

Michael Bublé is a stadium-filling, multi-Grammy and Juno Award-winning singer (aka: the Canadian Grammys) who has sold more than 60 million albums worldwide, and has singlehandedly made us re-visit our love affair with The Great American Songbook...yet his first order of business as we began this interview was to put me at ease around his enormous celebrity with his seamless charm and wit. ~ Upon calling him, a woman picked up and asked if I was ready to speak with Bublé. Two seconds later, Bublé came on the line and opened with, "She doesn't really work for me: I just have her do that to make me sound more important," as chuckled. My reply? "Well, too bad for me: I answer my own phone!" and we shared a laugh. In reality, Bublé's music is unspeakably important to millions around the world who glean such joy and comfort from his flawless interpretation of some of the most iconic music of the 20th century, as well as the music he writes and performs himself. His original works have swiftly achieved classic status in the soundtrack of our lives. ~ The year 2019 marks a boon of personal and professional success, and a packed schedule for Bublé. His family's much publicized heartbreak as their son, Noah, battled pediatric liver cancer, set Bublé on a new course of humility which was evident throughout our conversation. Now, with Noah's health much improved, Bublé re-emerged with a new album, aptly titled Love (or simply, the heart emoji) on which he collaborated with mega-music producer David Foster; a sold-out worldwide tour; and his seventh musical television special which aired on NBC in March. My conversation with Michael Bublé is one of his most authentic and reflective, to date. We cover the subjects of parenthood, success, spirituality, love, humor, and of course, the music.

MICHAEL BUBLÉ

LEANS IN WITH LOVE & LAUGHTER

—By Allison Kugel

SEE MORE  SHA

Allison Kugel: I'll tell you what I have always found fascinating about you, and I'm a fan of music from earlier times. I'm forever listening to music from the 1940s, 50s and 60s. What's so interesting about you is that you came along in the very early 2000s when everything was hip hop, and rap/rock. What made you believe that you could even break through as somebody who was crooning these songs from a bygone era? **Michael Bublé:** It was probably stupidity (*laughs*). I mean, thinking that I might have success was probably naiveté. But honest to God, I think I was blinded by the love of the music. And by the way, I love *all* kinds of music. I love rock, R & B and rap. For me, if it's good, it's good. It doesn't matter who did it or where it came from. I hoped that I could trust my instincts.

AK: I've been listening to this author and speaker named Dr. Joe Dispenza. He studies the patterns of the human brain and how we create our own reality. He essentially talks about how anybody who has ever achieved something great has been able to believe in a vision and believe in a life for themselves that they couldn't yet perceive with their physical senses. When I read that you, from the age of 2, knew you were going to be a singer—slept with your Bible at night and prayed for it, and you held strong to that vision for all of those years before it actually materialized in your life—I put you in that great category. **Does that make sense?** **MB:** Yeah, it does, and there are a few people like Eckhart Tolle with *The Power of Now*, and some of these other philosophers who also talk about that. There is a Canadian writer [Malcolm Gladwell] who wrote a book called *The Outliers*. His whole premise was that to truly become great at something, you need to put in ten thousand hours of work. And if you find anyone who's become truly great at what they do, they have put in that amount of time. There are little parts of what you were talking about [in my process]...that mix [of] the practical application of doing things enough and focusing enough. You learn by osmosis, and your experience helps you to grow. Then by the time you get your opportunity, you're ready. I think that probably had a lot to do with it for me. Number one, I loved it. I had a passion for the music and the songs, and all of that. But I did the work. I practiced, I sang and I studied. I took it all in, and I digested it as much as possible, and downloaded it as much as possible in every kind of genre. I get what you're saying. You're talking about visualizing. I have a friend who tells me often that he used to walk down the street and say to himself, "I have a million dollars." Not, "I want a million dollars," but, "I have a million dollars; I am successful."

AK: You're living it and believing it, rather than wishing for it. **MB:** Yes, but this is a difficult conversation, because I think for people who have had the success and who have done that, they can confidently say to you, "Yes, it works. It worked for me, I did that." For most of the people who don't have that, I think they look at it as pish-posh.

