"I wasn't even trying to make an album," says YANNI. "I just felt like writing music. I happened to be at a point where I wasn't going on tour or having to deliver an album. Every night, I walked into my studio and just had fun. It was effortless. I felt the music. It just showed itself to me. It was probably the best way to do an album." Released in early 2011, Truth of Touch was recorded with producer-songwriter Ric Wake, YANNI's key collaborator on his last two albums, Yanni Voices and the Spanish-language Yanni Voces, both featuring vocals.

Throughout 2011, YANNI performed sold-out concerts in Eastern Europe, the Middle East (where Truth of Touch is platinum), and Asia—where the Chinese government invited YANNI to adopt a panda during his time in Chengdu, an honor usually reserved for countries rather than individuals. He named her "Santorini," which means "peace" in Greek, and is also the title of one of his best-known compositions.

A legendary live performer, YANNI's concerts have been seen by millions of fans in person, and via television broadcasts (he is one of public television's all-time top fundraisers). YANNI closed out 2011 with two shows at the historic 16th-century Castillo San Felipe Del Morro in San Juan, Puerto Rico—a recognized UNESCO Heritage Site—that were filmed for PBS. Debuting March 3, 2012, the program, *YANNI: Live at El Morro*, will air exclusively in the United States on PBS. An accompanying CD/DVD package will be initially, available exclusively through PBS pledge drives, and is scheduled for worldwide release in the spring of 2012, when YANNI will tour the U.S. A South American tour will follow in the fall, and a multi-city tour of China is set for 2013.

In concert, YANNI will perform favorites from throughout his career, as well as selections from Truth of Touch. The new album's 15-song set is adventurous and diverse, blending the "traditional" YANNI sound with robust textures and dynamic rhythms. YANNI says, "I come from the Mediterranean; I've always had rhythm inside my blood," adding that this time he substituted tricky time signatures for something "more straightforward, with a little more Western kind of attitude on the rhythms—although there's still a beautiful complexity, a lot of rhythms coming against other rhythms, causing you to feel a third or a fourth rhythm that adds so much to the songs." Highlights include the lush title track, the Latin-inflected "Seasons," "Mist of a Kiss" and "Yanni & Arturo" (a pairing with Cuban trumpet great Arturo Sandoval), the Indian inspired "Flash of Color," the rock-skewed "Vertigo," and the hip-hop flavored "I'm So."

While mainly instrumental, Truth of Touch also continues YANNI's work in the vocal realm, bringing in several of his Voices team. Nathan Pacheco sings the operatic "O Luce Che Brilla Nell'oscurita," Leslie Mills lends smoky tones to "Can't Wait," and Chloe Lowery, who YANNI calls "my little tiger," voices the album-closing "Secret." "I didn't want it to be a vocal album like Voices and Voces," says YANNI, "but a couple of vocals here and there, I think, enhance it. It gives you a point of departure and then a place to come back to."

"I refer to it as YANNI 2011," says Wake. "It takes the best of what he used to do and makes it something that's very modern and new." YANNI adds that making Truth of Touch "was very pure, like the old, old albums where I used to go in and do whatever I wanted. That's exactly what I did with this one—no rules, walk in, 'What do you feel like?' I'd hear a melody in my mind and I'd go with it. There are no rules. I have an emotion to express, and I will use any combination of instruments or vocals or lyrics—whatever I feel is the best way to express that emotion."

That spirit is part and parcel of YANNI's approach to music, and to life. He was born Yanni Chryssomallis in the southern Greek metropolis of Kalamata. Gifted with perfect pitch, he taught himself to play piano, and also excelled as a swimmer, setting a Greek national record in the 50-meter freestyle when he was just 14. He came to the U.S. to attend the University of Minnesota, which gave him an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters in 2005. He studied psychology, but ultimately dedicated himself to music, which he felt was "a time bomb ticking inside" him. At

school, he played with the group Chameleon before moving to Los Angeles, where he released his first album, Optimystique, in 1980.

YANNI delved into instrumental composing, and had his first platinum album with REFLECTIONS OF PASSION in 1990. Two years later, Dare To Dream netted YANNI's first GRAMMY Award nomination; its follow up, In My Time, was also GRAMMY nominated. His major breakthrough came with 1993's Yanni Live at the Acropolis, an album/video/PBS special project, seen by half a billion people in 65 countries, and selling more than 7.5 million albums worldwide. It marked the beginning of YANNI's long association with PBS that now includes *Yanni: Live at El Morro*, and past event highlights such as *Live at Royal Albert Hall* and *Tribute*, which featured 1997 concerts at the Taj Mahal in India and the Forbidden City in China—YANNI was the first western artist to perform at both.

Most important to YANNI, the career turning point of Live at the Acropolis and the works that followed found a global audience for his music, expansive creations that he designed to be positive and life-affirming. "I want to remind people of their potential for greatness," he says. "I want to inspire as well as to entertain. I don't preach to people, but the uplifting part is something that goes in because of who I am. I don't sit down and say 'Now I'm going to write music that is inspiring.' I can't do that. But who you are affects everything you can create."

To date, YANNI has sold more than 35 million albums globally, and his 2003 autobiography, Yanni In Words, made the *New York Times* bestseller list. His music is also a staple as a soundtrack for television, especially major sporting events—it has been featured in broadcasts of Olympic Games since 1988, as well as ABC's *Wide World of Sports*, the World Figure Skating Championships, the Tour de France and many other events.

Over the past several years, YANNI's ongoing studio explorations have resulted in the crafting of more than 300 songs. "Exploration is a good word," he says. "I was sound designing. I just started playing around with the equipment and got inspired by the new sounds I would discover. The only prerequisite is it had to turn me on. It had to keep me interested."

Even as the road beckons with major touring, YANNI's heart also remains in studio with all the music he's created of late, and with the excitement of what will come in the future.

"There's a lot of music nobody has heard yet, but it will be released eventually," YANNI says. "I'm just having fun with music. What I've learned is when a song hits you, when something moves you to write, it's an emotion. All of life comes together, and you have to follow it. The whole idea is to lead the audience, surprise the audience. I want to take them through a journey. They don't know what's coming next, but I promise it will be a pleasant surprise."

###