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## The Hounds of Heaven make their debut at the opening of the new Wharf Theatre.

Adam Joseph **May 10, 2018**



The Hounds of Heaven's music "represents a framework of [life] experiences, attitudes and observations." At least that's their best stab at describing a unique sound.

Mike Buffo

Defining The Hounds of Heaven can be an exercise in futility. The trio's repertoire is sculpted from bluegrass, Texas blues, Philly soul, traditional country, Petty, Springsteen and everything in between into their own sound.

The Hounds of Heaven's reimagination of Don Henley's introspective ballad "Train in the Distance" is an infectious uptempo dose of Americana. But the prose remains unchanged: "You can ride that train to the far end of creation, away from everything and everyone you know."

Hounds of Heaven take the stage for the first time on Friday. Yet they are a veteran lineup. For more than four decades, co-founders Bob Langford (vocals, guitar, bass) and Jon Zabler (vocals, guitar) have been "riding" together, musically, all over the Peninsula and beyond.

In the 1970s, the pair began with low-key, vocal-centric acoustic rock; by the early '80s, the duo went electric and evolved into a quartet. The Langford/Zabler Band rode *that* train for a decade before disbanding. A barrage of projects and life-changing landmarks ensued, but they always ended up together.

Local multi-instrumentalist Frank Lucido Jr. joins them in The Hounds of Heaven, a vocally-focused entity similar to what they were when they first started performing together. However, HOH tears through more musical territory. Along with a growing list of originals, the outfit takes pride in its deep covers.

"We're not just covering a hit song, we peel away the layers into the album content," Langford explains. "We find these great songs that nobody has ever really heard."

HOH transform Bruce Springsteen's *Tunnel of Love* little-known gem "All That Heaven Will Allow" into a '70s country-rock track with rich harmonies and the soul of The Byrds' *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*.

"HOH challenge the limits of your musical universe," Lucido Jr. says. "That's what makes it interesting."

Zabler adds, "I don't know how we know, but when [the song] works for the band I know it works for the audience. There are moments when everybody locks – and when it [happens], it's magic."

Friday, HOH make their live debut at the inaugural concert at the newly reopened Wharf Theatre (formerly the Bruce Ariss Wharf Theater) with special guest Gary Machado on drums. Big Sur Vineyards will host a wine bar.

**THE HOUNDS OF HEAVEN** 7pm (6pm doors) Friday, May 11.  
The New Wharf Theatre, Old Fisherman's Wharf, Monterey. \$15.  
[eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com)

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**Adam Joseph**

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