AK: I think people are afraid to relinquish their faith to something that may leave them empty handed. It's the fear of, "Well: If I really invest myself in this process and I really believe, and it doesn't materialize in my life, I'll be devastated. Therefore, I'm going to remain skeptical." **MB:** There are times where I think to myself, "My God: I worked at visualizing and praying and wanting, and putting out all of that stuff to the universe, and it worked." But then there are a lot of times where I have to say to myself that I was just so lucky—so lucky. I mean, a million dominos had to fall in the most perfect way for this to have happened in my life. The question that I really ask myself is, if I had to do it all over again, would I be brave enough?

AK: Wow. Well thank God that's not an option! **MB:** It's a hard question to think about, because reality doesn't come into it. I came home yesterday with my wife and we had to take our son to his checkup—the scans and everything (*Bublé is talking about his son Noah, who is currently in remission from pediatric liver cancer*). We take him every 3 months for checkups, and it's really scary. My wife and I actually talked about this and we said, "My God, look at what we did." Here we were, she was 23 years old and I was 32. We met in Argentina and we fell in love. Everyone told us that it was impossible. They told us not to do it, because it was too far away, the whole long-distance relationship thing. And we did it. We got married. Everyone said, "That's crazy. That's not going to work. And whatever you do, don't have kids, because that'll be murder." And then we had kids. And then there's what happened to our family....One of the first things a doctor told me at one of the hospitals we'd gone to, was to stay strong and help each other through this. When we asked a friend of ours who works with families going through things like this why the doctors keep telling us that, this friend said that something like 92 percent of couples who go through this...

AK: ...get divorced. **MB:** Get divorced. And many of the 8 percent who don't, have [more] children. And of course, my wife and I thought, "Here we are, with a beautiful daughter." We were in the car yesterday and I looked at her, and said, "Would you do it all over again?" She then answered, "Of course I would do it all over again. I wouldn't want anything different. You guys are the greatest joy of my life." But then my question to her was, "But would you be brave enough to do it all over again?" And then she said, "I don't know." And I would have to say the same thing. I don't know.

AK: Any of us could say that. It's like when you have a baby. You bring that baby home from the hospital, and the thought that goes through your mind is that you are going to give this kid a perfect existence, and you're going to shelter him or her from any pain or discomfort. And then life happens, and you feel completely out of control because you realize that you don't have the power to completely shield them from the pain and discomfort of life.

MB: And you don't have the power to shield them from yourself. For sure, I thought to myself, "He's going to be better than I am!" I am so flawed. I'm so flawed and so impatient, and there are so many things about me that I don't like or that I wish I could improve on. And then you go, "Oh my God, he's acting exactly like me."

AK: You do your best and nobody gets through life without bumps and bruises....Now: Going back to the enormity of your career, when you're on stage looking out over the massive crowd of 20,000 or 30,000 people, do you ever have an out-of-body experience, like you're looking at this famous guy singing his heart out on stage and you're just like, "How did I get here?!" MB:

It's weird, I used to [feel like that] years ago. I don't anymore. It's really strange to say this, but after what I've gone through and what my family has gone through, I actually talk about it during my shows. I feel so deeply connected to all those beautiful souls in the audience; I don't feel there is a difference between us. The truth is, they're singing just as much as I am. We laugh together, we dance together, and we cry to together. The truth is, I would never have gotten through what I got through without them. I don't care what people think of me. My goal in life is to be kind, and to do what I do with integrity, and just to know myself. But I'll never use the word "fan." I think it's a shitty word.

AK: It is a shitty word. MB: It's short for "fanatical," and I think that's negative. I don't think these are fanatics. I think these are beautiful human beings who need as much love, and who give as much love, as anybody else. When I'm standing there on stage, it's emotional for me. Sometimes I can control that emotion and sometimes I can't. But you're asking me how I feel, and it's overwhelming. I feel overwhelmed...and grateful. I didn't know if I was ever going to come back.

AK: What was the impetus for you to come back? MB: He was better. We didn't know how it was going to turn out. My heart was broken, I don't know. It wasn't that I ever fell out of love with music. I just didn't know if I had it in me to go out there and be joyful. It just wasn't something I could turn on.

AK: And you returned with an album dedicated to love. The album's title is a heart emoji, and features some of the most beautiful love songs. Is that because you were so filled with love and gratitude for your son's healing? MB: It's because I was in a bubble, looking out at the world, and I saw a lot of negative things happening around the world. I realized that I had an opportunity to put beautiful things out there.

