

PHOTO BY JOSEPH CULTICE



## **THE HOT SARDINES**

Friday, September 14, 2018, at 7:30pm  
Tryon Festival Theatre

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# PROGRAM

## THE HOT SARDINES

Elizabeth Bougerol and Evan Palazzo

The Hot Sardines will announce this evening's selections from the stage.

*The performance will be presented with no intermission.*

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*The Hot Sardines appear by arrangement with:*

*IMG Artists*

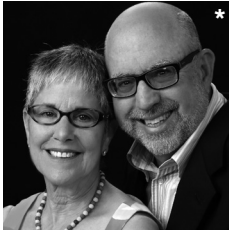
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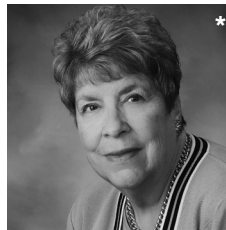
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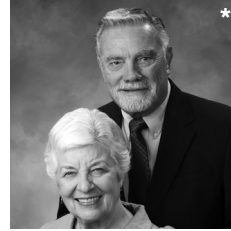
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# THE HOT SARDINES

Quality is timeless. Just ask The Hot Sardines.

In the talented hands of the New York-based ensemble, music first made famous decades ago comes alive through their brassy horn arrangements, rollicking piano melodies, and vocals from a chanteuse who transports listeners to a different era with the mere lilt of her voice. On *French Fries & Champagne*, The Hot Sardines' new album for Universal Music Classics, the jazz collective broadens its already impressive palette, combining covers and originals as they effortlessly channel New York speakeasies, Parisian cabarets, and New Orleans jazz halls.

Bandleader Evan "Bibs" Palazzo and lead singer "Miz Elizabeth" Bougerol met in 2007 after they both answered a Craigslist ad about a jazz jam session above a Manhattan noodle shop. The unlikely pair—she is a London School of Economics-educated travel writer who grew up in France, Canada, and the Ivory Coast, he a New York City-born-and-raised actor who studied theatre at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia—bonded over their love for Fats Waller. Influenced also by such greats as Dinah Washington, Louis Armstrong, and Billie Holiday, they began playing open mic nights and small gigs and by 2011, they headlined Midsummer Night Swing at New York's Lincoln Center.

The Hot Sardines' self-titled debut album, named by iTunes as one of the best jazz albums of 2014, spent more than a year on the Billboard Jazz Chart, debuting in the top 10 alongside Michael Bublé, and Tony Bennett with Lady Gaga. The accolades began pouring in for the band: *Downbeat* called The Hot Sardines "one of the most delightfully energetic bands on New York's 'hot' music scene," while *The London*

*Times* praised their "crisp musicianship" and "immaculate and witty showmanship," declaring them "simply phenomenal."

"We found ourselves in the perfect place at the perfect time," says Palazzo. "As we explored this 100-year-old jazz, we began to look at it as a journey forward, not so much as a look back. This is music for today, not a museum piece." Indeed, "People Will Say We're in Love" from the Rodgers & Hammerstein musical *Oklahoma!* gets reinvented as a tart tango. Jazz standard "Comes Love" starts as a minuet before vocalist Bougerol, singing in her native French, conjures up spirits from the roaring '20s. The Hot Sardines even upend Robert Palmer's 1985 classic "Addicted To Love" with Bougerol's cool vocals and hot horn arrangements.

Alan Cumming pairs with Bougerol for a mischievous take on "When I Get Low, I Get High," a song popularized by Ella Fitzgerald. The Emmy-winning actor (*The Good Wife*) came to mind as Bougerol, Palazzo, and producer Eli Wolf (Elvis Costello, Al Green, Norah Jones) conceptualized the album. "We wanted to give it a kind of Weimar feel and when I saw Alan in the revival of *Cabaret*, I knew we had to ask him," she says. "Turns out he was already a fan of the band, and said yes right away. It was so much fun, and a real honor."

The album title *French Fries & Champagne* celebrates the duality of The Hot Sardines, reflecting both their glamorous and gritty sides. "When we started out as a band, we played illegal parties in these secret spots in Brooklyn. It was pretty down and dirty, and that was one of the reasons we loved it," Bougerol says. "Cut to a few years later and we were invited to play

with the Boston Pops. We came up with the idea of half of the album being elegant and lush with strings, and then the other half is us going back to our roots."

The name is also a reflection of the times, as lines blur between high and low culture, luxury and comfort. "The old rules—that champagne goes with caviar, or couture and takeout don't mix—are out the window. You see it everywhere . . . fashion, travel, food," says Bougerol. "Just be yourself and do what you like," adds Palazzo. "Which is really how the Sardines approach everything we do."

The title track is a reminder that when the going gets tough, the tough go for comfort food and bubbly. About the pair's original song, Bougerol says, "I wanted to write something that could be taken as the end of a love affair, but with a second layer that expressed what we're all feeling," she says. "These are uncertain times. When everything's hopeless, throw a party."

It's one of several originals on the album, including Palazzo's instrumental homage to his old neighborhood, "Gramercy Sunset," and "Here You Are Again," a woozy, country-leaning track written by Bougerol about "that person in your life who you can't seem to break up with who keeps popping up like a bad penny," she says. "The most fun part of the tune is I got to play a little bit of Hammond organ," Palazzo says. "It was sitting there in the corner of the studio and it called me over."

Among the album's other highlights is a high-voltage version of "Running Wild," a song from the '20s that film buffs will recognize from director Billy Wilder's 1959 classic *Some Like It Hot*. The new arrangement allows each of The Hot Sardines' accomplished musicians to stretch out. "It also has some Ray Charles moves, which I love to explore," Palazzo says.

The Hot Sardines played more than 100 shows last year, taking their act from their familiar confines of New York across the country. And, to no one's surprise but their own, they were greeted by music lovers everywhere. "In a weird way, it never occurred to me that anyone was listening to us outside of New York City. To show up in a town and have people say, 'I love this song. I love this video' is mind-blowing to me," says Bougerol, who adds she remembers the towns by the food. "I'm always trying to find some sort of mom-and-pop place where I can eat something that they make in that area."

In New York City, The Hot Sardines draw a young audience. In the rest of the country, multi-generations come to enjoy the music. "We'll see daughters, mothers, and grandmothers coming to our show together," Palazzo says. "In Long Island, a young girl came up to Elizabeth with a can of sardines to sign. She was 7!"

In the hot jazz movement, The Hot Sardines stand apart for the innovation, verve, and sheer joy they bring to music, both new and old. "It's a really cool time to be making music," Bougerol says. "Especially if you're making music that started its life 100 years ago."