AK: ...Which is so important, because we need as many people out there as possible lifting collective consciousness. MB: Sometimes I feel like I'm just one small person, but I feel like there is a lot of power that one person can generate. We can all make a difference, and it usually comes in those random acts of kindness and putting love out there. I felt that if I didn't do something that was being true to myself and true to how I felt about what the world needed, then I was one of the assholes that was making the world worse. I sat with my producer, David Foster, who had been retired. And he wasn't going back. This was a year before we ever got into the studio. I said, "Are you ever going to work again?" He said, "No, I don't think so. I love being retired. I don't think I could ever go back in the studio. What about you?" I said, "David, if I ever go back, I just want it to be joy. I want it to be bliss, and I want to work with people I love...put out beautiful music and make people fall in love." I think both of us in that moment had this epiphany. After that day, he said to me, "Well, Mike: Man, if I ever come back, it would be with you." And then a year later we found ourselves in the studio doing it.

AK: What do you think you are here in this life to learn? MB: Listen, I don't know yet. I'm still learning a lot. What scares me is I've learned so much more in the past 5 years than I had in all my previous years combined. The reason I am reticent to give you an answer is because I can't imagine what I will learn in another five. What I've learned is how much I don't know. Life moves quickly, and...I think I sound like Ferris Bueller right now *(laughs)*.

AK: *(Laughs)* I was just thinking that! MB: *(Laughs)* I think just waking up in the morning and focusing on being kind. It sounds weird, but just be kind, be loving, forgive, and try to get through this very short life. And especially when you have kids, you hope your actions are louder than your words.

AK: Dare I now ask what you feel you are here to teach? MB: I do have an idea, but it's really personal to me and I don't want to get preachy. But I do, and I think you do to. I can hear it in the way you speak. I think you have a good, solid idea of what you are doing here.

AK: I've been studying this stuff for quite some time. I hope I don't sound too airy-fairy. Michael Bublé: It's okay to be airy-fairy. I have my faith and I try never to put it in people's faces, because there are a lot of people who don't believe the same things I do, and that's okay. I don't know who's right, I really don't. I can keep it simple and say I don't know what there is or what there isn't, but I feel in some way we are all connected. I know that each one of us gets to play a part in bringing goodness and humanity into the world. I feel like sometimes, because of the job I have, it can be magnified. If I can do that as best as I can, that can be my legacy.

Michael Bublé photos courtesy of Evaan Kherr|Bublé's tenth studio album, *Love* (illustrated with a heart emoji), is out now. Visit MichaelBuble.com/tour or TicketMaster.com for information and tickets for 2019 his worldwide tour. Allison Kugel is a syndicated entertainment columnist, and author of the book *Journaling Fame: A memoir of a life unhinged and on the record* available on Amazon, and owner of communications firm, *Full Scale Media*. Follow her on Instagram @theallisonkugel and at AllisonKugel.com.



Allison Kupel: I'll tell you what I have always found fascinating about you, and I'm a fan of music from earlier times. I'm forever listening to music from the 1940s, 50s and 60s. What's so interesting about you is that you came along in the very early 2000s when everything was hip-hop, and rap/rock. What made you believe that you could even break through as somebody who was crooning these songs from a bygone era? Michae Bublé: It was probably stupidity (laughs). I mean, thinking that I might have success was probably naïveté. But honest to God, I think I was blinded by the love of the music. And by the way, I love all kinds of music. I love rock, R&B and rap. For me, if it's good, it's good. It doesn't matter who did it or where it came from. I hoped that I could trust my instincts.

AKG: I've been listening to this author and speaker named Dr. Joe Dispenza. He studies the patterns of the human brain and how we create our own reality. He essentially talks about how anybody who has ever achieved something great has been able to believe in a vision and believe in a life for themselves that they couldn't yet perceive with their physical senses. When I read that you, from the age of 2, knew you were going to be a singer—slept with your Bible at night and prayed for it, and you held strong to that vision for all of those years before it actually materialized in your life—I put you in that great category. Does that make sense? MB: Yeah, I do, and there are a few people like Bobbie To's with *The Power of Now*, and some of these other philosophers who also talk about that. There is a Canadian writer [Malcolm Gladwell] who wrote a book called *The Outliers*. His whole premise was that to truly become great at something, you need to put in ten thousand hours of work. And if you find anyone who's become truly great at what they do, they have put in that amount of time. There are little parts of what you were talking about [in my process], that me [left the greatest application of doing things enough and focusing enough. You learn by osmosis, and your experiences helps you to grow. Then by the time you get your opportunity, you're ready. I think that probably had a lot to do with it for me. Number one, I loved it. I had a passion for the music and the songs, and all of that. But I did the work. I practiced, I sang and I studied. I took it all in, and I digested it as much as possible, and downplayed it as much as possible in every kind of genre. I got what you're saying. You're talking about visualizing. I have a friend who tells me often that he used to walk down the street and say to himself, "I have a million dollars." Not, "I want a million dollars," but, "I have a million dollars. I am successful."

AKG: You're living it and believing it, rather than wishing for it. MB: Yes, but this is a difficult concept, and I believe in it for people who have had the success and who have done that, they can confidently say to you, "Yes, it works. It worked for me. I did that." For most of the people who don't have that, I think they look at it as wish-peak.

AKG: I think people are afraid to relinquish their faith to something that may leave them empty handed. It's the fear of, "Well, if I really invest myself in this process and I really believe, and it doesn't materialize in my life, I'll be devastated. Therefore, I'm going to remain skeptical." MB: There are times where I think to myself, "My God, I worked at visualizing and praying and wanting, and putting out all of that stuff to the universe, and it worked." But then there are a lot of times where I have to say to myself that I was just as lucky-as lucky. I mean, a million dollars had to fall in the most perfect way for this to have happened in my life. The question that I really ask myself is, if I had to do it all over again, would I be brave enough?

AKG: Wow. Well thank God that's not an option! MB: It's a hard question to think about, because reality doesn't come into it. I came home yesterday with my wife and we had to take our son to his childhood—his arena and everything. Bublé is talking about his son Nash, who is currently in remission from pediatric liver cancer. We take him every 3 months for checkups, and it's really scary. My wife and I actually talked about this and we said, "My God, look at what we did." Here we were, she was 22 years old and I was 22. We met in Argentina and we fell in love. Everyone told us that it was impossible. They told us not to do it because it was too far away, the whole long-distance relationship thing. And we did it. We got married. Everyone said, "That's crazy. That's not going to work. And whenever you do, don't have kids, because that'll be murder." And then we had kids. And then there's what happened to our family.... One of the first things a doctor told me at one of the hospitals we'd gone to, was to stay strong and help each other through this. When we asked a friend of ours who works with families going through things like this why the doctors keep telling us that, this friend said that something like 92 percent of couples who go through this...

AKG: ...get divorced. MB: Get divorced. And many of the 8 percent who don't, have [ment] children. And of course, my wife and I thought, "Here we are, with a beautiful daughter!" I was in the car yesterday and I looked at her and said, "Would you do it all over again?" She then answered, "Of course I would do it all over again." I wouldn't want anything different. You guys are the greatest [joy of my life." But then my question to her was, "But would you be brave enough to do it all over again?" And then she said, "I don't know." And I would have to say the same thing. I don't know.

AKG: Any of us could say that. It's like when you have a baby. You bring that baby home from the hospital, and the thought that goes through your mind is that you are going to give this kid a perfect existence, and you're going to shelter him or her from any pain or discomfort. And then life happens, and you feel completely out of control because you realize that you don't have the power to completely shield them from the pain and discomfort of life.

MB: And you don't have the power to shield them from yourself. For sure, I thought to myself, "This's going to be better than I am!" I am so flawed. I'm so flawed and so imperfect, and there are so many things about me that I don't like or that I wish I could improve on. And then you go, "Oh my God, he's seeing exactly like me."

AKG: You do your best and nobody gets through life without bumps and bruises.... Now: Going back to the anonymity of your career, when you're on stage looking out over the massive crowd of 20,000 or 30,000 people, do you ever have an out-of-body experience, like you're looking at this famous guy singing his heart out on stage and you're just like, "How did I get here?" MB: It's weird, I used to [feel like that] years ago. I don't anymore. It's really strange to say this, but after what I've gone through and what my family has gone through, I actually talk about it during my shows. I feel so deeply connected to all these beautiful souls in the audience, I don't feel there is a difference between us. The truth is, they're singing just as much as I am. We laugh together, we dance together, and we cry together. The truth is, I would never have gotten through what I got through without them. I don't care what people think of me. My goal in life is to be kind, and to do what I do with integrity, and just to know myself. But I'll never use the word "fan." I think it's a shitty word.

AKG: It is a shitty word. MB: It's short for "fanatical," and I think that's negative. I don't think those are fanatics. I think those are beautiful human beings who need as much love, and who give as much love, as anybody else. When I'm standing there on stage, it's emotional for me. Sometimes I can control that emotion and sometimes I can't. But you're asking me how I feel, and it's overwhelming. I feel overwhelmed... and grateful. I didn't know if I was ever going to see back.

AKG: What was the impetus for you to come back? MB: He was better. We didn't know how it was going to turn out. My heart was broken, I don't know. It wasn't that I ever fell out of love with music. I just didn't know if I had it in me to go out there and be joyful. It just wasn't something I could turn on.

AKG: And you returned with an album dedicated to love. The album's title is a heart emoji, and features some of the most beautiful love songs. Is that because you were so filled with love and gratitude for your son's healing? MB: It's because I was in a bubble, looking out at the world, and I saw a lot of negative things happening around the world. I realized that I had an opportunity to put beautiful things out there.

AKG: ...Which is so important, because we need as many people out there as possible lifting collective consciousness. MB: Sometimes I feel like I'm just one small person, but I feel like there is a lot of power that one person can generate. We can all make a difference, and it usually comes in those random acts of kindness and putting one out there. I felt that if I didn't do something that was being true to myself and true to how I felt about what the world needed, then I was one of the cynics that was making the world worse. I sat with my producer, David Foster, who had been retired. And he wasn't going back. This was a year before we ever got into the studio. I said, "Are you ever going to work again?" He said, "No, I don't think so. I love being retired. I don't think I could ever go back in the studio. What about you?" I said, "David, if I ever go back, I just want it to be joy. I want it to be love, and I want to work with people I love... put out beautiful music and make people fall in love." I think both of us in that moment had this epiphany. After that day, he said to me, "Well, Mike, Men, if I ever come back, it would be with you." And then a year later we found ourselves in the studio doing it.

AKG: What do you think you are here in this life to learn? MB: Listen, I don't know yet. I'm still learning a lot. What scares me is I've learned so much more in the past 8 years than I had in all my previous years combined. The reason I am reticent to give you an answer is because I can't imagine what I will learn in another five. What I've learned is how much I don't know. Life moves quickly and... I think I sound like Pema Butler right now (laughs).

AKG: (Laughs) I was just thinking that! MB: (Laughs) I think just waking up in the morning and focusing on being kind. It sounds weird, but just be kind, be loving, forgive, and try to get through this very short life. And especially when you have kids, you hope your actions are louder than your words.

AKG: Dare I now ask what you feel you are here to teach? MB: I do have an idea, but it's really personal to me and I don't want to get preachy. But I do, and I think you do too. I can hear it in the way you speak. I think you have a good, solid idea of what you are doing here.

AKG: I've been studying this stuff for quite some time. I hope I don't sound too airy-fairy. Michae Bublé: It's okay to be airy-fairy. I have my faith and I try never to put it in people's faces, because there are a lot of people who don't believe the same things I do, and that's okay. I don't know who's right, I really don't. I can keep it simple and say I don't know what there is or what there isn't, but I feel in some way we are all connected. I know that each one of us gets to play a part in bringing goodness and humanity into the world. I feel like sometimes, because of the job I have, it can be magnified. If I can do that as best as I can, that can be my legacy.

Photo: Kelly photo courtesy of Jason Chen/Bublé's web studio (above). Lisa (Loved) with a heart emoji, is not real. This is a photo of a heart emoji. The information and content for 2017 is now online. New: Official Bublé is a registered trademark and service mark of the music publishing company, a life of a life and as the name of the company, and some of the information for Bublé's website. Please, for an ongoing subscription, go to allthingsbublé.com